

Soundings



Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine
March 2017



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

The other day I read an article by Jilly Cooper – who recently turned 80 – in which she bemoaned the fact that she now has to sit down to put on her socks. I was astonished that anyone *doesn't* sit down for this procedure – and I've got a bit to go before I'm 80. And then I heard June Brown (Dot Cotton from *EastEnders*) saying on *Desert Island Discs* that she never holds on to the arms of chairs when getting up. "You need to keep your thighs strong," she said severely. She's 90. Since then, I've been flailing my arms in the air when rising, groaning, from the sofa. My thighs are strengthening daily – I hope.

They may well have something in common with this month's *Getting To Know You* interviewee, Ian. I believe that he's nearer June's age than Jilly's, and I was very interested to read about what he does to relax: nothing to do with sofas!

In this edition, Stewart asks us to reflect; and also invites us to study part of Luke as if it were a book club choice – an intriguing idea. There's encouraging news about the stewardship campaign and there are details of our finances. Harry gives us thoughts on behalf of the Prayer Group – I appreciate his regular and timely contributions to the magazine – and you'll see reminders about the holiday club and the backpack project, and a thank-you from Mary – who's feeling much better. And there are the usual other features.

If you have an announcement (such as "Tinsel!" – coming soon) or another contribution that you think might be of interest to others, do let me know. Do, however, bear in mind the laws of copyright.

Pam

From the minister



Dear Friends and Neighbours,

‘What just happened?’

This question acted as a springboard to a recent series of lectures offered by Rev. Dr. Doug Gay, a lecturer in Practical Theology and the Principal of Trinity College at Glasgow University.

It was meant to convey the sense of shock, surprise and disbelief when one looks at the present state of the Church of Scotland. Certainly other denominations have experienced decline and must contend with secularisation, but the CofS has declined more markedly than other mainline groups.

The lectures explore possible responses. He calls for spiritual and liturgical renewal, mission refocussing and institutional reform. He discusses the 5 marks of mission used by the Anglican Communion, which begins with the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom and then ripples out to others and to our creation. He calls for attentiveness to faith and, in a sense, a decentralisation so that all of us, followers of Christ and congregations and Presbyteries, can respond to an environment not readily conducive to faith.

What is going to happen?

Doug Gay’s lectures will certainly provide the basis for future discussions at PJPC. Do watch this space. Session are also considering Future Focus, an initiative overseen by the National Church that helps us to assess our situation and plan realistically for the future.

But perhaps that’s the wrong question. Is there too much doing implied and not enough reflection, listening and prayer?

In November I took part in the Retreat in Daily Life, organised by Fr. Jock Dalrymple at St. John's and Rev. Dr. Sophia Marriage at St. Mark's. It was run by the Epiphany Group and it encouraged participants to pray and reflect consciously and consistently. Twice weekly meetings with prayer guides were invaluable.

My success was, er, intermittent. Quiet time in the morning, reading or thinking or scratching ideas (I did have one once!) down, has always been important. The discipline of the retreat helped me to focus.

Has it made any difference? Perhaps the congregation can see best. But I have certainly felt less compulsion to move from one task to another quickly and, more importantly, to move from one person to another because, you see, I'm soooo important and soooo busy. Perhaps this has something to do with Lourens and Tara helping out too!

What is going to happen?

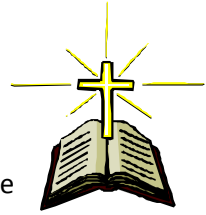
It might be best to turn that question over to you, dear reader. Are you willing to set aside time for quiet, for reflection, for peace, for God as revealed in Christ's love? Are you willing to take a gamble that nothing will happen....which may precisely be the point?

Maybe nothing will happen. And we can say thanks be to God. For when nothing happens, perhaps we will hear God in the sound of absolute stillness.

PS: Videos of Doug Gay's lectures can be found at <http://stream1.churchofscotland.org.uk/chalmers-lecture> and transcripts at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/recent/lecture_series_ends_with_prophecy_for_the_kirk

Stewart

Luke in Lent



Come along on Sunday nights during Lent to discuss the Gospel of Luke.

Quite a number of people from the local churches are taking part in the Community Bible Experience (see Scottish Bible Society website), which has been initiated by Jenny at St. Mark's. In essence, it is an opportunity to read through large portions of the New Testament over 8 weeks in a format more akin to a book club than a Bible study. Even the layout of the text is different.

Because not all of us could do this, Lourens and I thought we could offer something analogous.

SO, on each Sunday evening at 7.30pm in the sanctuary during Lent we will gather to discuss approximately 4 chapters of the Gospel of Luke. We will read it in the same format as the Community Bible Experience. Copies are £1 and available from Lourens.

I have already read through this version and, with the recent Doug Gay lectures ringing in my mind, many thoughts are already percolating. Is Jesus' quote of Isaiah 61 ('the Spirit of the Lord is upon me...') his statement of intent....and should be ours? Outsiders are crucial to Luke: are they important to us?

Do join us: 7.30pm on Suns. 5, 12, 19, 26 March and 2 and 9 April in the Sanctuary.

Stewart

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



“The generous will themselves be blessed....” Proverbs 22:9

A sincere thank you to everyone who has responded to our stewardship campaign! We’ve had a number of people pledging to share their gifts of hospitality, prayer and pastoral care. We’ve also had pledges of additional financial support which so far has resulted in a collective rise in financial giving of over £1,000 per month! We are indeed truly blessed by the generosity of so many in our congregation, whether through the gifts of their time, talents or money!

If you are still unsure about how you can share your gifts then please do contact a member of the Stewardship team to find out where your service would be of most value.

On a practical level, if you’ve yet to complete a standing order mandate or are a UK taxpayer and haven’t completed a gift aid form then please consider doing so. If you need help or more information then please ask David Stocks or Michael Craig who’d be delighted to hear from you!

Thank you once again for all your support.

The Stewardship Team – Sheena, Louise, Michael, Tara, Lourens & Stewart

From (other) churches’ announcements

Barbara remains in hospital. She is having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Nelson’s sermons.

During the absence of our minister, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J F Stubbs supplied our pulpit.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

TINSEL!

Portobello and
Joppa Parish Church
DRAMA GROUP
presents

TINSEL!

a 1930s
Hollywood
musical

Book and lyrics
by Gavin Booth,
Music by
Nancy Kent

Wednesday 22nd March
to Saturday 25th March
at 7.30 in the Church Hall,
Abercorn Terrace

ramped entry by
Brunstane Road North

tickets £10 for adults,
£5 for children and students
available from group members or
anne.mckerchar@gmail.com
or 669 3123



Community Bible Experience

Join people from the local churches for this initiative. In essence, groups will meet once a week between the beginning of February and the beginning of Holy Week (10 April) to discuss their reading of the New Testament. It will be treated like a book group and the text is not in traditional format. It is instead laid out more like a flowing narrative. If you are interested, please speak to Stewart.

More information can be found at <https://scottishbiblesociety.org/our-work/community-bible-experience/>

From Mary



Dear Folks of PJPC,

I must thank all my friends who have been so kind to me during my stay in hospital and also now that I am at home. Lovely flowers from the flower group and a very kind letter from the prayer group, visits from the coffee group plus lots of other people, and kind words from Stewart. And of course there were also good wishes from the Guild.

Love from **Mary**

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church
Summary of the General Fund for 2016

Congregational Fund

Expenditure on the normal day to day running of the Church

Funded by the normal giving of the Congregation plus Income for Legacies

Actual To 31 Dec 2015		Actual To 31 Dec 2016	Budget To 31 Dec 2016
£	Congregational Income	£	£
141,033	General Offerings	146,547	139,500
22,296	Income Tax Recovered	25,319	23,000
4,316	Contributions from Congregational Organisations	5,119	3,000
42,224	Contributions for Use of Church Premises	37,954	42,500
11,420	Income from Investments	11,287	11,000
47,625	Drawdown from General Trustees	34,521	7,500
14,375	Other Ordinary Income	9,903	10,000
283,289	Total Congregational Income	270,650	236,500
	Congregational Expenditure		
49,648	Local Staffing Costs	50,282	55,232
1,585	Christian Education and Outreach	3,465	5,500
2,652	Communication	2,990	5,000
52,253	Buildings - Heating, Lighting, Insurance and Council Tax	51,189	68,000
16,268	Administration	13,988	14,804
122,406	Total Congregational Expenditure	121,914	148,536
160,883	Net Congregational Income	148,736	87,964
162,255	Ministry and Mission Plus Presbytery Dues	138,781	146,962
(1,372)	Net surplus (deficit) for the Year	9,955	(58,998)
(3,059)	Accrual Adjustment	(11,500)	0
8,404	AV Depreciation Adjustment	8,404	0
0	War Stock Adjustment	0	0
57,303	Congregation Fund Reserves at 1 January	61,276	61,276
61,276	Congregational Fund Reserve Carried Forward	68,135	2,278

Fabric Fund

Expenditure on keeping the buildings in a suitable state of repair

Funded by specific contributions from the Congregation and income from Fundraising.

Fundraising is, in general, to meet the cost of specific items.

The Fabric Fund is also funded by contributions from the Special Projects Fund,

which receives income from the legacies received invested with The Church of Scotland Investors Trust

Actual to 31 Dec 2015		Actual to 31 Dec 2016	Budget to 31 Dec 2016
£		£	£
	Fabric Fund Income		
26,665	Contributions Towards The Fabric Fund	56,272	21,000
53,853	Drawdown From General Trustees	164,188	17,500
2,901	Fundraising	3,007	0
83,419	Total Fabric Fund Income	223,467	38,500
	Fabric Fund Expenditure		
24,920	Building Repair Costs	227,702	78,500
58,499	Net Income (Expenditure) to be Funded	(4,235)	(40,000)
75,866	Fabric Fund Balance at 1 January	135,565	135,565
0	Transferred to Investors Trust	(25,000)	0
0	Accrual Adjustment	38,507	
1,200	War Stock Adjustment	0	0
135,565	Fabric Fund Balance Carried Forward	144,837	95,565
	Turnover for Charities Act		
	Congregational Fund	270,650	236,500
	Fabric Fund	223,467	38,500
		494,117	275,000
	Total Drawdown from General Trustees	198,709	25,000

2016 Financial Results

Above is a summary of the income and expenditure for 2016 for the Congregational and Fabric Funds for Portobello and Joppa Parish Church (PJPC). The 2016 annual report and accounts have been reviewed by the Independent Examiner and will be presented to the Kirk Session for approval before submission to OSCR (done on our behalf by Edinburgh Presbytery).

In summary, we managed to balance our books very successfully in 2016 thanks largely to your generosity and the contributions of our wider network of supporters. We also benefited from several

drawdowns against the funds held on behalf of PJPC by the Church of Scotland General Trustees. I'd like to again acknowledge the excellent stewardship of our resources during 2016 by David Stocks and Brian Moar.

A presentation of the 2016 financial results will be made to the congregation at the Annual Stated Meeting later this month. Alternatively, please contact David Stocks or myself should you wish more information.

Thank you again for your support.

M Craig

Finance Convenor

Brain-teaser



Mother's Day is on March 26th this year. Here are some anagrams of treats that you might like to give (or receive) on this special day. They're all one word unless indicated.

Sellii

Foldsfadi

Satchelcoo

Snakebird fat be (three words, 9, 2, 3)

Sikess

Dracs

Kecas

Faucet sop (three words, 4, 2, 3)

Chuln

Promisers

Alison



A call to prayer

HAS GOD GIVEN US A VISION?

“Write the vision and make it plain ... that he may run who reads it.”
(Habakkuk 2:2)

When God gives us a vision for our life, write it down, keep it before us at all times and run with it. We say, ‘But I see no way for it to come to pass.’ The Bible says, ‘The vision is yet for an appointed time ... wait for it; because it will surely come’ (v. 3 NKJV). We may not know how to get from where we are right now to where the vision will ultimately



take us - but God does. So ask Him to reveal the next step to us. Whether we’re in prison like Joseph, in a soup kitchen in the inner city, or at home taking care of small children, God will fulfil the vision He placed in our heart. The more we see ourselves leading in the boardroom, launching our own business, serving in ministry, writing our first book, or helping others through our gifts, the sooner it’ll become a reality. Before a vision becomes clear, God gives us glimpses of it - like a picture developing from a soft hue into sharp resolution. So take our vision and run with it. Let it motivate us to perform to the best of our ability in our present position, while staying in communication with the One who knows and loves us best. Today pray: ‘Lord, I know that where I am right now isn’t where You’re taking me. Give me glimpses of Your vision for my future, so that my understanding may grow in accordance with Your timing. Give me patience along the way and faith to trust that You’re always working for my good. Amen.’

H McNulty,
Prayer Promoter

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***Portobello Holiday Club
2017 – Guardians of
Ancora, Treasure Seekers***



This summer, our Portobello Holiday Club is running for the third year, with six area churches working again in partnership with Scripture Union Scotland.

From the 24th to the 28th of July from 9am to 12:45pm, our halls at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and at St Mark's Scottish Episcopal Church will be full of children and volunteers exploring the *Guardians of Ancora – Treasure Seekers*, summer holiday club material from Scripture Union. We will be welcoming in school-aged children each morning of that week to take part in arts and crafts, games, music, drama, gardening, baking, Bible study, worship, snack and many surprises throughout the week. There will also be a crèche and nursery group available for volunteers' children. We hope your family will join us!

Registration information and flyers will be sent out to the local schools and churches in May, but for now – save the dates! You can also send Michelle Brown a provisional booking reservation at portobelloholidayclub@gmail.com

Remember that we are now recruiting volunteers. If you can give a full week, or even a day or two, in July to this ministry, we'd love your help with: games, arts and crafts, baking, music, drama, AV technology, snacks, crèche care, administration, small group leaders, and much more.

There will be a training evening for the full team in May and a further training in July. All volunteers will need to complete an online volunteer's application for Scripture Union Scotland alongside the Disclosure Scotland PVG process.

If you are interested in helping with our ecumenical holiday club or if you know any secondary students who might be interested in volunteering as Junior Helpers, then please speak with Michelle on any Sunday after church - the more volunteers we have, the more families we can welcome to take part.

Michelle



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 to all 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 that 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 April 23rd or you could also turn your bag in at a special film screening on Saturday, 22 April from 6:30pm-7:30pm at the church. We will be showing the short film, "Generation Hope" which shares stories of some of the first children to have grown up receiving Mary's Meals. For more information, please contact Michelle.



Getting to know you...

Ian, formerly of Portobello Old, has kindly agreed to be this month's interviewee. He lives with his wife Shirley in Bellfield Street and is very happy to be in Porty. They have two daughters in Edinburgh and two sons down south, in Salisbury and London. Ian was a minister in Pencaitland and Glasgow in the sixties, and in the eighties and nineties he was Advisor in Religious Education in the Highland Region. In between, he taught RE in Blairgowrie and Glasgow.

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. "All people that on earth do dwell" – an old metrical psalm with a wonderful tune.

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. Sunday school in Stromness, Orkney, where my father was minister. Sitting on a prickly horsehair sofa being taught by an old lady who had been a missionary in China. Each week we got a wee picture card with a Bible text.

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

A. Swallowing a marble, which luckily fell out when my mother held me upside down.

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

A. An engineer – mechanical or civil.

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. "Audacity of Hope" by Barack Obama. I'm in a wee book group of old guys. We read fiction, biography, history, economics and poetry.

Q. What would be your ideal holiday?

A. In a big caravan on a campsite anywhere in France or Italy.

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. My family.

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

A. A super duper radio, short wave if necessary.

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. Cut the grass.

Q. What is a favourite quotation?

A. Live simply so that others may simply live.

Q. What kind of music do you listen to?

A. All kinds, especially classical and the great American musicals.

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

A. Friendly.

Q. What gets you up in the morning (apart from your alarm clock)?

A. A leisurely breakfast and the simple chores of the day – fun or otherwise.



Count group

It would be helpful to have at least one other team of five people to count the collection. Each team is on duty for a month at a time, for about half an hour after the 11am service. Currently this duty happens three times per year but the more volunteers we get, the less often the duty will recur. So far there have been only two volunteers – thank you to them!

This is a good way to get to know people and could be your gift of talents for our stewardship campaign.

If you think you could help, please contact P Donaldson



LIFE AND WORK MARCH 2017

Church and Play Jackie Macadam learns about Godly Play, a different approach to working with children in the Church

A Life of Service Jackie Macadam meets writer and storyteller Irene Howat

'You Feel More Dead than Alive' Thomas Baldwin meets a young minister aiming to end the stigma around mental illness

'I Know How You Feel' Three contributors explain why offering sympathy to those suffering chronic or long-term illness is better than trying to empathise with their condition

A Time for Reflection Ron Ferguson considers the place of Lent in today's turbulent world.

A Changed and Changing Environment The Rt Rev Dr Russell Barr highlights the lessons to be learned from the innovative farming communities of Perthshire.

Sacred Space on Your Desktop The Very Rev Albert Bogle explains why the internet can be a touching place for the presence of God

Opening Doors In the final part of his series, the Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan considers an unlikely escape from prison

Plus news, reviews, letters, registers and crosswords – all for just £2.50

Online visit us at www.lifeandwork.org for regular news and exclusive features, find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @cofslifeandwork

Gaelic The Gaelic Supplement for March will be available as a free download from www.lifeandwork.org/about-us/gaelic-supplement from February 27. If you would like an email notification when it becomes available, please contact us on magazine@lifeandwork.org

MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES

April	Sunday 19 th March 2017
May	Sunday 23 rd April 2017
June/July/August	Sunday 21 st May 2017

Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728

A wide-angle photograph of a coastal town at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, pink and orange clouds, with a pale blue hue near the horizon. The town, featuring numerous buildings with dark roofs and light-colored walls, is situated on a slight rise above the water. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky and the buildings. A small white bird is visible on the water's surface near the shore. The overall mood is serene and peaceful.

www.portyjoppachurch.org

Photography by Kim Kjaerside