



# EAGLE

The magazine of the Church of St John the Evangelist

Forfar

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## Communication

As well as our own website address for St John's [www.stjohnsforfar.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsforfar.co.uk) you can also find information at the following on-line resources:

Inspires Online <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/publications/inspires/>

Inspires Online is the free e-newsletter from the Scottish Episcopal Church – to subscribe please use the address above and then the sign-up box on the footer of that page.

Pisky.scot – <http://pisky.scot/> This provides the latest in thinking and discussion within the SEC. Previously Inspires Magazine offered a forum for information, discussion and debate. Now pisky.scot allows for that same conversation to be held more publicly and with the invitation to comment and get involved.

Diocesan website address <https://standrews.anglican.org/> – from there you can access all the Diocesan resources and subscribe to the Diocesan e-newsletter.

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## “Are we there yet?!”

Who remembers the cry from the back seat, “are we there yet?!” – and you’ve only been going five minutes!! It feels a bit like that on our COVID journey. Just when we thought we were nearing the destination, a more infectious strain appears, and despite the vaccine being delivered, our journey’s end becomes a little more distant. However, rest assured we will get to the end of this. I know from messages that I’ve received that some of you have already had the first injection and by the time this goes to print many more of you will have been vaccinated. Of course, we know it is likely that even if you have been vaccinated that whilst it may not make you ill, you could still carry and pass on the virus, so pandemic restrictions are likely to continue until we get more data to see how the virus behaves as more of the population are immunised. But remember, we always got to that holiday destination. We clambered out, greatly relieved to be stretching our legs, perhaps greeting family or friends, arguments from the back seat forgotten, and having a cup of tea with a different vista in front of us. We will enjoy all of that too when this pandemic ends.

For those of us who have not been housebound before COVID we struggle with this smaller, restricted world. One of the things I attempt to hold onto, is to keep my focus looking outward (though I have had to change my news channel to do so) and to love. To talk about love is to talk about what Plato calls “holy madness.” Divine love has nothing to do with feelings of “liking” one another. Jesus never defined love, but instead made it a command because it is vital. We must love if we are to know God and know ourselves. Love is grounded in God and developed by prayer. Perhaps like me, you have really had to dig deep during these past months to keep the rhythm of prayer going, to use the despair and interminability of our situation, and find solace in the little things. For sure we need to contemplate who we are in God’s love knowing we will be transformed as we look, listen, find, and share. However you find ways to share that love during these days, I like many, look forward to the time we share that through our worship together in one place and we know we have arrived at the end of this particular journey.

*With love*

*Elaine*



## **The Scottish Episcopal Church's Work in Scotland**

One of the things I do as a priest in the wider Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), is serve on the SEC's Church in Society Committee (CiSC). I joined the CiSC in 2017 and had been approached primarily because of my expertise in public health. The work of the Committee is interesting as it explores the interface between church and society; assesses the impact of secular issues on our church and develops appropriate strategic partnerships. Our current priority topics are climate change, child poverty and genome editing.

Under our remit we disburse £50,000 annually to general projects that support ministry and mission and another £50,000 specifically for child poverty projects that our SEC churches and partners can apply for. It is also our responsibility to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the grants, with grant holders being invited annually to an event where learning can be shared and then disseminated. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic we were asked to recommend how a further £50,000 should be shared with charities to help alleviate poverty during these times. Aberlour, Scottish Women's Aid and the Scottish Association for Mental Health were chosen, with a further allocation of £7,000 being made to each of these organisations at the end of the financial year. This may give folk in St John's a little comfort that while we have had few retiring collections for various charities over the past year, the SEC is still contributing in our modest way to different causes.

I am currently the CiSC's Interim Convener and it fell to me to take a motion to Synod 2020 on the climate emergency. This motion was carried and committed the SEC to work towards achieving the target of being carbon neutral by 2030. The CiSC will take a programme of actions for approval to General Synod 2021, to help guide local churches to accomplish this challenging target. The Committee will also liaise with organisations preparing for the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), due to be held in Glasgow during November.

The climate emergency is society's most pressing issue. Whilst COVID takes up much of our thoughts now, it will pass. Without radical changes to how we live our lives, the climate emergency will continue to worsen affecting millions of lives around the planet, including those of our children and grandchildren. Over the next editions of the Eagle, we will highlight the issue and if you have ideas and examples of things to do as individuals and as a church that could be included, then please let the Editor know.

**Rector**

Latest Quilt Recipient



As many of you will know already, St. John's has an active sewing group which produces these beautiful patchwork quilts.

As soon as a quilt is finished, it is formally 'blessed' in church by Elaine and offered to someone who would benefit by it.

Here is Nora Craig receiving her quilt. Nora went into "The Glade" care home in Brechin just before the first lockdown last year.

She looks very happy to receive her quilt and we pray that she will be greatly blessed by it.

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## Angus Creative Minds

In October 2019, Angus Creative Minds opened a centre for 'creativity and wellness'. Preliminary designed to share experiences, skills and food and aimed at using these ideas for the mutual support and enrichment of quality of life for participants.

### "Postcards From...."

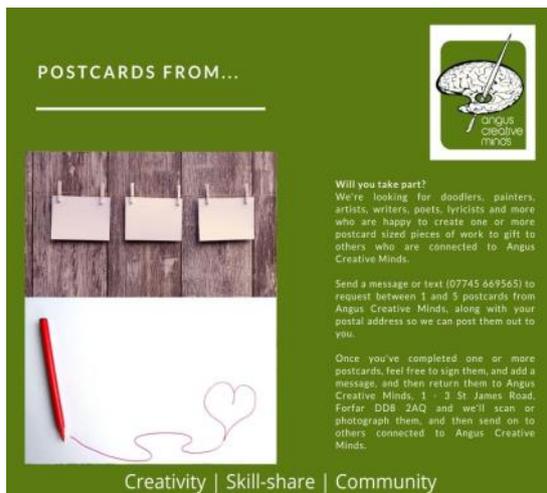
ACM sends out blank postcards for people to decorate and return. They will then take a photo / scan of each postcard before sending it out through the post to another participant.

### "Reconnected / Normality"

This is a similar idea to "Postcards From". ACM sends out squares of linen canvas, choice of: 18.75cm, 37.5cm, 75cm or 150cm. Do something creative with your square and return to ACM who will stage an exhibition as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival in May.

### "Sketch Book"

ACM provides A3 and A4 white and brown sketchbooks to adults who wish to take part in their 'Sketch Book and Journaling' project and they have an associated Facebook Group.



**POSTCARDS FROM...**

*Will you take part?*  
We're looking for doodlers, painters, artists, writers, poets, lyricists and more who are happy to create one or more postcard sized pieces of work to gift to others who are connected to Angus Creative Minds.

Send a message or text (07745 669565) to request between 1 and 5 postcards from Angus Creative Minds, along with your postal address so we can post them out to you.

Once you've completed one or more postcards, feel free to sign them, and add a message, and then return them to Angus Creative Minds, 1 - 3 St James Road, Forfar DD8 2AQ and we'll scan or photograph them, and then send on to others connected to Angus Creative Minds.

Creativity | Skill-share | Community



**SOME DAYS...**

**CREATE**

*We're refreshing our Sketch Book and Journaling Project for 2021.*

It's not a 30 day challenge, or a 100 day challenge, it's a take part and share anything creative when you can group...

Contact us on 07745 669565 if you would like a sketch book (we'll try and arrange a local contact for collection/delivery in Angus).



**ANGUS CREATIVE MINDS**  
We want your creative work on the theme(s) of

**RECONNECTED.  
NORMALITY?**

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival 2021  
3 - 23 May 2021

*One size doesn't fit everyone!*

**“ You can’t breathe but you can’t come in.”**

Shelagh Millar is in regular touch with a friend in Zimbabwe, who sent her this disturbing letter:

**You can’t breathe but you can’t come in**

Dear Family and Friends,

I am writing this letter to you from beneath a dark grey sky in Zimbabwe.

Five days into the new year Zimbabwe again went into total lockdown to try and slow the spread of Covid-19 which is now worse than it was all of last year.

Gatherings have been banned and movement restricted to essential services, food and pharmacy purchases and medical assistance. There is a 6.00am to 6.00pm curfew and once again an estimated 80% of our population who survive on street vending and cross border trading are paralyzed. Schools with exam classes have re-opened but the President of PTUZ (Teachers Union) said over 50 Head Teachers at those schools had tested positive for Covid. All other schools have not re-opened leaving 80% of children who don’t have access to online learning being stuck at home again having only had 2 weeks of education in the last 10 months.

Hospitals and clinics in many towns and cities are overwhelmed, beds are full, oxygen cylinders and ventilators are like gold and desperate families have resorted to putting out appeals for help on social media. One private hospital in Harare was said to be charging

US\$ 2,500 to admit a patient and another would only accept patients who had a letter of referral from a government official. What? You can’t breathe, you have money but you can’t come in unless you have a letter from a government official; what inhumanity is this? The

ZADHR (Doctors for Human Rights) secretary general said that their “conservative estimate” was of 1,000 health personnel currently affected with COVID. Sixty nurses tested positive at the main hospital in Harare this week; they have grossly inadequate PPE’s and are only given one face mask for a 12 hour shift when they are seeing scores of different patients. The Nurses Union (ZINA) said in a communiqué: “ There is massive panic amongst our colleagues at the hospital....most nurses are testing positive..... And this is being kept secret by the management....Nurses are being threatened and victimized.....”

A doctor at Parirenyatwa told Al Jazeera that ten patients had died in the ward in one night and said “it’s mostly because there is no medication and equipment.” On Saturday a government spokesman put out a message saying “ we are being overwhelmed and overrun by this virus,” but four days later as COVID patients went door to door desperately looking for a hospital bed, the same government spokesman said “ we have lots of beds available. Our current occupancy is around 18% only.” As usual we are left shaking our heads at which statement was closer to reality on the ground.....

Until next time, thanks for reading this letter from Zimbabwe, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year.

#### **Editor’s comment**

I am sure that we are all grateful for the hard work of NHS staff during this difficult time. This letter helps us to appreciate just how fortunate we are!

As a gesture of thanks to the staff of the Intensive Care Unit at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge provided a “Burn’s Dinner” at lunchtime on the 25<sup>th</sup> January.

They also visited by videolink, giving a message of appreciation and encouragement to the doctors and nurses.

## Bernkastel-Kues

It is always a delight to read an account from Ingrid of one of her many adventures.

Here is one about a visit to Bernkastel-Kues, a stunning mediaeval town in Rhineland Germany.

Bernkastel-Kues dates from the early 11th Century and is famous as the birthplace of the churchman and philosopher Nikolaus von Kues.

It is also a well-known winegrowing centre.



## A New Year's Prayer

( From the Pastor of St. Lamberti in Münster, 1883 )

In June 2018, Nicholas and I went on a cruise along the Rhine and the Moselle.

One of the many highlights of the journey was the little German town of Bernkastel-Kues located in the Moselle valley, halfway between Cochem and Trier. On our walk through the very attractive mediaeval town we discovered on one of the house facades a well over a 100 years old 'New Year's Prayer', which I have tried to translate (see below)



— *A New Year's Prayer* —

Lord put a limit on abundance

And let limits be superfluous.

May the people not make false money

And money not make people false.

Take wives last words

And remind their husbands of their first.

Give our friends more truth

And the truth more friends

Better officials, businessmen, and  
working people,

Who are busy, but who are not busy with  
Charities.

Give the Government good citizens

And the citizens good government.

Lord, take us all to Heaven

— but not just yet —

## REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Coronavirus is still with us and the church is once again closed for worship which also means the halls are unable to be let and this naturally affects our income stream. I am very grateful for those that have sought ways and means to continue their freewill offering either by bank transfer, cheque or cash.

The expense of running a church as large as ours still exceeds our regular monthly income (hence the need in normal times to hold fund raising events) however a glimmer of hope is that our heating and lighting bills should be lower this year!

Roger Cousins



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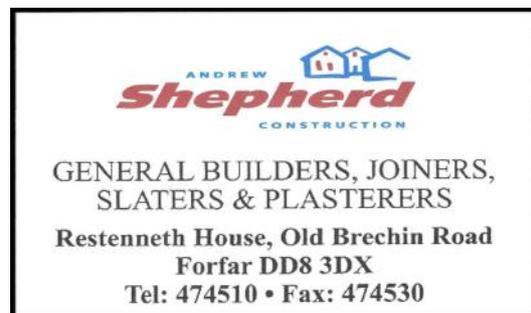
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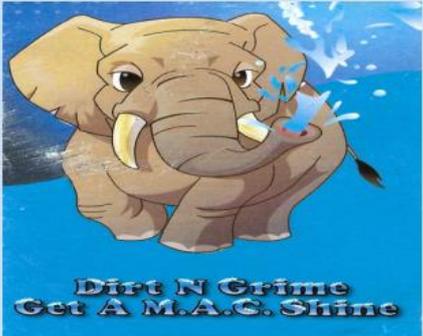
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Scottish Episcopal Church

Dear friends,

For most people Epiphany means Twelfth Night, 6 January, the last day of Christmas, when the decorations go back in the box and the Christmas tree is taken down for another year. But for others, including me, Epiphany is not just one day but a Season that goes from the Feast of the Epiphany to the Feast of Candlemas, and the Crib stays in place and the tree lights keep shining until 2 February.

### **Revealing**

Epiphany means 'revealing,' the revealing of Christ for all people, and the Season is the enactment of the journey of revealing that begins with the Magi following the star, continues with the baptism by John, continues with the calling of the disciples, and ends at Candlemas with the recognition in the Temple by Simeon and Anna. Epiphany is the continuing of the Christmas journey, a time to reflect on the meaning of these events, the Epiphanies that reveal who Jesus is. And as we make the Epiphany journey year after year, the revealing is different because we are different, the world is different.

For the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles this Epiphany will include the revealing of a new ministry, as the Electoral Synod meets on 23 and 30 January to elect a new Bishop of the Diocese. Please pray for the discernment of the Diocese, the Electors, and the Candidates, this month.

The journey through Epiphany this year includes another journey, our continuing struggle with Coronavirus. Tragically, the journey has revealed inequalities and loss, and untold suffering. More than 100,000 in the UK have lost their lives, and more than 2 million worldwide. In Scotland, with a second period of Lockdown for most and ongoing restrictions for some, it is likely that greater restrictions may yet be needed. Vaccines and treatments are signs of journey's end, but we still have some way to go.

### **Worship**

As this journey moves on, we have to keep on acting *positively* as churches. That does not mean exhausting ourselves (or our Clergy, Lay ministers and Vestry members) with anxious activism, even at a distance. It does mean attending to worship and witness in whatever ways are possible.

Some strident voices have been heard demanding that the Government should allow churches to stay open for worship. Attending worship and attending to wellbeing are closely related, they argue, and rightly. But does that mean privileging places of worship over concert halls or sports grounds? All contribute to wellbeing, but all could potentially lead to transmission of the virus.

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Lent Course 2021



This year's Lent Course again uses a resource promoted by Churches Together in Britain & Ireland. However, it is quite different from other years. The author has written the gospels into a rhythmic fashion and is the outcome of a deep engagement with God in Christ.

In our Lent course we will listen to some sections of this gospel and reflect on this using questions and images. Of course, we cannot yet meet physically, so we will meet using Zoom. Everyone from all the Forfar churches is welcome. The Zoom link for the group discussion is available from any of the Forfar clergy. The group will meet on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> March at 7-8pm.