

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

November 2022



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

From the editor



The other day we watched a programme about TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*. I studied it at university and was not a huge fan – it's one of these poems with many abstruse references not only to other works of literature but also, say, to the fact that the poet's childhood home had a green garden gate or that his father liked mulberries*. You need footnotes. However, I hoped in the 50ish years that had passed since I last read it, I might have acquired the necessary wisdom to make *The Waste Land* more accessible. Sadly, no. It *sounds* great and is very quotable. I can see how you could build a career on being an expert on it. But it's not bedtime reading.

So I was very encouraged that Stewart, in his letter, confesses similar troubles with Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

Fortunately, *Soundings* requires less mental effort (or at least, I'm hoping so). You can read about our Sunday worship, the Recycling Group's new initiatives, the Book Group's feelings about their latest book; and what you should be doing in the garden. There's sad news about the Ladies' Golf Club. And you can find out who once sailed through ice to deliver fridges from Italy to (I assume) Finland.

You're also invited to a concert on November 19, when the Drama Group will be singing songs by Lerner and Loewe.

Thanks as ever to all contributors.

Pam

**I may be inventing these particular examples, but you get the general idea.*

From the minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

‘All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.’



This is a quote by Julian of Norwich that is often repeated, almost like a mantra of calm in turbulent times. It points to the wider picture, a perspective drawn under the eye of God’s eternity.

It is also woven throughout TS Eliot’s ‘Four Quartets’, an exploration of time and mortality. Will all indeed be well, one wonders?

A question well worth asking these days.

The world is experiencing war and environmental upheaval. Inflation and possible recession indicate economic turmoil. Politics in the UK is disorientating in its chaos. And the church is grasping a painful nettle of necessary change.

I recently watched the actor Ralph Fiennes do a one-man performance of Eliot’s ‘Four Quartets.’ During covid he memorised it (7,000 lines?) and then proceeded to create a performance out of it.

Full disclosure: I understood precious little. It was true linguistic, mental and cerebral overload.

But watching Fiennes take some words from a book, a perplexing poem, and then turn them into something raw, physical, tangible and emotional was captivating. Words that had seemed relatively wooden and two-dimensional on a page suddenly became alive and potent through his diction, his intonation, his movements, his gestures and his mixture of restlessness and stillness.

How do we turn the words of the Bible into something alive, real and captivating?

How do we take the parables and teachings of Christ and transform them through word and action into something that will transform?

How do we allow the Spirit of holiness to ignite a light of grace and love in our souls that will enlighten and warm people?

I can only begin to imagine how long Fiennes spent memorising those words. I can only begin to imagine how long he spent getting the intonation, timbre and resonance of the words, phrases and sections. And then to put it all together on a set with movement and action, with nothing but himself, the space, the words and the audience, is almost inconceivable.

If we did the same with the parables of Christ, how might we and the world be changed?

What if we took the Good Samaritan or the Forgiving Father and lived it and spoke it and moved within it and created space for it and shared it?

What if we took those hymns we know and let them shape our thinking, our acting our believing, so that we live emanating a 'love divine, all loves excelling' or look about us always with wonder because God is 'holy, holy, holy'?

This all takes time and dedication and commitment. And faith.

That immersing ourselves in this way will change us. And change our church. And change our community. And change our country. And change the world.

Nothing to do? Live in a parable.

Too much to do? Live in a parable.

Then all shall be well.

Stewart

WORSHIP

Sunday 6 November

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



Sunday 13 November – Remembrance Sunday

- 9:15am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10:00am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 10:50am** Traditional service, with two-minute silence at 11:00am

Sunday 20 November

- 10.30am** **Celebration Service**

Saturday 26th November

- 3:30pm** Messy Church

Sunday 27th November (First Sunday in Advent)

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

Sunday 4th December (Second Sunday in Advent)

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

Sunday 11th December (Third Sunday in Advent)

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

WEDDING

1st October 2022 Stuart and Kirsty of Mountcastle



Thank you!

There was a wonderful response at the Harvest service to the appeal on behalf of the food bank – both goods and cash. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

Catherine



Ladies' Golf Club



It is with great regret that after many (113) years, the Ladies' Golf Club has closed.

Our first Medal was played in 1909 as part of the Ladies and Gentlemen Church Golf Club and then, on the 24 April 1929, the Ladies' Club was officially constituted.

The annual subscription was then half a crown, and a competition calendar was drafted which the Club continued to follow until its demise.

An Extraordinary Meeting was held on 9 November 2021 when the difficulties impacting on the Club were discussed. The main points being a lack of new members, COVID and problems with the new online booking system.

It was agreed to put the Club into abeyance until some of the issues might improve.

However, recently it was recognised by the members that it is impossible to continue with so few playing members and sadly we have now closed.

The Minute Books and trophies have been lodged with the Church for safekeeping, in the hope that, at some future date, the Club may be resurrected.

Mandy, Secretary

Portobello & Joppa Parish Church Drama Group presents

THANK HEAVEN FOR
Lerner and
Loewe

*An evening celebrating the music of
Alan J Lerner & Frederick Loewe*

FEATURING SONGS FROM
Brigadoon, Paint Your Wagon,
Gigi, Camelot and My Fair Lady

SATURDAY 19th NOVEMBER, 7.30pm

Refreshments served in the hall from 9pm - 9.30pm

PORTOBELLO & JOPPA PARISH CHURCH

ABERCORN TERRACE, EH15 2DH • TICKETS £5

**FOR TICKET ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL 07974 684353
OR EMAIL PJPCDRAMATICKETS@GMAIL.COM**

Recycling group news

WE'VE MOVED!

The PJPC Recycling area is now in the passageway near the hall doors. You can't miss it. Donations for Fresh Start can still be left in the 'Flower Room' as can clean jars (for the wonderful jam makers).



The box drawers in the new Recycling area unit pull out using the strip where the label is attached (hope that makes sense - try it and you'll see).

The box labelled 'Large Plastic Bags' is only for those more solid bags which can also be used for storage or carrying heavier items. If it's full, please don't leave any extras! Please take one if you need it, but always leave a couple there.

Please don't leave food bags! They go to some supermarkets, along with other 'soft plastics' like the thin plastic film on food packages. PJPC do NOT take them.

However, we need to let people know of places where one can leave soft plastic – e.g. Tesco Musselburgh and M&S at Fort Kinnaird do take it 😊; Aldi and Co-op in Portobello don't 😞. We would appreciate it if you could let us know of other places which do.

And don't forget – when you are putting foil into your kerbside recycling bin at home, make sure it is screwed up into a shape bigger than a tennis ball, otherwise it slips through the recycling machinery.

With gratitude and good wishes from the Recycling Team.

PERIOD POVERTY

– Restoring Women’s Dignity

Just a reminder!

Meeting in PJPC Hall

Sunday Nov 20 at 3pm



You might like to share this among friends or contacts

Please.

Especially if you/she/he/they sew, or can cut fabric, or thread drawstring bags, or add poppers (press studs).

Otherwise come out of curiosity to hear about

REUSABLE PADS FOR REFUGEES

My dream would be that we might eventually get them to Aarsal in Lebanon. However, with the most recent cuts to water accessibility it’s looking increasingly out of the question (recently down to 7.5 litres per person per day!).

Still, they will go to refugees somewhere where there is great need.

Easy pattern.

Live sewing demonstration.

Hope to see you there. Coffee and tea served.

All welcome.

Kay

Book group –

The Loch of the Green Corrie by Andrew Greig

We were a split jury on this one but as on many other occasions when we are divided in our opinions, the discussion was both lengthy and inquisitive and rarely dismissive. Perhaps that was what the author had hoped would happen.



We loved the use of language, the poetic flow of much of the text and the beautiful images it conjured up of the Assynt landscape of wildness, wet wilderness and the scent of heather and myrtle, all delivered in a soft, gentle and sensitive way.

Built around the metaphors of cast and retrieve, actions that are familiar to anyone that fishes, the book charts a number of relationships in Greig's life – family, brotherhood, male bonding, admiration of elders – and behind it all, Greig seeks to find out 'who his people are'. This is a challenge set him by one of the other characters in the book, who asked him directly, "Who are your people?" – seeking to find out where he found comfort and brotherhood and where he felt safe.

The main thrust of the story is Andrew Grieg's promise to Norman MacCaig to fish at the Loch of the Green Corrie, a favourite haunt of MacCaig. To do so he had to negotiate and conquer the mysteries of the Gaelic language, gain the trust and friendship of the residents of Assynt (especially Norman McAskill) and face the torture of the Scottish midge and the rigours of west coast wind and rain.

The book is not about fishing per se; it is much more far-reaching and covers topics such as personal relationships, male bonding, plate tectonics, poetry, the

Highland Clearances, the battle of Culloden, the mistrust of highlanders for those from the lowlands, James Hutton and his theories on geology.

There is a potted Scottish history contained within the pages of this book as the author discusses the history of Scotland and the Scots. There was humour here too in the description of the meeting with the local policeman seeking to see their fishing permits, while the tragedies of the natural world are shown in the observation of the inevitable outcome of the crows marauding the nesting duck.

Although it was a 'marmite book', each of us was able to pick out passages that we liked and which held special meaning.

Our next book for the end of November is *A Ladder to the Sky* by John Boyle, described as "a dark and twisted psychological drama, showing how easy it is to achieve the world if you are prepared to sacrifice your soul".

For January 2023, we will read *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro. So, happy reading!

For more information, contact **Gill and George**

For many years, a rabbi stood and prayed at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. One day a man stopped and asked him what he was praying for. "Peace, justice, honest leaders who want to serve the people," replied the rabbi.

"And how's it going?" asked the man.

"It's like talking to a stone wall," said the rabbi.

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



The growing season is slowing down now, and at my allotment work is starting on preparing the beds for winter. The site that my allotment occupies is part of an old raised beach that runs through much of Joppa and the Coillesdene area. Throughout the area, the soil is a free draining sandy loam and is what is called a hungry soil and very quick to dry out. In order to keep it fertile and in good heart it requires frequent applications of organic matter in the form of farmyard manure, home-made garden compost created from kitchen scraps, paper shreds, grass mowings or fallen leaves, in fact, any vegetable matter that will eventually rot down and produce a nutrient-rich compost. There is a problem though. The composting system that many of us use at home is a “cold composting” system, where the accumulated vegetable matter rots down slowly under low temperatures and rarely if ever manages to get hot enough to kill all the weed seeds it contains. So when I use it at my allotment, I don't spread it on the surface as a mulch but dig it into the soil.

However, I also buy compost from Caledonian Horticulture, which has been made from the garden waste we all put out in our brown bins and processed in such a way that the compost heaps heat up during the process, get quite hot and kill all the weed seeds. The local authority compost can then be applied directly on to the soil surface and no weed seedlings will appear, making it an ideal material to use as a soil mulch.

Soil mulches can be applied either in late autumn or early winter, when the underlying soil is moist and still slightly warm. The mulch acts as a blanket, keeping any residual heat in the soil and trapping and preserving soil moisture as well as preventing unwanted seedling weed growth.

When we had work done recently in the Church grounds, the contractor arranged for the various branches, twigs and other bits of green vegetation

pruned off or dug up to be shredded and returned to the borders, where they act as a mulch and keep the weeds down. Some plants have been removed, some have been severely pruned in order to encourage them to regrow while yet others have just been given a slight prune to keep them in good shape. New plants will be purchased to fill some of the gaps, and carefully chosen to provide attractive foliage for the flower committee to use.

With the approach of shorter days and lower temperatures the autumn leaves will all have fallen, the deciduous trees in the church grounds will be bare twigged, skeletal and dormant, waiting for next spring and the returning of sunshine and warmth.

Time to hunker down for the winter.

Take care, stay safe and wherever you are, enjoy your garden space.

George





The Word for today

How to be fruitful

"I chose you... that you might bear fruit... fruit that will last." John 15, 16

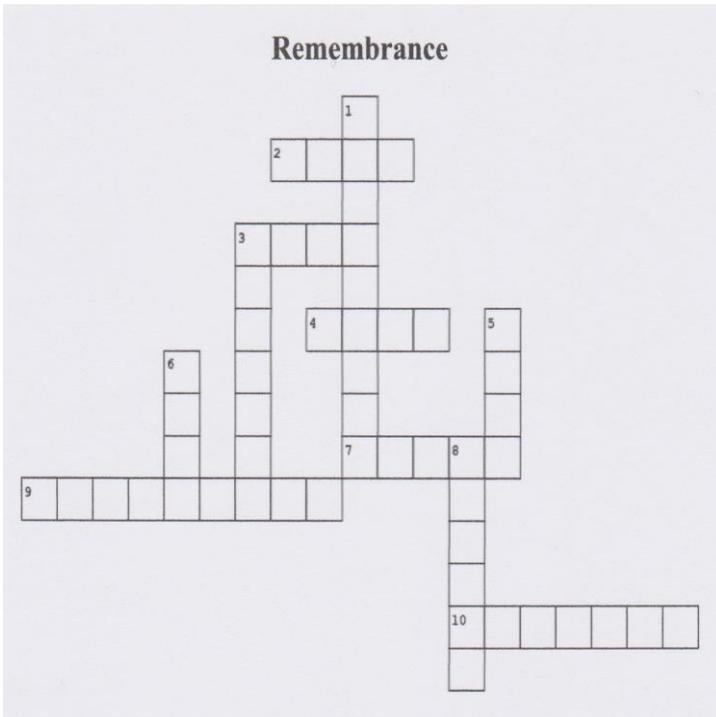
When Jesus said, "I chose you... that you might bear fruit... fruit that will last", he was saying, "Spend your life in pursuit of that which has lasting significance and eternal value." We read that "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" – Galatians 5, 22-23).

These nine qualities describe a life that's truly worth living. Fortunately, we're not left to produce this kind of fruit by self-effort. No, Jesus said, "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, so that it will be even more fruitful. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain on the vine. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit." (John 15, 1-2, 4-5)

So if you want to be more fruitful, draw nearer to the Lord.

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Brain-teaser



I've been thinking about Remembrance Day on November 11th.

Each of the answers to this crossword starts with a different letter of the word "Remembrance".

Across

2. Garden
3. Daughter of Naomi
4. Gospel means good...
- 8 Grace... and peace.
9. Mother of John the Baptist
10. Religious songs

Down

1. Jesus' birthplace
3. Be glad
5. Mother of Jesus
6. Book before Nehemiah
8. Promised land

Alison



Getting to know you – Sandy.

Sandy says, “I am a lifelong attendee at St Mary of Wedale Parish Church, in Stow, in the Borders. It is where I was married, so it is a special place to me.

My lines are still there, basically because it is a very, very small congregation nowadays and if I leave, it will reduce it even further, threatening its very existence. I still contribute financially to it. It is my second favourite building in the whole world. If it closed it would bring to an end 1300 years of Christianity in the Gala Water Valley. The DNA of all the many people I knew and loved is in there and my Grandfather’s name is written on the rafters. It cannot close. However, my wife has a flat in Porty – because of child-care issues she lives part of the week in Porty – so I often attend the 11.15 service at PJPC. I have a flat in Galashiels because of work commitments and also because my grandson, who I go truck-spotting with, lives in Gala.”*

**Sandy’s absolute favourite building is “the house in Stow where my father was born – his father came there in 1889. We took over the building in 1980 and lived in it and brought up our three boys there.”*

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. "Away in a manger". Especially the third verse. I have not sung it for years; I get too emotional. Such beautiful words. a prayer on its own, which I frequently use myself.

*Be near me Lord Jesus,
I ask Thee to stay,
Close by me forever and love me I pray,
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.*

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. Sitting with my mother in a full church at Christmas. The huge tree with the lights on. Magic!



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

A. Later in that year watching the Coronation on the TV in the "houf". a kind of village hall attached to the "Royal Hotel". There was "snow" on the picture and I am not sure i really knew what i was watching. It was pure magic! The Royal Hotel is now no more.

Also, going to school as a very young lad and meeting children from the other end of the village and the farms that surrounded my village. Some i still see. Seems light years away. We wrote with a pen nib and an inkwell in the corner of the desk. But a wonderful, and very happy childhood.

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

A. I joined the Merchant Navy. I tried to join the Royal Navy but found out at the medical I was colour blind. Scunnered with school, I had applied without telling my mother and father. When I got home my father was disappointed and my mother relieved! I found out I could join the MN as a Radio Officer. I had to go back to school and work to get entry to Leith Nautical College. After a few years I got married to Susan, my long-suffering wife, came ashore the first time and worked in Radio Stations in Wick and Portishead, Somerset. On return to sea I eventually ended up in the North Sea Oil Industry working for Fred Olsen on experimental craft. It is still a great sadness that we helped to build the "Piper Alpha". Yet another disappointment in my life.

I left the North Sea to become a lecturer at Leith Nautical College and while there I was elected as an Independent Councillor on Scottish Borders Council.

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. I am currently reading "The Luminous Spark" by Donald A Gibson. He was my classics teacher at Galashiels Academy in 1959. I was not a good student. The transition from small primary school to a very large "Academy" was too much for me. However, i really enjoyed classics and enjoyed his company and we shared a love of music. I knew of the book, which Donald never saw in print, and I found it online recently. I am reading it as a tribute to the man I thought was strange and different. It was only later I found out that he was a hero of the Royal Marines during WW2, something I could never imagine. The book is, appropriately for him, a difficult and complex read.

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. I don't have a favourite possession. However, if pressed I will say my 5 wonderful grandchildren, whom i love dearly. Maybe that is cheating!

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

A. I really enjoy classical ballet. I don't know any of the "celebrities" that inhabit our media.

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

A. Spending time on a desert Island would be wonderful. No TV, no radio and no depressing newspapers to read. However, I could easily shatter the peace and quiet with the complete works of Sibelius and a machine to play them on. The music will transport me to a colder, different world which I visited once when my ship travelled through the ice to deliver a cargo of fridges from Italy!

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. I listen to music. I walk a good deal. Walking gives me space to think. Not always a good thing! I am a lifelong Hibs supporter and season ticket holder, though I doubt if that is relaxing.

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

A. A time machine would allow me to go back and talk to my Dad. I would ask him all the questions I didn't ask. He was wounded in 1918 and I don't know anything about that time. When I was born, it was WW2 that my friends' fathers were in. I was not interested in WW1. Now I feel a great shame in not knowing what he did and not showing an interest. He never talked of it himself – he probably needed to be asked, and to my shame I never did ask.

**News from
CrossReach**

CROSSREACH

Care you can put your faith in

Jacqueline's Story

Perinatal counselling is often not spoken of. Jacqueline has been brave enough to share her experience in support of our Bluebell Perinatal service and raising awareness that there is support available.

"My name is Jacqueline, I have two kids: a boy aged 5 and a girl aged 2.

When I had my son almost 6 years ago, I knew after a few months that I wasn't feeling 100%. I didn't feel sad, but I felt very misplaced from my own self, and I couldn't put my finger on what or why.

I think at that point I felt like I had to speak to someone like a GP, so I was assessed at Leverndale Hospital and the doctor there pointed me in the direction of CrossReach Bluebell Perinatal Counselling Service. The donation service waiting list was quite long so I opted to pay for their fixed fee service. I had around 6 sessions, which were so useful and got me back on track.

When my son was 2 and a half years old, I was giving him a bath after a long day having been to see Toy Story the movie. He wasn't sleeping well then, neither was I, and he was playing up which got worse and worse. I remember thinking I wanted to hit him.

I knew then I needed to speak to Bluebell again so reached out and as I was 5 months pregnant with my daughter, I was a priority. I had 8 sessions with an amazing counsellor, which made me feel in a much better place and I was happy in life again. She said to me, "I see you", which really helped.

Now, I am doing good, I think! I feel lighter, I feel like I have shed something heavier than another skin but lighter than a demon. I can't quite find the words to describe it, but I no longer carry it and that's thanks to my counselling sessions. Sometimes, when I am really sleep-deprived I do struggle. But that is normal, and I am at peace with myself.

There was a long time when I didn't want to be here, but I also didn't want to die. That limbo is a scary place. No one deserves that. I am grateful to CrossReach for helping me when I needed that most. I'm not sure where I'd be without it.

Please consider making a donation today and help us support even more mums and dads in desperate need of our expert support.

**Every single penny can enhance, change and even save a life; can you help us?
Please text WESEEYOU to 70085 to donate £2**

LIFE AND WORK NOVEMBER 2022

A Final Farewell Lynne McNeil reports on the days following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, and the unexpectedly significant role of the Church of Scotland.

Tributes and memories from former Moderators, chaplains and the Queen's parish ministers.



Dianne Sanderson tells of her experience queuing to pay her respects at St Giles' Cathedral.

'Look at People' Jackie Macadam learns about the life and calling of the Rev Professor John Swinton, whose journey has taken him from mental health nursing to the ministry, academia and King's Chaplain.

Support Armed Forces In the month of Remembrance, churches are invited to consider how they are responding to the Armed Forces Covenant, five years since the Church of Scotland signed up.

A New Chapter The Church of Scotland's ministers in the Holy Land reflect on the importance of the Church's presence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Faith in Action Official monthly update from the Faith Action team

Plus News, letters, readers' pictures, crosswords and registers

Online

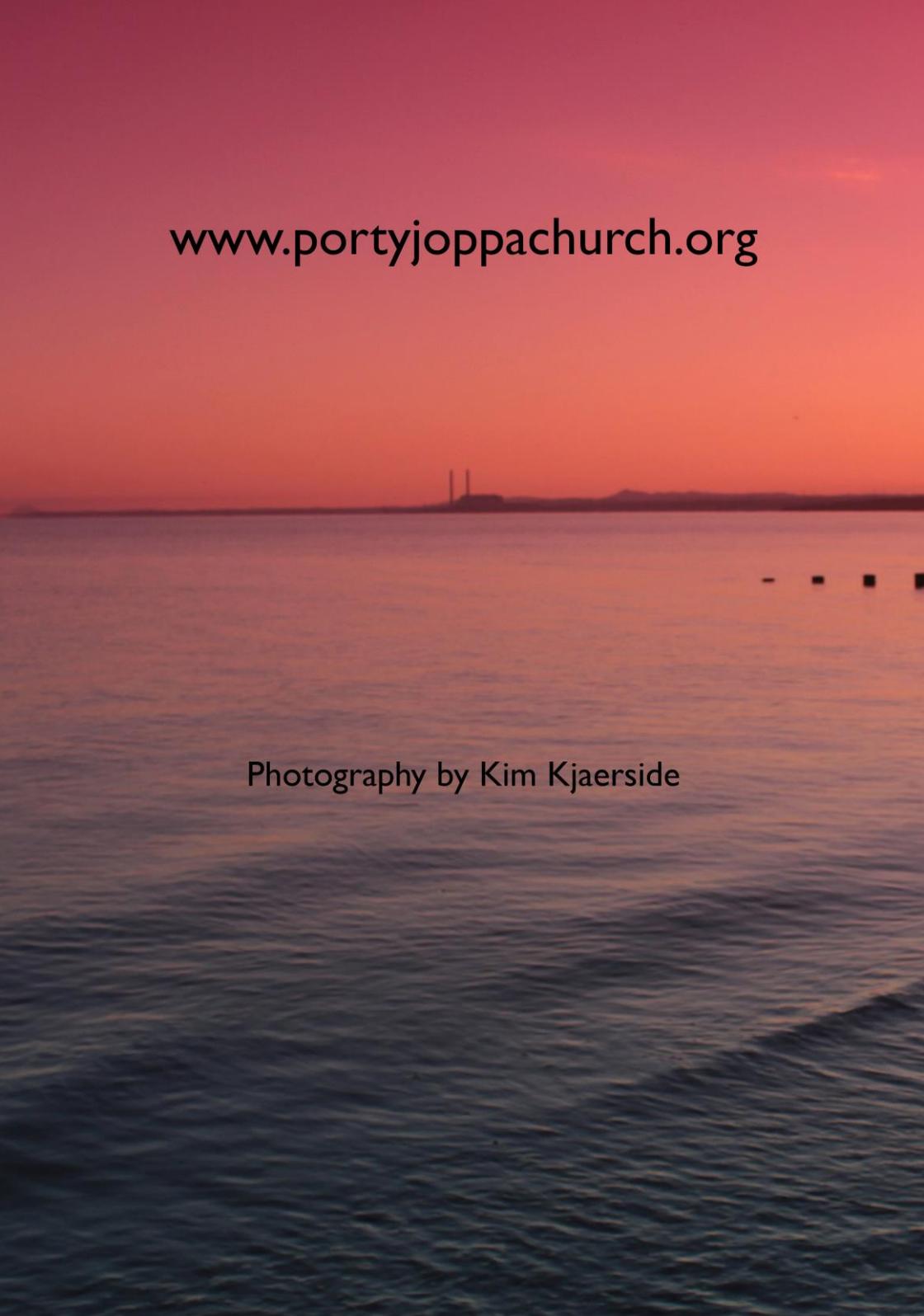
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MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES

December 2022/January 2023	Sunday 20 th November 2022
February 2023	Sunday 22 nd January 2023
March 2023	Sunday 19 th February 2023

Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728

A photograph of a sunset over a large body of water. The sky is a gradient of orange and pink, with a few wispy clouds. In the distance, a low-lying landmass is visible, featuring two tall, thin industrial chimneys. The water in the foreground is dark blue with gentle ripples. On the right side, a few dark, rectangular markers are visible in the water.

www.portyjoppachurch.org

Photography by Kim Kjaerside