

A detailed stained glass window depicting the Adoration of the Kings. The Virgin Mary is seated on the left, holding the infant Jesus. Three kings kneel before them, offering gifts. A priest stands on the right, holding a chalice. The scene is framed by ornate, golden decorative borders.

Cathedral News

December 2023 - January 2024

Who's Who at the Cathedral

Manager	Chris Ahern	manager@perthcathedral.co.uk
Administrator	Marion Swan	01738 632053
Vestry chairman	John Wright	jdw17514@hotmail.com

Padre's Ponderings

Over the summer, whilst I was on pastoral duty in London, I visited the Rossetti exhibition at Tate Britain. It was a wonderful opportunity to see in context this amazing family's work. As painter-poets of the Victorian age they helped break the mould of convention and sought to make their poetry and painting express lived experience, feeling and beauty.



One of my favourite carols comes out of their quest.

In the Bleak Mid-Winter was written by Christina

Rossetti and set to music, to the tune Cranham, by the composer Gustav Holst.

I love the poem and the music because it has a timeless mystery and is wonderfully evocative of a journey through the wintry landscape to the stable and the heart of the nativity story. It evokes a response in us and, along with the

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shepherds and wise men, the animals and the hosts of heaven, and the whole of creation, we are invited to offer to the Christ Child the gift of our heart.

There is no cloying sentimentality here. Christina Rossetti uses images and metaphors to speak about a bleak winter of suffering and poverty. She reminds us that Jesus was not born into luxury but into a stark and humble world. When he was born, he had milk and a manger full of hay in which he was able to find comfort and a mother's kiss to console him. Rossetti writes that this was enough for Him, implying in these lines that we ought not to complain about our own situation but should remember that the Christ Child was born into a physically destitute place.

Perhaps as we sing this carol this year, and other carols too, we should also remember the suffering of little children in Gaza and other areas of the world where poverty and want reign, where violence wrecks lives.

As the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem write in an open letter dated 11 November 2023, we are invited at Christmas to hold in our thoughts our brothers and sisters both taken hostage and affected by the war in Gaza, and pray for a just and lasting peace for the Holy Land.

As we give our hearts to Jesus and renew our commitment to Him this Christmas, let us also show compassion for those who suffer in the Holy Land and pray for peace.

God Bless,

Rev'd Philip

Readings and Collects for December and January

First Sunday of Advent - 3 December

Collect: Stir up your power, Lord, and come: that, with you as our protector, we may be rescued from our sins; and with you as our deliverer, we may be set free; for you live and reign with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one

God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 64.1-9, Psalm 80.1-7, 16-18, 1 Corinthians 1.3-9, Mark 13.24-37

Second Sunday of Advent - 10 December

Collect: Stir up our hearts, Lord, to prepare the way of your only-begotten Son: that, in his coming, we might serve you with our hearts made pure; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 40.1-11, Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13, 2 Peter 3.8-15a, Mark 1.1-8

Third Sunday of Advent - 17 December

Collect: Stir up our prayers, Lord, and hear us: that they who are sorrowful and suffering may rejoice at the Advent of your only-begotten Son; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126, 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24, John 1.6-8, 19-28

Fourth Sunday of Advent - 24 December (Morning)

Collect: Stir up your power, Lord, and come: and strengthen us by the might of your love; that, although we are hindered by our sins, your abundant grace and mercy may quickly come and save us; for you live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16, Psalm 89 1-4, 19-26, Romans 16.25-27, Luke 1.26-38

Midnight Eucharist of Christmas - 24 December

Collect: O God, you have made this most holy night grow radiant with the brilliance of the true light: grant that, as we have known the mystery of that light on earth, so may we delight in him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 52.7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1.1-4, (5-12), John 1.1-14

Christmas Day - Monday 25 December

Collect: O God, who wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of our human nature: grant that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 9.2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2.11-14, Luke 2.1-14, (15-20)

First Sunday of Christmas - 31 December

Collect: O God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Saviour, so we may with confidence behold him as he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 61.10 - 62.3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4.4-7, Luke 2.22-40

The Epiphany - 7 January 2024 (Transferred)

Collect: O God, who, by the guidance of a star, revealed your only-begotten Son to the nations: grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at the last be led to see your glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 60.1-6, Psalm 72,1-7,10-14, Ephesians 3.1-12, Matthew 2.1-12

Second Sunday after Epiphany - 14 January

Collect: Almighty and eternal God, ruler of heaven and earth: mercifully hear the prayers of your people, and grant your peace to our times; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: 1 Samuel 3.1-10 (11-20), Psalm 13, 1-5,12-17, 1 Corinthians 6.12-20, John 1.43-51

Third Sunday after Epiphany - 21 January

Collect: Almighty and eternal God, behold us in our weakness: and stretch out

your hands to protect us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Jonah 3.1-5,10, Psalm 62.6-14, 1 Corinthians 7.29-31, Mark 1.14-20

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany - 28 January

Collect: O God, through our human frailty, we cannot stand firm: give us strength and protection, that, with your help, we may overcome all difficulties; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Deuteronomy 18.15-20, Psalm 111, 1 Corinthians 8.1-13, Mark 1.21-28

The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas Transferred) - 4 February

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God: as your only-begotten Son was presented and received in the temple, so may we proclaim him as the light of the nations and the glory of your people; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Malachi 3.1-4, Psalm 84, Hebrews 2.14-18, Luke 2.22-40



Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday 3 December at 4.00pm: Advent Readings & Carols

Wednesday 20 December at 1.30pm: School Nativity

Saturday 23 December at 3.00pm: Christingle

Sunday 24 December at 9.30am: Holy Communion (Said)

Sunday 24 December at 11.00am: Festival of Readings and Carols

Sunday 24 December at 11.00pm: Midnight Eucharist of Christmas

Monday 25 December at 11.00am: Sung Eucharist

What's Been Going On?

Concert of Organ Music

Dr Michał Szostak, an associate professor at the University of Social Sciences in Warsaw, gave a superb concert on the cathedral organ on Wednesday 8 November. He ranged from Böhm to Lefébure-Wély, via Bach, Beethoven (the first movement of his fifth symphony), and, perhaps oddly, a Chopin nocturne. A few minutes before the start of the concert he asked the audience for their favourite hymns. A few were mentioned and with scarcely any time to think about them, he improvised at length and with great originality on two of the suggested hymn tunes. He put the organ through its paces, particularly in terms of volume, but this attendee found it quite thrilling.

Dr Szostak, pictured below with concert organiser Annabelle, gave his services free of charge. We are most grateful to him.



Advent Course

Songs for Advent

For our discussions this year we will read St Luke's narrative of the Nativity story and look in more detail at the songs it includes which still form part of our liturgy. Why not read Luke chapters 1-2 and see if you can find four songs that you recognise?

As before, we will meet on Monday mornings in the Lady Chapel. If possible, I'd like to start a little earlier than last year, perhaps at 10.00am, but the schedule isn't finalised yet and could be changed. Refreshments will be available afterwards in the Chapter House as part of the cathedral's Warm Spaces initiative. Since Advent begins on Sunday 3 December, we will meet on Mondays 4, 11 and 18 December.

Please get in touch with me if you'd like to take part, or sign up on the list on the notice board. It's still not too late!

Lis Burke

PACT News

A reminder that Perth Action of Churches Together (PACT) invites you to join the Lantern Advent Parade on Saturday 9 December, which leaves from the cathedral at 4.45pm. Following behind the Perth Pipe Band, and carrying lanterns, lights or torches, we parade through the town to the nativity tableau outside St John's Kirk, where members of Perthshire Brass will lead us in community carol singing. All are welcome, and there will be refreshments following the carols. Prior to the parade there will be a lantern-making workshop at the cathedral from 2.30 to 4.30pm led by local artist Lisa Earl, in which all ages are welcome to participate.



Then on Friday 22 December PACT will be holding its annual carol service at 7.00pm which this year will be held in the North Church. We are delighted that the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt. Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton, has accepted our invitation to be the guest speaker.

Interregnum Update

Following the 'Away Day' the Vestry has drawn up a five-year plan based on our ministry and mission. The plan will be used as the basis for the Congregational Profile, which will be completed in the New Year. In addition, the house owned by the cathedral in Gray Street has been put on the market so that we can purchase a more modern house for the new Provost, which will meet the standards set out in the SEC Net Zero Action Plan. Meantime the Vestry continues to deal with the running of the cathedral and recently totally refurbished the Provost's study.

John Wright
Vestry Chairman



Those attending the recent Away Day at Glenalmond College included, from left to right, the Rev'd Canon Christine (facilitator), Wendy, Andrew, John (vestry chairman), Christopher, Emmanuel, Maureen (vestry secretary), Chris (cathedral manager) and Brendan (convener of the diocesan administration board).

Cover Photo

The cover shows Bill Crighton's excellent photo of the nativity scene in the Children's Window, which features on our cathedral Christmas cards. They are still for sale in the A K Bell Library - only £5.00 for 12!

Vestry Update

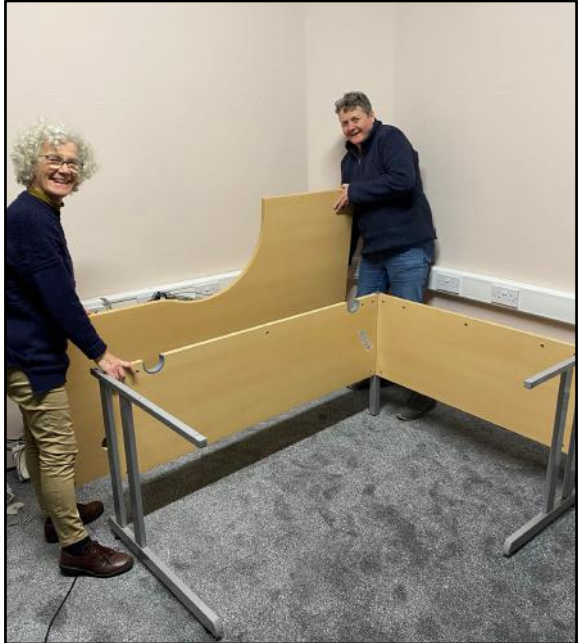
Guided by the Bishop, the process of finding a new cathedral provost continues and the Vestry is working harder than ever to keep things moving along as well as we can.

The provost's study has been repainted and carpeted, fitted out with good quality recycled office furniture and is looking ready for its new occupant.

Replacement LED lights have been installed in the kitchen, all the offices and choir vestry which should reduce the electricity used there by 80%.

While we all understand that our huge, draughty Victorian cathedral can never be warm in winter our heating engineers are trying to find a way of making the heating more controllable, so that we are as comfortable as possible on Sundays. Please do dress very warmly though, throughout these cold months. If we get an especially cold spell after Christmas there is always the option of worshipping in the Chapter House as we have done before and this may be something we need to consider again.

You will no doubt have noticed that the cloister lights are well past their prime and many fluorescent tubes have gone. It's not possible to get compatible LED tubes for these old fittings, and the fluorescent ones are no longer made, so we are faced with getting completely new lighting installed. This requires careful



Erica and Wendy have recently been accepted as members of Mensa, the high IQ society, following their successful assembly of recently acquired second-hand furniture, which came with no instructions. Well done, ladies!

thought, professional expertise and ultimately diocesan permission, so if anyone has the necessary knowledge or a good contact with someone who does, please would you let the Vestry know as soon as possible? And if you happen to see something you think suitable when you're out and about over the next few weeks please do take a picture and share it with the Vestry. We're very open to suggestions!

Wendy Duncan



To Ian...

...of Bennan Flooring in Crieff who very kindly laid the carpet for us in the refurbished provost's study. When requested to send in his invoice he replied that he would like to supply and fit the carpet free of charge, as a donation to the church. He added that the church was a big part of his mother's life, and still was for his sister (Tammy), and so this was 'just a little thank-you from myself'. Greatly appreciated, Ian, and thank you!

...and to Bruce

Many of us have probably cursed the table trolley in the Chapter House, when the requirement for, say, a small table has necessitated the removal of several larger ones first. Sensible Bruce not only had the sense to see a solution but the skills to make it happen. Bruce is pictured beside the remodelled trolley where the folding tables are now stored end-on, making it much easier to select the table size you want. Thanks, Bruce!



Winter Warm Space

Our Winter Warm Space is up and running again, providing a bit of warmth, food and companionship in the colder, darker months. The Chapter House is open on Mondays between 11.00am and 3.00pm and everyone in the congregation and beyond is welcome to drop in for tea, coffee, biscuits and filled rolls. Word has it that Ayesha and Tyro, our near neighbours at the Tay Larder, will be providing us with soup on 11 December - a treat in store! As always, more volunteers to help with setting up and tidying away, or serving food and drink, would be welcomed with open arms. If you feel able to help with this, please do sign up in the cloisters - thank you!



Wendy Duncan

Carol Singing

Perth Christian Aid supporters will be singing carols at Dobbie's Garden Centre, Crieff Road, Perth, on Saturday 23 December. They will be doing four half-hour sessions: 11.00 - 11.30, 12.00 - 12.30, 1.30 - 2.00, and 2.30 - 3.00. Everyone is welcome to join them for a Christmas sing!



Beethoven Concert

Pat Beatson's step-son, Alasdair Beatson, the international concert pianist, will be performing with Perth Choral Society and the City of Perth Sinfonia in a Concert of Beethoven, which will include Ode to Joy. The concert takes place in Perth Concert Hall on Sunday 10 December at 7.30pm.

Annual General Meeting

The cathedral AGM will take place in the Chapter House on Sunday 28 January 2024, immediately after the 11.00am service of Holy Communion. Please do bring along a sandwich for lunch if you wish. Tea and coffee will be provided.

There are, and will be, several vacancies on the vestry so if you think you could contribute to the life of the cathedral in this way please do give it serious consideration. Further details about nominations - and nomination forms - will be announced nearer the time.

Meanwhile, reports for the AGM should be sent to Marion in the office by mid-January, ideally in digital format, for circulating before the meeting.

Food Banks

The Perth and Kinross Foodbank urgently needs the following items, which can be handed in direct at their base at 11 Cutlog Vennel (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9.30 - 11.00, but please phone first on 01738 626799) or handed in at the cathedral for onward

delivery: fruit juice (long life), UHT milk, tinned tomatoes,

small bags of rice, small jars of coffee and small bags of tea, small cartons of laundry powder or gel, and sweets. In addition, as we go to press, they also need cooking sauces and tinned puddings, such as rice pudding, and custard.

In the cathedral we also collect basic essential items for families linked to St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School. If you'd like to donate any basic food items or toiletries, please leave them in the appropriate box in the cathedral. Thank you!



Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

We managed to send off 17 boxes, plus a whole lot of fillers, to this year's shoebox appeal. Not as many as in previous years, but that applies to cathedral numbers in general. Many thanks to everyone who contributed!

The Bin Problem!

Not only have the council been, shall we say - irregular? - in their collection of our bins but to add insult to injury they have recently parked their large bins, for the use of residents in nearby flats, pretty much right outside our main entrance. For an A-listed building and a Visit Scotland three-star tourist attraction, this is not a good look and we understand the matter has been raised with Perth & Kinross Council.



Emotion Coaching

Recently I completed a course for work called Emotion Coaching which focuses on the communication of emotions when working with children, and I have found that it is actually relevant to interactions with all people. Emotion coaching is a way of helping people to manage and communicate their emotions effectively. I'm sure we have all experienced negative behaviours from others that seem to be a bit over the top or unnecessary, and this can really hurt and upset us, so it can help to understand why people sometimes behave the way they do.

Step 1: The first thing to remember is that emotion and behaviour are inextricably linked, but never assume that a person's behaviour reflects the whole story. Behaviour is driven by a complex mass of underlying emotion so in order to support the person, we need to uncover the emotions lying beneath. Think of it as an iceberg: the emotion of a person is the huge area under the surface of the water while the behaviour is the small bit that pokes out at the top. Rather than judging whether a behaviour is right or wrong, perhaps try to work out what this person is feeling at the moment because a behaviour is not always reflective of the underlying emotion.

Step 2: The next thing to do is to label the emotion you think the person might be feeling. Name it to tame it! By doing this we validate how the person is feeling. Phrases such as 'I know you are disappointed, and I feel the same' can really help to validate a person's emotion because there is no such thing as a wrong emotion. We see wrong behaviours all the time, but the underlying emotion is never wrong.

Step 3: Finally, we move on to limit setting and problem solving. Just because we understand how someone feels doesn't mean that negative or hostile behaviours are acceptable but it gives us the opportunity to share ideas and help people to identify more constructive ways of expressing their emotions. Once they are calm, letting someone know that you are upset by their behaviour and sharing how they could communicate their feelings in the future leads to problem solving and provides emotional support.



So, as we are out and about, in the shops, with our families or even in our own cathedral community, we may come across someone who is struggling to handle their emotions and is behaving negatively. Perhaps we are behaving negatively ourselves! It's a tough world so it's understandable that people can lash out or overreact but the next time this happens, I challenge you to try the emotion coaching approach and let me know how it goes!

Maihri Cameron

From the Registers

Deaths

Gun Collins - 7 October 2023

Beatrice McIntosh - 27 October 2023

Irene Birkett - 8 November 2023

*Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them.*

Captain Robert Brittain

The recent death of Irene Birkett at the age of 97 severs a link with the earlier days of the cathedral's history. Her grandfather was Captain Robert Brittain in whose memory a plaque was placed on the wall of the north aisle. Captain Brittain died in 1918 and this is what the *Perthshire Advertiser* (27 April 1918) said about him: 'The death of Mr Robert Brittain, of the Church Army, and officer in charge of the Watergate Mission of the Episcopal Church in Perth, will be sincerely regretted by many. Captain Brittain was one of the most zealous religious workers in the city. He, in the literal sense, searched the highways and byways in order to act the Good Samaritan. The Boy Scouts and soldiers' and sailors' wives and dependents had a staunch friend in Captain Brittain, and will miss this strenuous worker.' Our old friend Mr Farquhar, in his diary, described him as 'one man in a thousand'.

Irene's husband, Walter, a former vestry member, died in 2004. Both were faithful members of the cathedral.

Cathedral News

The magazine team have become aware recently that some people have not been getting their issues of Cathedral News. If anyone knows of anyone else in this tragic situation, please do ask them to leave their contact details with Marion in the office. Thank you!

Holy Russia?

Dr John Byrom raised the curtain on the Russian Orthodox Church for the Men's Group (and five ladies!) in the Chapter House on Tuesday 22 November. He explained how the faith was ingrained in the Russian psyche from birth and their guardian angels watched over them to bless their comings and goings. The



The team responsible for our series of photos of people you wouldn't normally expect to find in a church magazine do not believe Stalin has ever been included. So here he is now!

Orthodox Liturgy was in an invented language, enabling the many different races in Russia to worship together. The Church had been suppressed by a succession of Government chairmen after Stalin until 'glasnost' when restrictions had been relaxed. The faithful believed that everyone lived in contact with heaven and earth until sin put a barrier in the way. Only repentance and forgiveness by the Holy Trinity can remove it. John noted that it was not uncommon for ordinary folk to discuss the faith when they pass a church on the bus! So now, with churches overflowing, Putin has been anxious to be seen with Archbishop Cyril to gain public approval for his actions in Ukraine and on the island of Svalbard (formerly Spitzbergen) which belongs to Norway and is full of desirable minerals.

Geoffrey Hall thanked John for his talk and presented him with a shopping voucher on behalf of the Men's Group. £80 was raised in donations for the cathedral.

Rev'd Geoffrey Hall

From the Farquhar Diaries

Summary for 1923. I do not feel capable of writing a proper summary for the year:- I have written 20 sermons: preached 57 times from MS: composed 12 poems: got round the congregation (400 visits) once and a little more: prepared [blank] Confirmation Candidates & acted for three months as Commissary to the Bp and taken my usual number of School Services and Classes with Addresses.

Eddie the Eagle says...

My ears are still ringing after that stunning organ recital by Dr Szostak. It was bit loud at times and in all my years here I don't think I've ever heard it played so powerfully. So, while the funds he raised for us will go towards the cathedral restoration campaign, we might need to start a new campaign for the restoration of the organ! On that (rather loud) note, I wish you all a very merry Christmas!



Times of Services etc

At St Ninian's we extend a warm welcome to all those who come to share in the worship of God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Services

Sunday	Eucharist	11.00am
Wednesday	Eucharist	11.00am

Giving

For all committed giving, envelopes and covenants, please contact Chris Ahern, our treasurer, who will be delighted to advise.

Flowers

Flowers greatly enhance our worship. If you can help or donate, please contact Molly or Hazel.

And finally...

If you have an article for the magazine, or a suggestion for one, please either pass it to the editor, Jeremy Duncan, or email it to cathedralmagazine@gmail.com . The closing date for inclusion in the February magazine is **21 January**.



**St Ninian's Cathedral
of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the
Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane.**

We are one of the family of Anglican churches throughout the world.

The cathedral is served by a clergy and lay team:

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Provost

Vacant

Assisting Clergy

The Rev'd Peter Higson
peterjhigson@hotmail.com

The Rev'd Philip Francis

Retired Clergy

The Rev'd Canon Celia Matthews

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