

WALK TOGETHER

Spring 2022

Magazine of
St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bathgate
&
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Linlithgow



Happy Retirement Christine

*Vacancy
at
St Columba's
&
St Peter's*

www.stpeterslinlithgow.co.uk

www.stcolumbasbathgate.org.uk



Life Together – Spring 2022

Letter

Dear friends,

What can I say, thank you seems so inadequate, even a huge thank you doesn't adequately express what I want to say!

Two weeks into my retirement, I have now vacated the Rectory, said my farewells, and begun integrating Millie's and my belongings into our home in Cupar. So much 'stuff' but slowly it will get sorted!

I don't know where those almost 10 years went but, for me, they were so very special and I have returned to Fife with so many precious memories. Our wise sovereign Queen Elizabeth is quoted as saying '*good memories are our second chance at happiness*', I will bring mine out from time to time and dust them down, reliving those special times.

Thank you for your wonderful gifts, cards, messages and words, they too hold a very special place in my heart and my home. I have purchased some lovely garden furniture with the hugely generous cheque from St Columba's and look forward to spending many happy hours enjoying sitting in my garden this summer. I will be investing in a new 'smart' TV for the winter evenings with the very handsome cheque from St Peter's and look forward to sitting in the Arbor that is about to be delivered here.

And what can I say about the 'send offs'? Each one is so amazing and fitting. High Tea at the Hillcroft Hotel with the interview from Duncan I will never forget; he had me down to a tee and the farewell lunch after St Columba's worship on Easter Day was a wonderful way to send me on my way smiling. And the weather couldn't have been more perfect, nor the setting, for the Garden Party at Ravelsgreen. All rounded off with some very competitive 10 pin bowling at Deer Park yesterday afternoon with St Peter's children and parents!

As I look through the Memories Book of photographs and messages from St Columba's and the photograph album from St Peter's they are a record of some amazing events that we all shared. They are now on my coffee table for me to dip into along with the beautiful painting of St Peter's stained-glass windows that awaits hanging in my home. All wonderful reminders of our two special churches and you all.

My email address and mobile phone number remain the same so please do not hesitate to get in contact if you are coming up our way, the kettle is always ready to be put on and the gingerbread will be in the tin.

You are embarking on a new chapter of your church lives; I will keep you in my prayers and when I light my candles for surely there is a Rector out there destined to come your way and invite you onto a new adventure.

Thank you once again for the adventure that we shared.

With love, Christine. xxx

For those of you who couldn't hear my short speech to Christine on Easter morning – here you are. Just a few words which leave much unsaid but which also say so much. During these coming months I know that she wants us to be strong, to support each other, to be kind to each other and “to love one another as I have loved you”.

Life as we know is made up of meetings and partings and this morning we have to part with you Christine – God's loving, faithful and dedicated servant who stepped through our red doors one misty May Day, a little presence who was to grow with us and walk along with us through so many adventures, sharing our laughter and tears along the way. We let you go now, into a future which is waiting with open eager arms to greet you and we sadly say farewell. You leave warm memories in our hearts, tears in our eyes but with gladness for the times you have shared with us, your St Peter's church family, as our beloved Rector, Rev Christine Anne Barclay.

Jane Ramsay

Easter Day 2022
Sermon for St Peter's and St Columba's
Rev Christine Barclay

In verses immediately preceding our epistle this week, St. Paul makes a claim about Jesus's resurrection that feels truer and truer to me, the older I get: *"If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Amen"*

I can't speak for Paul, but I *can* say that Christ's resurrection is the heart of my faith and the foundation of my hope. It is the reason why I'm a Christian and why I responded to God's call to ordained life and to the call 10 years ago to come here to share your lives and journeys. Without the empty tomb, without Jesus's historic, bodily return to life two thousand years ago, I simply can't reconcile God's love and justice with the horrors I see in the world, in Ukraine. Death is too appalling a violation. Evil is too ferocious an enemy. Injustice is too cruel and endemic a reality. Humanity, though beautiful, is broken beyond description. I need the empty tomb. I need the promise of resurrection.

That said, I struggle with doubt every single day. It's not easy to affirm resurrection in a disenchanted world, a world that considers miracles embarrassing; disdains belief in an afterlife; mocks "crazy" things like angels, demons, prophets, and saviours; and shies away from mysteries that lie outside the purview of science. We live in such a world, and so we struggle to believe. Of course, we do.

What comforts me is that the first witnesses to the empty tomb struggled, too. As our Gospel reading from St. John describes it, Jesus's friends stumble around in the half-light on that third day after his crucifixion, running here and there in their confusion. Is it an angel, sitting in that unlit tomb? Are those shadows mere tricks-of-the-eyes, or are they grave clothes? That man lingering outside — is he really just the gardener?

"Early in the morning, while it was still dark..." That's where Easter began two millennia ago. It's where Easter still begins. In the dark.

Perhaps the Gospel accounts of the resurrection keep surviving our doubts because they ring so true to human nature.

In John's version, we see individual people having profoundly individual encounters with Christ. The encounters don't look identical. When Peter sees the empty tomb, he runs away. When "the beloved disciple" sees it, he believes without comprehension. When Mary sees it, she weeps and waits for more. But all of them, without exception, experience Easter. The resurrection meets them where they are.

And we come to the empty tomb as ourselves, for good or for ill. We don't shed our baggage ahead of time; it barges in with us and shapes our perceptions and conclusions. What matters, I think, is encountering the risen Jesus in the particulars of our own lives. What matters is finding in the empty tomb the hope we need for our own struggles, losses, traumas, and disappointments. Whatever universal claims we make as Christians must begin in the rich, fertile ground of our own hearts, our own stories. Whatever acclamations we cry out this Easter Day must begin with a willingness to linger in the garden, desolate and alone, listening for the sounds of our own names, spoken back to us in love.

In John's account, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus first because she chooses to remain in the holy darkness, bereft and bewildered. She doesn't flee. She doesn't sugar-coat her despair. She doesn't freeze. She stays put in the place where her pain resides. She gives the grief, desolation, hopelessness, and agony of her circumstances their due. Unlike her male counterparts, Mary refuses to abandon what is real, even when what is real is unbearable. I love the way her story honours sorrow as a legitimate and faithful pathway to revelation.

Jesus reveals himself in the shadows, and sometimes it takes a long time to recognise him. He doesn't look the way I expect him to look. He doesn't let us cling to our old ideas of him. He disappears again just as we grab hold of him. But he comes, he calls us by our name, your name, my name, and in that instant, there is recognition.

I love the way the beloved disciple's story honours the gap between faith and understanding, because it's a gap I know so well. I believe but I don't (yet) understand. I believe in the resurrection, but I don't understand death's ongoing cruelty. I believe that Jesus reigns, but I don't understand the elusive nature of his kingdom. I believe that all things will be well, but I don't understand why they're not all well now.

Saint Anselm of Canterbury's motto for the Christian life was "faith seeking understanding." I like that. It invites me to begin right where I am. What have I experienced of Jesus so far? Can I hang onto the faith that is possible in light of my experience, incomplete though it is?

The remarkable thing about the resurrection is that it grows in us. It roots us, and it roots itself *into* us. Often, it's only in retrospect, only as we look back at the "gravesides" of our lives, that we notice this rootedness, and find the miracle the first disciples found. St. Paul sums up his teaching in this week's epistle with a promise rooted in pure joy: "*In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.*" He is risen. He is risen indeed.

This sermon is the last one I will preach as your Rector and I am grateful to be doing so on Easter Day for the resurrection reminds me that our endings — however bittersweet — are not final. New life comes; it cannot be stopped. Every change, every sorrow, every hope, and every farewell we experience is held in the arms of the risen Christ. Like the first disciples, we might doubt, stumble, flee, and fall. But like the Christ of the empty tomb, we will also rise. This is the promise of resurrection.

Rev Christine Barclay



Tree dedication in
the church garden
at St Peter's

Blessing the rowan trees





Easter vigil and
Christine lighting
the pascal candle



Palm Sunday



Easter Sunday



Memory book created by June Bremner. The plate was made by the children of St Columba's





Christmas afternoon tea

St Columba's Sunday Club

When wracking our brains to think of a suitable gift for Christine from St Columba Sunday club we had lots of thoughts running through our minds. What would capture how we felt about all that Christine has given us during her time with our little church; what would allow her to remember us all; what would be something we could all do together, from our youngest member to our eldest? The words 'cake' and 'craft' sprang to mind and we decided that designing our own cake plate was the way forward!

The next challenge we faced was how to complete this task covertly, whilst also taking part in a Mother's Day family service. This was the Sunday where all our members were to be in church so a lot of planning got underway. The very creative Hannah took ownership of the plate ahead of the service to paint the design in the centre. On the Sunday morning our young people played their part in the first part of the service and when the final reading was done we headed out to complete our



mission - painting thumb prints and names on the edge of the plate. In addition to this we made some Mother's Day cards as a diversion should Christine ask what we had been up to in Sunday club! Mission complete, we came back into church to take part in the last part of the service and hand flowers out to the congregation.

We are so grateful to all the fun times we had with Christine, and hope that she remembers us every time she sits down to a cup of tea and a slice of cake!

Rachael Bell



Christine is interviewed by Duncan at the Hillfoot





Here is Christine re dedicating the Baptismal Font that had been in storage for 20 years



The lovely cake Liz Frew made for Rev Christine's retirement



Before the Easter Sunday service started we had a full Church and after we had a lovely buffet made by Liz and Maureen



Also Christine's last Choral Evensong - sung by a choir of 12 (augmented by some ladies from Bathgate High church)



CHURCHES WITH CHILDREN

Over my years of teaching, I led many overseas school trips and on every one, I tried to introduce my students to aspects of the Christian religion, visiting churches of every denomination. My first trip was in 1976 when Dot and I piled 13 pupils into the school minibus and we headed off for Paris - camping overnight in my aunt's back garden in Rutland – roasting in that summer's heat.



We spent 10 days camping in the Bois de Boulogne – in three tents, cooking for ourselves! We walked everywhere – a visit which gave me a wonderful mental map of the city – and instilled in me a love for the French capital. The youngsters had a ball and we visited a colossal number of sites. They were not that impressed with Notre Dame – finding it gloomy and overly sombre, what another teacher on a later trip called “an unwelcome odour of sanctity. The children preferred Sacre Coeur, a building completed in 1914 (not like Notre Dame which was completed in 1260 – after 100 years of construction!)

Their favourite French House of God was Chartres where we had the most wonderful guide in Malcolm Miller. He talked us through many of the magnificent stained glass windows - each one a story book for the Medieval congregation.



Malcolm Miller in Chartres Cathedral

But the country which really grabbed the pupils' imaginations was Italy, especially Rome and the Vatican with their wealth of ecclesiastical buildings, from the massive St Peter's to smaller ones such as Santa Maria in Trastevere where we all gaped in wonder at the fresco behind the altar.

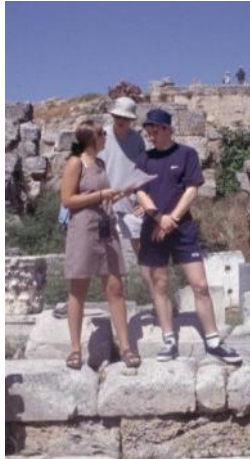


We had all learned some Italian during school lunch breaks and I was anxious to show off. When our bus driver got lost, I announced that I would leap off and ask a passing Italian the way. Spotting a lady dressed in black, I walked up to her and ask "Scusi, Dove i chiesa de Santa Maria Maggiore?" She turned round with an apologetic look and put a finger to her lips. She was a nun who had taken a vow of silence - cue for much laughter on the bus!

The pupils were equally impressed by the Mithraic Temple below the 4th century church of San Clemente and by the chains which purportedly bound St Peter when he was imprisoned in Jerusalem – on display in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli.

In Amalfi, they paid their respects to their patron saint as they paraded past a reliquary containing some of St Andrew's bones. In Assisi, it was the incorruptible body of Saint Claire that caught the imagination.

I often tried to imbue my pupils with a sense of historic location - as when I got them to read from Paul's letter to the Corinthians while actually in Ancient Corinth – or his letter to the Ephesians on a visit to Ephesus in Turkey..



In Corinth



In Ephesus

Yet more individuals read from St Paul's sermon delivered on the Areopagus hillside, just below the Parthenon in Athens:

"As I walked around and saw your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship."

On a trip to Turkey, our bus broke down and we all had to decant at a spot looking down on the village of Nicea (now part of the city of Iznik) We couldn't let that opportunity go by, so our students duly got an impromptu talk on the Ecumenical Council that created the Nicene Creed!



Stranded near Nicea

When we got the bus going again, our next stop was Istanbul where the incredible Hagia Sofia was explained to us by another excellent guide – Sherif, a gentleman who took a shine to me and insisted on holding my hand throughout our tour of Constantinople – much to the student's amusement!



A combination of Christian and Islamic elements in the Hagia Sofia.

American churches were something else again – particularly Old North Church in Boston where Paul Revere had worshipped and where the congregation sat in little family boxes.

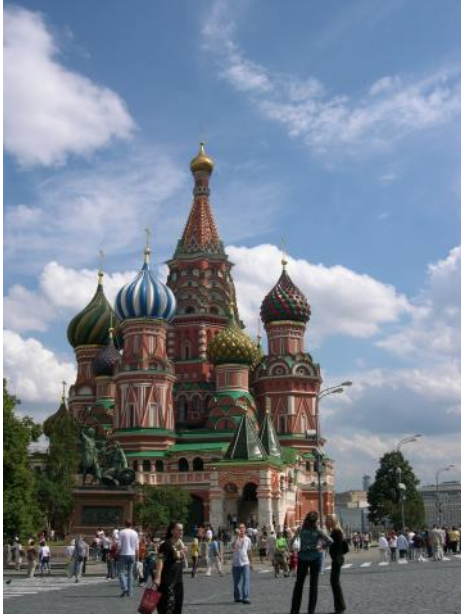


Old North Church, Boston

In New York, one Easter, we asked our hotelier if we could have 50 hard-boiled eggs next day to roll . When we arrived at breakfast – there they were - all peeled! It was clear that rolling eggs is not an American custom. In fact, when we received replacement eggs - in their shells – we attracted quite a crowd rolling them downhill in Central Park!

My last school trip was in 2007 when 45 pupils travelled to St Petersburg – where Dot climbed to the top of the dome of St Isaac’s using crutches, after she had broken her leg skiing. A month later, the “unbreakable” titanium rod, holding together her shattered femur, snapped!

In Moscow, we had to seek shelter within the fabulous St Basil’s Cathedral during a torrential thunderstorm. I told my captive audience that Tsar Ivan the Terrible, upon seeing St Basil’s for the first time, demanded that the architect’s eyes be cut out so he could never create anything so beautiful again.



St Basil's after the rain.

I have so many more school trip memories: visiting the pilgrims church in Burgos on the Camino de Santiago; viewing the reliquary containing the heart of Anselm Adornes in the Jeruzalemkapel in Bruges (his body is under St Michael's Church); listening to the choir in the Westerkerk in Amsterdam whose bells were heard from Anne Frank's secret annex.

I often wonder whether such visits had any lasting effects. I would like to think that it opened their eyes to what was on offer – and maybe, even on the principle of osmosis, they acquired the desire to find out more - and perhaps even develop a faith to follow all their lives. I know of several former pupils who are now in the ministry – and many others who are active in their respective churches, so I'd like to think the trips did make a difference.

Bruce Jamieson

The St. Andrew Declaration.

Many of you will have seen the news of the signing of the St. Andrew Declaration by the Primus of the Episcopal Church of Scotland and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. It was given fairly widespread publicity, notably in the *Scotsman* and of course *Inspires* and the *Church Times*. Nevertheless, I have come across a number of people who have not even heard of it and others who have only a vague idea of what it is all about. St. Andrew's Day was an important choice to symbolise the relationship between the two Churches but was, perhaps, a bit near Christmas for the Declaration to receive maximum publicity. It is an important step in the spiritual journey of the two churches so I thought I would say a bit more about it.

What is it?

The fruit of many years' discussion, it declares the Churches as belonging to the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ"; sharing in the "common confession of the Apostolic faith"; "authentically preaching" the Word of God and "faithfully administering" the sacraments; and acknowledging each other's ordained ministries. In his Reflection after the document was signed, the Primus referred to the changes which had taken place in the attitudes and behaviour of the two churches towards each other in his lifetime. The Declaration is the culmination of a long process of improvement in the relations between the two Churches. There is obviously further to go. Nevertheless, it is an important step forward. In his address the Moderator made the point with some force: "Some might try to downplay the significance of today and say, well, is it really a big deal? Well, emphatically: yes, it is. It remains the case that in spite of reservoirs of goodwill, and many good examples of common action and purpose, our churches have never before entered into any formal joint declaration, recognising that we share the same faith, and accordingly are true churches of the gospel. And that we solemnly do today." And that surely, is a momentous step forward.

What are its contents?

The Declaration is in three parts, a preamble, largely historical on the development of the two churches, a section of Acknowledgements and a section on Commitments. The Acknowledgements go quite far, recognizing the degree of cooperation and understanding which can arise between them. The first four are worth quoting. “(i) We acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God. (ii) We acknowledge that our churches share in the common confession of the Apostolic Faith. (iii) We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion are faithfully administered. (iv) We acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit but also Christ's commission through the Church” and that they “are given by God as instruments of grace for the mission and unity of the Church.”. The commitments are also important. They include an intention to encourage partnership in social and pastoral activities and initiatives and theological discussion, the creation of a working group to encourage such partnership, and the promise to allocate resources to joint initiatives.

The texts.

Inspires for December 2021 has the texts of the Reflections by the Primus and the Moderator. The text of the actual Declaration is not given there and was curiously hard to find. It is available, however, on https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/81331/Saint-Andrew-Declaration.pdf. It is not long and I urge you to read it.

Carola Small

Sermon - 13/2/22 Linlithgow and Bathgate

Epiphany 6 Jer 17. 5-10, 1 Cor:15. 12-20: Luke 6. 17-26

I read through today's readings as usual and to be honest I would often have decided you needed to hear my views on the Prime Minister's problems, Covid or Ukraine. None of the readings are easy passages, at least not for me. But I'm going to say a word on each of them – and you may then decide to report me to the Bishop and have me properly retired! Jeremiah: “Cursed are those - - who turn away from the Lord - - they shall live in the parched places of the wilderness. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord they shall be like a tree planted by the water-side.” The immediate problem is that the faith required to get this good life is always a particular faith – the views that agree with the person informing you of these facts.

There is a thriving religious genre today, particularly in America which preaches that enough faith in Jesus will bring you happiness - wealth, health, success. I have actually known a case where someone suffering from a great loss was told it would not have come about if they had had more faith!

Through history the Church institution has often felt, consciously or unconsciously, that it deserved good things – amassing great wealth and prestige while all around was poverty, hunger and devastation. Perhaps using an idea expressed in Mrs Alexanders hymn “All things bright and beautiful” – a verse I happily sang as a child but is fortunately generally missing from modern hymn books and rejected today. “The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high or lowly and ordered their estate.” I guess I've benefitted from that Church history a little myself – a comfortable life, with job security and pension. But many through the ages have suffered for their faith, many taking vows of poverty. Christianity calls us to be generous, caring, to identify with the poor – which may bring internal satisfaction but does not promise you a rich, comfortable life.

Luke: The Beatitudes are surely one of the best known and best loved passages in the Bible. Blessed are you who are poor, hungry, who weep, are hated. (But) Woe to you who are rich - - woe to you who are full, you will be hungry - - woe to you who are laughing, you will mourn and weep. Woe when all speak well of you.” Two thoughts about this: First, fortunately we read Matthew's version more often.

His beatitudes are much easier to take than Luke's. He has 8 or 9 "Blesseds" rather than Luke's 4 and they are slightly different. Blessed are the poor in spirit: Blessed are they who hunger for righteousness. These are more spiritual, more nuanced than Luke's bald 'poor' and 'hungry'. Also there are no "Woes" in Matthew, no threats. I do find Luke's version rather problematic. If I take them seriously do I walk past the beggar in the street saying to myself: "Never mind mate, you are blessed, it's me that's in deep trouble."

It also seems to me these readings from Jeremiah and Luke are somewhat contradictory: Jeremiah saying if we are faithful, good, then God will see that we become rich. Luke's Beatitudes saying that if we are rich we will not be acceptable to God. Of course it is much more complex, and all I've said up to now is just a warning against taking odd bits of the Bible literally.

Actually I think both these passages do raise questions that can be the basis of an interesting and perhaps important debate – and a challenge for our modern society. What is it that brings us fulfilment, contentment, happiness? Certainly not real poverty, desperate hunger, deep weeping, or being rejected by all your neighbours. But neither is it great riches, eating more than is healthy, not weeping over the great suffering we see all around, or making sure we don't upset those who are the cause so much suffering. Evidence shows that the poor *are* more caring of their neighbours than those climbing the slippery ladder to wealth. This bit I'm just putting in! Driving in, on the bridge under the canal is a poster "Thank GOD for the NHS". Yes, I thought: but also thank you for the post war generation, suffering all their losses and still under major rationing, who had the courage and generosity to set up the NHS, and universal education, and bits of the welfare state. They were poor but bravely generous. How does our generation which in spite of a minority in serious need, has been generally very comfortable for decades – how do we respond to need today? Do we have an example here of the poor being more blessed than the rich? More blessed in the sense of being more worthy – better people.

Now, to make your morning worse I also want to look at our 3rd reading – and here I am on very slippery ground. This whole Chapter (1 Cor: 15) is Paul's great assertion of life after death. "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ we are of all people most to be pitied". I've struggled with this all my life. For a Priest especially it is clearly important.

Over the past 59 years I've probably conducted well over 600 funerals. In the early years it was a straight reading of the prayer-book service; more recently I find myself talking of the mystery beyond the curtain and the eternal arms of love that unite all that was and is and is to come. I even ask people how religious they want the service to be

I've no desire at all to question other people's faith – in fact I rather envy them – but the truth is that I can't imagine what any life after death might be. I never believed one biblical picture – that of the dead rising back on this earth to live here for ever – though those who prohibited cremation because it destroyed the body, or who hung, drew and quartered criminals so they could not rise again in one piece seem to have thought this. Also I have long rejected hell – the burning pit of eternal suffering – I seriously hope I will not be proved wrong! Still, a God who punishes like that bears no relation to the Jesus who claimed to reveal his love. Some other religions believe in reincarnation. This, like heaven and hell, attempts to promote justice in that who I will be in the next life depends on how I behave now – but as I won't know then where I was before I'm not sure that works.

The truth is I don't know. Eternity is so fundamentally different to living in time I can't comprehend it. I don't know if my death, which can't be all that far away, is the end, or whether there is something totally unknown lying ahead. I think I've decided that is alright. It's OK not to know. I remember worrying some years ago whether we could expect people to behave unselfishly if there was no threat of judgment when we die. I now think that misses the point. There is little virtue in doing something because if you don't you will be punished while if you do you will reap a great reward. I believe the reward is in the act itself. I know I feel better if I've been able to help someone than I do if I've failed to live up to the standards I think are right. I'm not sure whether even children respond well to reward or punishment for their behaviour. I think they behave better when they know they are loved – perhaps when they know actions may disappoint or please those they love.

I hope this treatment of the readings today has not upset anyone. If it has I can only say I am not the Pope – just an ordinary person struggling to make sense of things like everyone else. In this changing world we will never have all the answers. But what I still believe is that goodness, love – the virtues – are still the way to live to achieve real comfort, peace, and happiness.

The Rev Jim Meins

The Woodpecker might have to go !



Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark ...

One : Don't miss the Boat. **Two** : Remember that we are all in the same boat. **Three** : Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. **Four** : Stay fit. When you are 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big. **Five** : Don't listen to critics: just get on with the job that needs to be done. **Six** : Build your future on high ground. **Seven** : For safety's sake travel in pairs. **Eight** : Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs. **Nine** : When you get stressed, float a while. **Ten** : Remember ; the Ark was built by amateurs ; the Titanic by professionals. **Eleven** : No matter the storm, when you are with God, there is always a rainbow waiting.

Provided by Gordon Beethan

Christine's Last Service at St Peters



Ian Wallace gives a speech



Margot recites her special poem for Christine, and the congregation sings the song composed by Judy Barker





Marjorie Wallace's
Painting





St Peter's Garden Party - Fairwell to Christine at
Ian Wallace's Garden Linlithgow













Jenny Hammond and Christine with cake and cupcakes made by Jenny



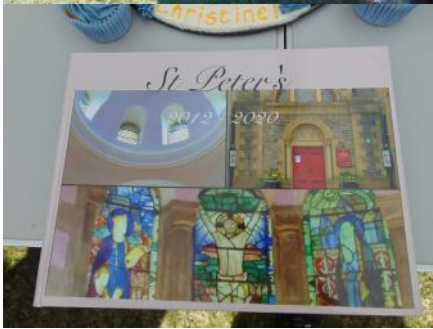




















AN ODE TO THE REV CHRISTINE BARCLAY
ON HER RETIRAL AT EASTER 2022

Into history let us delve,
To September the first in twenty twelve:
The Institution of our new vicar,
In St Columba's where candles flicker

As Bishop John, berobed, with mitre,
Made our lives seem that much brighter,
When he installed our Rev. Christine:
A lady who seemed very keen
To get stuck in and get us moving;
Many things needed fast improving.

In the vestry, you could not swing a cat,
With a public toilet - just fancy that!
We needed somewhere to entertain:
St Peter's own meeting-place domain.

So, into motion, the button was pushed;
We felt like we had been ambushed:
Kicked out of church, the garden wrecked,
A battlefield it's new aspect.

But we persevered - she kept us going,
Asking us to trust - her faith was flowing!
Led by Our Christine, worship went on,
St Peter was swapped for another - Saint John.

And Christine urged – “do buy a brick
Find the money and make it quick!”
She led us all with true conviction,
“It will get built” - was her prediction.

And so, amazingly, money was found,
The extension rose up from the ground.
The money came not from Barclay's Bank,
It's Lesley Stanley we had to thank.

The building was opened with great celebration:
Lashings of gingerbread, a little libation!
The Upper Room became a haven for many:
A kitchen, a vestry, and for spending a penny.

A time capsule was planned to mark the event,
But first we needed Grant Bulloch's consent.
"OK", he said, "but the children must dress
In steel shoes, hard hat and a luminous vest."

We'll always remember her wonderful notions:
Parties and suppers and other promotions.
"Let's go on a pilgrimage; let's build a maze
We need a church history", her eyes all ablaze.

"Let's open a café on Marches Day,
And feed those who shout 'hip hip hooray!'
Make a cradle of candles to disperse the gloom;
Let's set up technology and handle zoom."

"Let's set off together - a mountain to climb",
Full of enthusiasm, on the go, all the time:
On a Perthshire retreat, on Iona's fair isle,
She always made everyone go that last mile.

On the beaches of Coll, picking up litter,
She charmed the locals and made them titter.
The boat trip back though made her paler,
For Christine's not the world's best sailor.
A delegator par excellence,
She rarely received no response.
Her clever ways brought good results,
At which Christine still exults.

She attended Burns Suppers – saluted the bard,
Ate haggis and chips - well that's never hard!
At a Black Tie Dinner or a Dickensian night,
She was always there - shining her light.

At talent shows or concert nights,
Garden parties and other highlights,
She excelled at ministration,
How we all loved Jane's confirmation.

She saw her role more than a job,
For people her heart did truly throb;
She visited with pastoral care:
At home, in hospital, anywhere.

Weddings and funerals were her forte,
On the way to a crem, though, she lost the way,
But, spotting a chimney belching smoke,
She arrived - at a factory - what a joke!

She will be missed, there is no doubt,
But Cupar's not far - as she'll find out!
We'll come and see you - and your wee Millie
Keep her out of the dishwasher - that's just silly

So, Christine, goodbye - go with our blessing;
It's another start - it's not depressing.
You've made your mark - in many ways,
Now go in peace - with this hymn of praise.

Bruce Jamieson



Life on the bay.

I was sitting reading through the previous newsletter and contemplating just how much I feel I miss in church through having to work. I always joke I can't wait until I retire so I can get the option to do more of what I want to do e.g. church activities, my dogs and more time at my favorite chill place.... Pettycur bay. With covid around us life for months just appeared to be work, work, and nothing more, unable to even go to church, meet friends or go to the place I recharge each weekend for the next week, pettycur bay, My haven. Here I sit usually sunny albeit with the chill in breeze but that can be forgotten about when looking into the views hearing the waves rolling onto the beach.

Then last summer restrictions began to lift and the caravan park opened. We were able to go back to our chill place.

Then to our surprise there was talk of a production team for BBC coming to do a documentary about the caravan site. We showed some interest in taking part, we were approach then within weeks the camera and team had arrived to film. Nerves & apprehension all starting to hit, the producer and team explained what was wanted... it sounded simple nerves and heart pounding wondering if I could do this.

Time for the camera to role we sat on our balcony sun streaming down on us as we started answering the questions on the site, and how much the caravan-park and Burntisland meant to us when we were growing up. All the nerves disappeared thanks to the kindness and the professionalism of the production team. Our time chatting felt like talking to friends about our time here .

Then they asked us to take the dogs down the beach which we did gladly. What fun we had the dogs running and walking with us on the beach was amazing and came to an end so fast, but was such fun. The team showed on camera how the dogs looked in slow motion wow they looked amazing.

Few months later after hearing nothing there was an article in the fife courier regarding the show telling about the show starting its 8 week run. To our surprise it stated 'and two of the stars Andrew & John's experience of life on the park'. How excited to read this but still not sure what would be aired.

The time came we settled for the first episode of life on the bay and to our shock episode one there we were in our glory telling about our experiences and the wonderful site of my dogs loving the beach even in slow motion Wow.

What an experience loved it and the being recognized wasn't what was expected either from clients at work to even the guy reading my electricity meter all asking if I was on that programme about the caravan park I shyly would smile & say yes. The kind remarks and the amount of friends who saw the series was great. This was such a special experience which we could share with friends to chat over coffee & have in our memories forever.

All can say now is I am waiting on a call from River City. Andrew Mains

Margot's Moments

The way we were.

A few weeks ago Marilyn asked on the group chat if any one would like some books before she sent them to the charity shop. Peter had acquired a large collection which he no longer needed. I messaged Marilyn asking if there were any books on Crieff as I knew Peter had a Crieff connection through a very brief conversation with him a good few years ago. Sadly as often happens in life we never got around to chatting about our memories of that charming Perthshire town.

My Grandad was a chemist there, the family moved from Glasgow when my Mum was fifteen years old. She met my Dad there although he hailed from Edinburgh. They were married in Crieff and until I was fifteen we spent almost all of our holidays there and more. Marilyn contacted me re a book she had that I might be interested in and finally I received it last Monday at David's Lent Group. It is entitled "Old Crieff" and has many pictures of buildings and places which were such a happy part of my childhood. On Monday evening I settled down excitedly to browse through the pictures and then it hit me. I was overwhelmed by immense sadness as it dawned on me that there was no one alive with whom I could share these experiences. NO one to ask questions of, no one to say "remember this". My brother and sister were too young, indeed my brother wasn't even born when Grandma and Grandad left Crieff to move to Strathaven.

I feel so sad, not only about Crieff but about so many things that crop up in my life that would benefit from a chat with Mum or Dad or other relatives all of whom are long gone. SO I'm left with my memories known only to me but what memories.

Christine the great

How will we cope without our lovely lovely Vicar Christine. She has made her mark in so many many ways. Not only a Vicar but a friend, a confidante a chum and a good laugh.

Sunday after Sunday she has stood in front of us , welcomed us in her special cheery way radiating warmth and charm and love. Perfect make up, blusher and eye shadow polished nails on hands and feet when you can see the little toes peeping out of a particular pair of shoes. There was an informality without irreverance about church with Christine. She would embrace a phone going off or some other interruption whereas another minister would have ignored it. It was always possible to arrive late without feeling guilty, she was just glad that you had turned up. Is it really ten years since we welcomed her into our fold? How can time have passed so quickly?

Church won't be the same without Christine but we must let her go and wish her well in whatever path she now chooses to go down.

On line banking

On line banking is a pain
I'm trying time and time again
It is a pain you know it's true
because I never can get through

If query I need to discuss
once in the bank without a fuss
I'd sit at desk with friendly staff
quite often we would have a laugh

But now the banks are disappearing
and to top it all I'm hard of hearing
so even if I do get through
It's some young guy from Timbuctoo??

I cannot understand what's said
In fact it's doing in my head
yep online banking is ok
If everything is going your way
but if you need to have a chat
I'll tell you what I think of that. !!!!!?????

Margot



Christine and the newly-completed vestments and altar frontal (for Pink Sundays) December 2013





Christine's ordination at St Coilumbas September 2012



Christine's ordination at St Columba's September 2012





Christine at Katie and
Roberts Wedding
June 2014



Christine has a role in one of Judy B's concert evenings





Providing entertainment at the Interchurch Annual Dinner April 2013



Christine riding
in the Marches
June 2013

Christine and Millie at
the Peel Children's Gala
Day June 2015



Listening to an organ
recital in the comfort of
the rectory living room
October 2014



Christingle service 2013





Easter Vigil April 2104



St Peter's AGM January 2014

Christine's Pet
Service
November 2013



Christine cutting
the church's
birthday
cake Pentecost
May 2013





Some Pictures from Sarah Gahagan and some are in Christine's present book







Regular Weekly Services & Events

St Columba's, Bathgate

**Sunday 11.15 a.m Sung Eucharist
(Second Sunday of Month is a Family Service)
Last Sunday of Month 6.30 p.m Choral Evensong
Monday 9.00 a.m Morning Prayer
Second Monday of Month 7.15 p.m Film Night
Wednesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist
(followed by coffee and natter)
First Wed. of Month 12 noon Community Lunch
Thursday 11 a.m 4C's - Cuppa, Chat, Company & Crafts**

St Peter's, Linlithgow

**Sunday 9.30 a.m Sung Eucharist
First Sunday of Month 6 p.m Choral Evensong
Tuesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist
Thursday 9 a.m Morning Prayer
9.30am Sunday Youth Group Meets Monthly at Fenwicks**

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