

# Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish  
Church Magazine

February 2023



# *Portobello and Joppa Parish Church*

## ***From the editor***



As I write this, it's been a lovely mild day and so I did some gardening. So far, so good. And then I turned round, and my favourite little fork, the one that I'd been using just minutes before and just feet away, had vanished. It has remained vanished. Still, it's lovely to see the bulbs poking through the earth, giving hope that spring's just round the corner. Counting my blessings...

This is a full edition of the magazine – lots has been happening at PJPC. You can read about what the BBs have been up to, and what happens at Muddy Church and Godly Play. There's a report from Junior Drama and another from the Book Group (more members welcome) as well as information about the Food Bank.

Volunteers are requested to help with the Care Van, the BBs and Holiday Club. You can read about the concerts that raised money for the Red Cross's humanitarian work in Ukraine; and a very sad account of one of the many lives changed forever by that war.

Much more happily, you're invited to a concert given by Sirocco Winds, with Peter, one of our church family, on February 18 in our sanctuary. There are dates to put in your diary to see the Drama Group's performance of "Calamity Jane". And you can find out who in the congregation went to school with Hugh Grant!

Thanks to all contributors.

(And no doubt I'll find the fork – once I've bought another one...)

**Pam**



## ***From the minister***

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

We have just taken part in one of our Celebration Sundays, when the entire church gathers to sing, pray, worship and reflect. Lourens did a terrific job of encouraging all of the ages to think about our lives and gifts as blessings to be shared.

Much of it focused on the work of Mary's Meals, a charity which provides meals in schools where children may otherwise struggle to have one good meal a day. If my memory serves me correctly, in 20 years they have served over 2 billion meals.

A lot of meals. A lot of blessings.

Afterwards, we were treated to a porridge meal (as well as granola, porridge bars and muffins) prepared by Paul, organised by the Sunday Stars, Michelle and her team of volunteers, and served by the Breakfast Club. The atmosphere in the hall was relaxed, conversational, friendly. Again, a real blessing.

This is a time of great uncertainty in the world. Ukraine, the economy, the environment.

It is so easy to focus on all that is wrong with the world and the way that we would want it to be better.

But, perhaps it is equally as important to recognise the troubles in the world while nevertheless focusing on our calling as followers of Christ.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, we cannot all be saints but we can all be servants.

We cannot necessarily heal the world but we can be generous and gracious blessings.

With every word and action and thought and deed, we can overflow with goodness and joy. With all that we say and all that we do, we can illuminate lives with hope and bring shimmerings of healing. With our hearts, minds, souls, spirits and bodies, there is always the possibility of participating in the ongoing recreation summoned forth in life of Christ.

There is every reason for despondency and despair.

But we have every encouragement to bless and to heal.

'I am the way,' said Christ.

Which path will we tread today?

**Stewart**

## ***Wilson Memorial Food Bank***

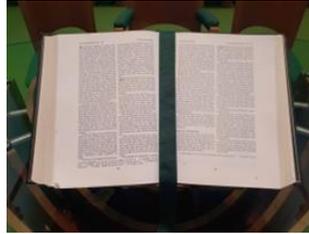
Many of you will be aware that PJPC supports the food bank at Wilson Memorial. With the current cost of living crisis, the demand for such support is great than ever. After a period of many years' service as PJPC's coordinator for the food bank, **Catherine** has decided to step down. On behalf of the Kirk Session and everyone who has donated to the food bank, I wanted to acknowledge Catherine's service and thank her for all that she has done for those in such desperate need. If you'd like to find out more about the food bank, then please speak to **Meg**, who has kindly agreed to take over from Catherine as our coordinator.



**Michael**

Session Clerk

# ***Worship***



## **Sunday 5 February**

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service with Sacrament of Communion
- 11.15am** Traditional service with Sacrament of Baptism

## **Sunday 12 February**

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service with Sacrament of Communion
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

## **Sunday 19 February**

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

## **Sunday 26 February (First Sunday of Lent)**

- 10.30am** Celebration Sunday

## **Sunday 5 March (Second Sunday of Lent)**

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

## **Sunday 12 March (Third Sunday of Lent)**

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

## ***Godly Play at PJPC***

During the school holidays at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church, our Sunday Stars take a break and instead we share Godly Play sessions during the Sunday Stars time.



Godly Play is a way to share bible stories with children, young people and/or adults in a small group. The door person meets each participant at the door to give them an individual welcome and then invites them into the room when they are ready. The storyteller sits in a circle on the ground and one by one, the participants come into the circle and find their cushion. The storyteller is able to “build the circle” by saying hello to each person by name as they enter. The intentionally slow welcome gathers the participants in and helps set the tone for our worship space.

In a Godly Play room, the participants are surrounded by all of the stories. There are the Sacred Stories (history of the People of God), the Parables, and the Liturgical Lessons (such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Baptism, the Holy Family and the Circle of the Church Year). When everyone has arrived and we are “all ready,” then the storyteller gets the materials for the day’s story and begins.

As the story is told, we experience the story by seeing the materials laid out before us and hearing the storyteller slowly and quietly explain what is happening. After the story is told, the storyteller looks up and engages the participants in a time of wondering. This question time is a safe place for people to express their thoughts on the story as all answers are equally valued.

Once the wondering is finished, participants are invited to carry on with their worship through art, reading, writing or play. With the help of our door person, some children choose to draw, paint, glue, work with play dough or create anything they can imagine with the art materials at hand. Other children stay with the storyteller and explore the story further for themselves with the materials or they can choose to get another story from the room and tell that one.

When our session comes to a close, the group tidies up and returns to the cushions where we say a prayer of blessing as we share a feast together of fruit and biscuits. As families arrive to pick up, the children leave the circle saying goodbye to the storyteller and door person for the week.

We started sharing Godly Play at this church building in 2010 and have slowly been building up our collection of materials ever since. Over the pandemic, several new stories were bought or made to add to our space so now when we meet and set up the full room, there are even more stories to explore. Recently, we also added a new storyteller/door person to our team of volunteers as Michelle W completed the Godly Play Scotland Storyteller and Door Person Accredited Training Course. We are very excited to have Michelle join us!

Godly Play stories, wondering and response time is also shared at Boys' Brigade at Anchor Boys on occasion as well as once a month for RME lessons at Musselburgh Burgh Primary School for four classes. If you would like more information, contact me.

**Michelle B**

## ***Portobello Holiday Club 2023***

Our sixth Portobello Holiday Club will finally take place on 17-21 July 2023 from 9am to 12:45pm here at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and at St Mark's Scottish Episcopal Church. Five local churches are working together to bring a fun filled week of games, crafts, science, Bible study, music, storytelling, baking and much more for children going into P1-P7. We are inviting secondary students to be involved as youth helpers. It will be a wonderful week and we would love for your family to be there.

If you are interested in volunteering, we could use help with leading activities, playing in the band, helping with snack, setting up, decorating, working with groups, being support for children attending with additional support needs, prepping crafts, helping with activities and various other roles. You can volunteer for a day, a couple days or the full week. Speak with Michelle.

Registration information and flyers will be out to the churches in March, but for now – save the dates! You can also send **Michelle** a note of interest to be added to the email list for first opportunity to register for holiday club. Hope to see you there this year!

**Michelle**

*One thing I learned from watching chimpanzees with their infants is that having a child should be fun. Jane Goodall*

*Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them. Lady Bird Johnson*

## ***Lunchtime Care Van Volunteers***



Once a month, our church team of volunteers for the Bethany Care Van serve sandwiches, tea and coffee to those in need in our city centre. The van makes four stops around town and there can be between 30 and 50 folk making use of this service. The van goes out each weekday at lunchtime and in the evening, though our team's involvement is only once a month, at lunchtime, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month.

Each time, we need two volunteers to serve the food and drink, and a driver. Our volunteers always enjoy the comradeship and fun of working together on a practical task, are able to better appreciate the needs and challenges of those who use the service, and find the experience of engaging with the users rewarding and humbling.

To qualify as a volunteer, all you need is to be available between 11.30 and 15.00 on the day, and as a driver, be licensed to drive a car and be under 70! If you are not available during daytime hours, there is another way you could help – by making sandwiches! Each month, the volunteers on duty bring along a dozen ham or cheese rolls, each individually wrapped or bagged. In addition, two other volunteers make a dozen rolls, which can be collected by the team, so that the group goes out in the van with 5 dozen sandwiches – all gratefully accepted by the users.

If you want to know more, or are ready to join our team, please contact me.

**David S**





## CALAMITY JANE

The Drama Group is hard at work, rehearsing for the wonderful musical treat, "Calamity Jane"! Set in the days of the American "Wild West", with well-loved songs *The Deadwood Stage*, *Windy City*, *Secret Love* and *The Black Hills of Dakota*, we will all have happy memories of watching the superb film starring Doris Day and Howard Keel!

The show dates are:

**WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> to SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH**

Tickets, priced £16 for adults, and £8 for students and children, will be on sale shortly.

They are available from our business manager, Fiona, on 07780687174, by email from [pjpcdramatictickets@gmail.com](mailto:pjpcdramatictickets@gmail.com) and between 10am and 12 noon on Sundays 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> of March in the Centenary Hall.

Please come along, and enjoy the show!

## ***Muddy Church***



Our Muddy Church has been meeting since July 2021 at Duddingston Kirk Gardens on the first Saturday of each month from 11am-12:30pm. Our team of volunteers from PJPC works with another leader from Richmond Craigmillar to put together this outside worship time each month. We meet rain or shine, snow or warm weather.

Muddy Church is a deliberate setting of time aside to be open to awe and wonder outside. To connect to the world around us and to connect with God. There is often an outdoor nature activity to do or you can just wander the gardens and spend time in nature exploring the theme of the month. All are welcome (from the very youngest to the very oldest). We meet at 11am on the lawn of Duddingston Kirk Gardens by the garden café and get to explore Dr Neil's gardens and the glebe lands near the lake. We end at 12:30pm with a Bible story and a time to reflect through an interactive prayer. Sometimes this is around a campfire with toasting marshmallows and enjoying hot drinks.



Speak to **Michelle or Reuben** to find out more.

We take January off, so our next Muddy Church is 4 February. Hope to see you there to wander and wonder together.



# Sirocco Winds in Concert



Matthew Howells– Flute, Victoria López - Bassoon, Irena Kilmach - Oboe,  
Peter McNeill - Horn, Matthew Giraldo - Clarinet

Sirocco Winds, a Scottish professional wind quintet, performing for the first time in Portobello and Joppa, playing a varied and enjoyable programme of light classical and popular music.

## Sat 18th Feb 2023 at 7pm

## Portobello & Joppa Parish Church

1 Brunstane Road North, Edinburgh EH15 2DL

Tickets £10 in advance or on the door (CASH ONLY), under 16yrs free

Interval refreshments available

Further information & tickets - Gillian McNeill, tel 07748 074386

[www.facebook.com/SiroccoWinds](https://www.facebook.com/SiroccoWinds)



## ***Concerts for Ukraine.***

In April last year a singing friend in England invited me to sing with a choir that was raising funds for Ukrainian refugees. The concert series proved very popular with local communities who were keen to buy tickets and fill the collecting tins at the doors.



Here at PJPC, after being prevented from singing in services by the pandemic for over a year, the church choir started rehearsing in the spring. We practised an anthem for Easter but couldn't raise a quorum of singers for Easter Sunday because so many of them planned to take advantage of the new freedom to travel to other parts. Nevertheless, we continued to rehearse after Sunday services and found that we had worked up a substantial repertoire of anthems. All dressed up and nowhere to go!

Non-choir members may not know that it is our normal custom to round up our singing year with a small party in the church. We don't dance, but we do sing: we work our way through all the anthems we've sung in services during the previous 10 months and surprise ourselves at the number of notes we can (and can't) remember. Unfortunately, we had nothing on that particular list in June last year, but we had a decent repertoire that we could offer somehow and a concert to raise funds for Ukrainian refugees sprang to mind as a good substitute for our 2022 party in many ways.

Of course PJPC can boast of at least two 'resident' choirs and so we joined with the Feast of Life Choir under David Simpson with Avril Brown to present our concert on 26<sup>th</sup> June in the church. We had no idea how many people to expect, but Elaine Armstrong's son Steffan's eye-catching blue and yellow poster worked wonders and the church was filled with so many people that Anne's Drama Group team had difficulty filling the tea and coffee cups fast enough. The piles of delicious home baking supplied by the choirs were clearly much appreciated.

We were joined at our June concert by a Ukrainian couple staying in Joppa. Bogdan read us his friend's account (see pages 15-16) about how he had sustained life-changing injuries as he tried to deliver humanitarian aid in their country earlier in the year. He had written this from his hospital bed in Germany. His story was difficult to hear. We also listened to his poem in its translation into English (see page 17). These contributions without doubt focused our minds on the purpose of the evening. The donation total was over one thousand pounds.

Following the success of that concert in June, PJPC hosted another choral event on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, also hoping to raise funds for Ukrainian humanitarian aid. Being only a few months after our summer break, the same line-up of choirs was not realistic, so the Sisters of Sound, a very small group of women singers from England and Scotland, and the Portobello Community Choir under Jane Lewis contributed half a concert each to do what they felt they could, which was sing. The idea was that we might draw a slightly different audience to contribute to the cause and although the numbers we attracted were smaller than in June, the refreshments (baked and served by church choir members) must have been even better because the donations in December also amounted to over one thousand pounds! Again, we were pleased to welcome Bogdan to update us on his friend's progress and highlight some of the problems he knew about personally in his home country.

The generosity of our audiences proves that we care and that many folk in Joppa and Portobello want to help in some way. We looked at what we do and tried to find a way of using that to raise a few funds. If you think that was a good idea, have you got any suggestions for what else members of our congregation can do?

**Sandra Anderson**

*[The money raised went to the Red Cross, specifically to be used in Ukraine. If you're interested in how this is administered, there's a statement from the Red Cross on page 18.]*



## ***Serhiy's story***

Since the first weeks of war I was a part of the volunteer movement, helping to deliver food, clothes and meds to the people in need in Kyiv.

Then, after the deoccupation, the geography of our aid widened to the territories of Kyiv and Chernihiv regions. But then, the time had come that there was no urgent need of help in that regions, thus, on the 6th of May we headed to Kharkiv, where the necessity for our assistance was much higher. And so was the danger.

We arrived to the village 10km from the frontline, slept in the Ukrainian literature cabinet of the local school, and in the morning were off to the nearest villages to deliver the humanitarian aid.

On this photo I'm smiling and still touching the ground with both of my legs. In 5 minutes I'm going to take my seat in the car, and in one hour my life would split into "before" and "after".

It was very quiet while we were riding, but the tension grew. We didn't know that a Russian military drone is already above us. As we came closer to the frontline, the smoke and sounds of the shelling were heard and seen. However, we were assured that the road was safe. We quietly started to move faster.

And then, in one moment everything turned white. I could only hear whizzing in my ears. I couldn't understand what had happened and lost consciousness for a few seconds. When I opened my eyes, I found myself lying on the ground in 4-5 meters from our demolished car. As I get it now, the 120mm mine hit our car just in the side I was sitting and I fell through the windshield.

So I was lying on the ground, feeling that my legs were put in something like boiling water. I took a look and saw that both my feet were twisted up in an unnatural position. I started screaming – I don't even know was it shock or pain – and immediately felt my jaw. It was broken.

As the shelling continued, I covered my head with arms, closed my eyes and only had one thought: “please, don’t hit me – I’ve got flowers to water at home”. Two times mines hit very close – just 5-7 meters near me. Finally we have made it to the safe place.

In half an hour our servicemen came. They have heard the shelling and came to check if we were ok. It turned out that they had saved us, because right after they evacuated us, Russians covered this quadrant with Grad.

I started to feel cold, I was sleepy. I woke for some 30 seconds when we arrived at the clinic in Kharkiv, just at the moment when the ambulance doctor was describing to someone what had happened to me.

I lost my left foot. It was amputated in the first hospital I came to in Ukraine. My right foot was amputated a month later in a German hospital, where I stay now. Doctors said they found a virus in the bone, and there was a danger that it would spread further – in that case they would have to amputate the knee. My jaw feels better, and now I try eating something harder than soups.

Doctors told me that people who lose so much blood mostly don’t survive – thus I realized that on the 7th of May I had more chances to die than survive, and the fact that I can move and breathe was already a big reason to be happy.

So, truly, the 7th of May is my second birthday.

With this thought in mind it became easier for me to overcome this situation, and this thought helps me till now. I’m alive, so I should be happy!

**Serhiy**

*[The recent news is that Serhiy is recovering well and getting used to using his prosthetic limbs.]*

## ***Poem from Ukraine (translated)***

She's fifteen, sells flowers at the train station.  
Sun and berries sweeten the oxygen beyond the mines.  
Trains stop for a moment, move further on.  
Soldiers go to the East, soldiers go to the West.

Nobody stays in her city.  
Nobody wants to take her with them.  
She thinks, standing in the morning at her spot,  
even this territory, it turns out, may be desirable, dear.

It turns out, you don't want to leave it for a long time,  
in fact, you want to hold on to it for dear life,  
it turns out, this old train station and an empty  
summer panorama are enough for love.

Nobody gives her a good reason for this.  
Nobody brings flowers to her older brother's grave.  
In a dream, you hear that motherland forms in darkness,  
like the spine of a teenager living in a boarding house.

Light and darkness are formed, take shape together.  
Summer sun flows into winter.  
Everything that happens today, to everyone, is called time.  
The main thing is understanding that all this happens to them.

Her memory is being formed, consolation formed.  
Everyone she knows was born in this city.  
At night she recalls everyone who left this place.  
When there is no one left to remember, she falls asleep.

**Serhiy**



## *Information from the Red Cross*



### **How much of my donation to the Red Cross will go to the people of Ukraine?**

During emergencies, staff at the scene make sure your money is used properly and spent effectively on the ground. We also work closely with the UN and other charities to ensure money is spent most effectively.

So that services help as many people as possible, any organisation faces associated costs. Whether here in the UK or overseas, we work very hard to keep these to a minimum, and on average these equate to around 9 per cent.

The rest will help the Ukraine Red Cross Society, International Committee of the Red Cross, and other Red Cross partners working in border countries, to support the humanitarian response in Ukraine and the border countries.

This response includes:

- Supporting families with food, first aid and medicines
- Supporting hospitals and healthcare facilities
- Repairing vital infrastructure  
Helping to repair homes, healthcare centres, schools and community centres.
- **Will my donation fund any other British Red Cross work?**  
Your donation will not fund any other British Red Cross projects.

## **Boys' Brigade News**

It's been a great year for the 25<sup>th</sup>, with pretty much everything back to normal after a couple of difficult years for everyone.



Anchor Boys have had a few changes in staff and I'd like to thank Karen and Julie for all their help over the last few years – and we have a couple of new helpers joined in the summer. Jill Wilson stepped down as officer-in-charge of Anchor Boys after many years at the helm but is continuing as an officer while mentoring Rory, who has taken over the role. Numbers in Anchor Boys are fairly low at the moment, which is generally due to not really recruiting too much in the summer until we knew what the staffing situation was like, but now that's all sorted, and any boys in P1 (after 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) to P3 are welcome to join.

Junior Section have had an excellent year, finally being able to return to Craggan for a week during the Easter holidays. This was the first trip for most of the boys, due to the restrictions over the last few years, and everyone had an excellent time – including the leaders, who have missed these trips as much as the kids! A lot of other normal activities returned and we also had a fun weekend at Canty Bay in November.

Company Section were also on their travels this year with most of the boys, and some of the leaders, attending the FDF National Camp in Denmark. This is a camp we have attended several times over the years and it was great to have the opportunity to do so again. This takes a lot of organisation and I'd like to take the time to thank Graham, Boab, Angus and Liam for all the work they put into this, as well as giving up a couple of weeks' annual leave to make sure that the boys enjoy what is a unique experience.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our leaders for their time and commitment to the 25<sup>th</sup>. Volunteering is a very rewarding experience and we are always on the lookout for new leaders – especially in Junior and Company Section! You don't need to have had any experience of Boys' Brigade before, and if you think you would like to help out, just get in touch.

I hope you had a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Gordon, Captain, 25<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh (1<sup>st</sup> Portobello) Boys' Brigade**

## ***Junior Drama Update***

Hi everyone! We in Junior Drama hope that everyone is keeping well. Since returning in September, Junior Drama have been very busy. We began rehearsing a play called “The Selkie” for a ceilidh organised by Elaine. We decided to use paper puppets for the characters and Charlotte, with her amazing talents, taught the children how to use the paper puppets and how to make them look more realistic. This was no easy task but a great skill to learn and the children had so much fun. Fiona, our musical director, taught the children a wonderful funny song to sing at the Ceilidh “The Ghost of Dundee”. The children gave a fantastic performance performing both the “Selkie” play and “The Ghost of Dundee” and they went down well with the audience who came along to the ceilidh. The children had a fantastic night after their performance eating stovies, pies, soup and enjoying dancing and singing at the ceilidh.

The following Thursday we began rehearsing for our Christmas Show for the parents. We decided to do “The Bossy Christmas Fairy”, which is about a fairy who gets her own Christmas tree and thinks she is the most important part of Christmas. She gets rid of all the “not so perfect” decorations and puts them in the reject box. The nativity people are also put into the reject box. Through learning the Nativity story, she realises she is not the most important part of Christmas. It was a happy ending, though, for everyone and by the time you have read this the show will have been performed to their families.



After Christmas we will be rehearsing for our main show for May and by then we'll be back to normal after Covid and can invite everyone again.

If you know any child aged between 8 years onwards who may like to join Junior Drama then contact me.

**Jamie**

## ***PJPC book group***

### *A Ladder to the Sky: John Boyle*



This was another ‘Marmite’ book, loved by some for the intrigue and black humour it contained and disliked by others because of the dishonesty and amoral behaviour portrayed.

We start the narrative in a bar in Berlin in the post war period where a liaison between a famous author and a young waiter germinates and finds root. The story of the author’s early history and background is slowly and innocently unfurled. He appoints the young waiter as his personal assistant and by this act has provided oxygen for the development of an unscrupulous, heartless, morally bankrupt, devious and undeniably ambitious author. He later engages in a series of homosexual liaisons in order to further his ‘writing’ ambition, all to gain the highest prize in literature.

The novel is written in three sections reminiscent of introduction, development and conclusion. However there was a repetitive element about the first section which was widely disliked. The second section centred upon Edith, his partner, and his treatment of her. Written in the third person, it brought a new perspective to the narrative and highlighted Maurice’s treachery and his ability to stop at nothing in order to gain notoriety and fame.

Enter a young student wishing to write a biography on the now alcoholic and down at heel Maurice. From casual enquiring, the student hardens his interrogation and we have revealed to us the ‘true’ character of Maurice. By this stage in the novel we had all been page-turning in the hope that ‘dear Maurice’ would get his comeuppance. We were smiling at the prospect of him being found guilty and incarcerated. That was indeed what happened, but in true ‘Jeffery Archer’ fashion he once again gained fame and acclaim.

A most disturbing tale of human ambition. Oh, and by the way he was also complicit in the death of his son. Read on...

**Our next book for the end of January is 'Klara and the Sun' by Kazuo Ishiguro**

**And then for the end of March:- The Fair Botanists by Sarah Sheridan.**

Happy reading  
**George**

## ***CrossReach – the social work arm of the Church***

At CrossReach we offer loving care to people of all ages who are in need of a helping hand, supporting them to live life to the full whatever their circumstances. We aim to show the practical side of our Christian faith by reflecting Christian love to those we support.

The Church of Scotland's Social Care Council is accountable for the work of CrossReach. We have been at the forefront of high quality social care for over 150 years. During that time, we have worked hard to understand the needs of the people who turn to us for help and with them have been pioneering services which have changed thousands of lives for the better. Today we are one of the largest care providers in Scotland, with experience across a broad range of services.

Our services include: residential care and education for looked-after children; short breaks and activities for young people living with disabilities and long term complex health needs; one-to-one counselling, and perinatal counselling for parents; play-based interventions for children under 8; accommodation and support for ex-offenders, and support for prison visitors in Perth and Polmont; accommodation and practical support for those facing homelessness; residential care, at-home support and day opportunities for young people and adults with learning disabilities; accommodation and support for mental wellbeing, including local groups; and care for older people, from day support to respite care and residential care homes. We also hold creative arts groups for people living with dementia; and help with substance use recovery including residential rehabilitation, move-on accommodation, and support for their families.



## ***The word for today***

**“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. (Psalm 56, 3)**

Faith is like a muscle: trouble may strain it, but in the end it grows stronger. David understood this truth. He was continually hounded by his enemies. Even as he was being anointed to sit on the throne of Israel, Saul was still occupying it. But instead of losing faith in God’s promise, David declared that “the Lord has chosen everyone who is faithful to be His very own, and he answers my prayers.” (Psalm 4,3.)

When he was in a cave, fleeing from Saul’s jealous rage, David said, “I will hide beneath the shadow of Your wings until this... is past.” (Psalm 57, 1).

During the third century, St Felix is said to have taken refuge from his enemies in a cave. A spider began spinning a web across the entrance, eventually making it look as if no one had been in the cave for months. Consequently, his pursuers passed by. Stepping out into the sunshine, Felix declared, “Where God is, a spider’s web is like a wall. And where God is not, a wall is like a spider’s web.”

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***Gardening with George*** – *More plant lore from George, horticulturist and star of the small screen.*



The snowdrop, 'Three Ships' has been in full bloom here in the garden since the middle of November. It is one of the earliest of my snowdrops to flower and it is always good to see it pushing its delicate green spear-like shoot through the cold wet soil. Now that we are well into January and with the daylight lengthening slightly each day, it has been joined by some of its close relatives, 'Fred's Giant', 'Colossus', 'Magnet' and 'Sam Arnott', each one different, with distinctly unique markings on their inner petals. Snowdrops with their pure white petals were said to represent the tears that Eve shed when she was banished from the Garden of Eden. Snowdrops come from Eastern Europe and are not native to Britain but were brought to these shores by monks in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The monks often planted them in the grounds of their monasteries, where of course they also buried their dead, and thus began the snowdrops' close association with cemeteries and death. Snowdrops however are also often seen as the symbol of hope, their appearance around Candlemas symbolising the end of the cold dark days of winter. Snowdrop bulbs contain the alkaloid galanthamine, a medicinal substance seen as valuable in the control of Alzheimer disease. A true symbol of hope.

Soon too, daffodils will be trumpeting the arrival of spring and along with crocus, grape hyacinths and early tulips will be offering up sweet nectar and nutritious pollen to the first of the foraging bumblebees.





I have been sowing some seeds in my cold glasshouse recently: sweet peas, garden peas, broad beans, parsley, cauliflower, tomatoes, aubergines, lettuce and peppers. The lettuce and sweet peas have germinated already but it may take the others some time yet before they push their 'heads' above the parapet. Gardening is all about faith and hope and patience.

Perhaps I am too impatient and willing spring to arrive before its time. However, I have not sown all the seeds that were in the packets. I have kept some seeds back as insurance and if the first sowings fail, then when the days are longer, the sun warmer and stronger, I will make a second sowing. Peas and broad beans are able to germinate when soil temperatures are in single digit Celsius readings or in the high thirties on the Fahrenheit scale. The main growth trigger is temperature, closely followed by moisture and oxygen supply.

We frequently complain about the frost and low temperatures we experience over winter but they too are essential for plant growth. The shortening days and cooler temperatures of late autumn cause deciduous plants to drop their leaves and enter a state of dormancy. Temperatures below 7C create chilling, an experience that is essential for the initiation of flower buds. Apples, pears, cherries, plums and blackcurrants all need to experience over 1200 hours of chilling where the average temperature is below 7C. Temperatures dictate a time to plant a time to sow and a time for harvest.

Soon spring will be here.

Stay safe.  
Enjoy your space,  
Happy Gardening.  
**George**



## Brain-teaser



We celebrate Shrove Tuesday on February 21 this year, so I've made up some clues, the answers to which start with the letters of the words SHROVE TUESDAY. Enjoy your pancakes!

- S ----- An anagram of this Old Testament judge's name is AS MULE.  
H ---- We sing these in church.  
R ----- "... in the Lord always" wrote Paul to the Philippians.  
O ----- Between Amos and Jonah in the Old Testament  
V ----- A saint for February 14.  
E -- The Bible's first lady.
- T ----- Doubtful chap.  
U ----- An anagram of UNTIED but meaning the opposite.  
E ----- An anagram of HE JAIL – he was a great prophet.  
S ----- For us, though not for everyone, it's a Sunday.  
D ----- Lions seemed to like him.  
A --- The Bible's first man.  
Y --- Happy New ...

**Alison**



**Getting to know you – Tim.** Tim says: *I started coming to St Philip's (as it was) around 20 years ago – I was pretty jaded and picky when it came to church. The 9.30 service was my 'home' – and still is. Why? Although I am part of 'David's FoLies' (aka The*

*Feast of Life choir) I don't much like hymn sandwiches. And I have long found that Stewart's sermons mainly leave me surprised and reflective – and inviting rather than requiring belief. I guess one of my long-term takeaways would be 'come because you want to'. And I love the communion that follows the service, an aspect that has become so much richer with the rolling coffee.*

*On to the questions:*

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

A. Now the green blade rises from the buried green – *for the last verse,*

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Thy touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

There is something in these words that always moves me; perhaps it is the miracle of love, that reaches out and touches us when we are dead and bare? I just discovered a surprising version of it, sung by Stevie Winwood. <https://youtu.be/vpU01KQIUJM>

**Q. What's your earliest memory?**

A. *Fury at my mum, who had thrown away a solid chocolate Easter egg that my dad's mum had given me (it was mine!); she died before I was 3. Terrible twos methinks.*

**Q. What is/was your job, and in an alternative life, what job might you have chosen?**

A. *I am still a civil servant, having joined as a social work inspector 20 years ago. As for what I might have chosen...*

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

*A. I have just finished reading "A Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson, for the second time. Books I've loved? "Team Of Rivals" (a biography of Abraham Lincoln), "Milkman" (a book about The Troubles), "East West Street" (a family history that encompasses the origins of crimes against humanity and genocide as crimes). And the Slough House series of books.*

**Q. What book do you feel you should have read, but never have?**

*A. I don't much like 'shoulds' when it comes to reading! But I have tried to read "The Brothers Karamazov" several times...*

**Q. What is your most prized possession?**

*A. I reckon probably my bike – just having a bike really, for the convenience, and for getting around under my own steam.*

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

*A. I am pretty open about things. Fun facts? I was at school with Hugh Grant, studied theology in New York and can juggle. But only with three balls.*

**Q. What luxury would you take to a desert island?**

*A. A fat bike (one with big fat tyres ☺) and/or music, lots of music.*

**Q. What single thing would improve the quality of your life?**

*A. Being effortlessly organised (I'm just not).*

**Q. What do you do to relax?**

*A. Run, music, read. Choir, pub quiz, friends.*

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

*A. To re-live odd specific days – Christmas in New York, being with friends who have died, some camping trips. Mostly those exhausting days when the children were young and demanding.*

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

*A. Not sure I have a favourite.... Maybe "these are very small, but those are far away". Or "words mean what I want them to, nothing more and nothing less"... or "Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing" (but only at the*

*midnight Christmas Eve service, and in spite of the patriarchal sentiment). Or the Gil Scott Heron line about “If you can help someone, why wouldn’t you?”*

**Q. What kind of music do you listen to?**

*A. All sorts. Monteverdi, Lyle Lovett, Led Zep, Joan Armatrading, Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, Karine Polwart, Rhiannon Giddens, Macklemore (though only a couple of his songs).*

**Q. What do you miss about being a child?**

*A. Hours spent with friends? All now so far away, and all of us changed.*

**Q. How would you like to be remembered?**

*A. Kindly.*

**Q. Where would you like to be right now?**

*A. Camping somewhere warm and dry, with a good book and a hammock.*

**Q. What makes your heart sing?**

*A. Loads of different things? Being with friends, being hospitable, listening to a favourite song, fixing something, playing a fun game of cards (the kind where it doesn’t matter who wins).*

***February, by Michael Field (1893)***

*Gay lucidity,  
Not yet sunshine, in the air;  
Tingling secrets hidden everywhere,  
Each at watch for each;  
Sap within the hillside beech,  
Not a leaf to see.*



# Wedding

28 December 2022 Lorna and Andrew

## *Remembering*

- 7 December 2022** Muriel McLean of Craigentenny  
**23 December 2022** Rosemary Smith of Joppa  
**11 January 2023** Rosemary Wilson of Craigentenny  
**14 January 2023** Arleen Martin of Portobello  
**15 January 2023** Gordon Gray of Portobello  
**15 January 2023** Janet (Joy) Ash of Portobello





### **‘A Tangible Thing Everybody Can Do’**

As Fairtrade Fortnight begins, how Fairtrade traders and campaigners in Scotland are facing the cost of living crisis.

### **‘We Are Facing Huge Challenges’**

The Rev Dr Doug Gay, author of *Reforming the Kirk*, tells of his journey from an upbringing in an Exclusive Plymouth Brethren Assembly to influential theologian – and where he feels the Church of Scotland is going wrong in its reforms.

### **Being Intergenerational Church**

Suzi Farrant and Darren Philip continue their series on the importance of developing a Church which embraces all generations.

### **Sitting Near My Neighbour**

John L Bell reflects on the impact of layout on worship.

### **Radical Reconciliation**

Ruth Harvey considers the message of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5.

### **A Good Host**

The Rev Dr Martin Johnstone reflects on the art of hosting as a vital leadership skill.

### **Pilgrim Journeys**

The Rev Dr Richard Frazer reflects on the value and gifts of pilgrimage.

**Plus:** youth column, My Church, View from the Pulpit, official updates from the Faith Action Programme and Assembly Trustees, readers’ pictures, news, letters and reviews – all for £3.50. Visit [www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe](http://www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe) or speak to your church’s Life and Work co-ordinator.

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

March 2023

April 2023

May 2023

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

***Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728***

Portobello & Joppa



Parish Church

Photography by Kim Kjaerside

