

Cathedral News



February 2025

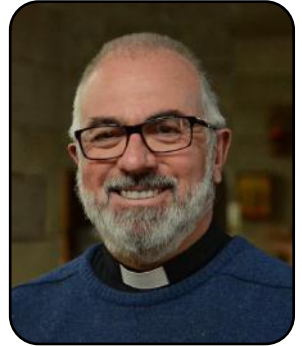
Who's Who at the Cathedral

Provost	The Very Rev'd Dr Stephen Holmes	07584 091870
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From the Provost

Dear friends,

I am writing this at the same time as I am putting together my report for the annual meeting. This year I will share my report with the deputy chairman of vestry, John Wright, as I have only been here four months. John commented 'it feels as if you have been here for ages (in a good sense)', and it really does as so many exciting things have happened and the cathedral has quickly felt like home to me and my family.



Thanks to all who contributed to such a splendid Christmas at the cathedral. We put up a VERY BIG red poster outside and large numbers came to our services. It was good to share our candlelit Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols with various charitable and cultural organisations that we are in partnership with such as the foodbank, the YMCA, Chansons Chamber Choir, and the Fire and Rescue Service. Whether it was the community connections, the candles or the red poster, it was good to see the cathedral full and it was also great to see so many families and children in and moving around the cathedral for our Christingle service on

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Christmas Eve, ably led by James, Ross and Maihri.

Preparing the annual report has got me thinking about where we are and where we are heading in our 175th year. My institution was on the 175th anniversary of the laying of the cathedral foundation stone in 1849 and this December is the 175th anniversary of the consecration of the cathedral by the saintly Bishop Forbes. We will have a big party on our 200th but this year we will keep the Feast of the Dedication of the Cathedral on Sunday 10 August, the nearest Sunday to the date of the consecration of the completed cathedral in 1890. Each church should celebrate the anniversary of its consecration and this is an opportunity for us to thank God for our beautiful building, which is a place many meet God, and for the beautiful people who worship the Lord in it.

We do many good things and there will be new initiatives this year. One example in the winter cold weather is our Monday 'Warm Spaces' session where people are welcomed here for food and friendship and we are supported by the Fire and Rescue Service. We have recently been blessed by more families joining us on Sunday and this year our new children and families team will start two initiatives for children: Toddler Church and Sunday Club. There is more about this elsewhere in the magazine but we are grateful to the Mothers' Union for their financial support. For both of these projects we are working in partnership with other organisations and to flourish in the future we need to build more partnerships like these.

I intend to send out a questionnaire to all members of the congregation to help me get to know you and make decisions about new initiatives, in consultation with the vestry and ministry team. Please fill it in as I want to get the broadest picture of our Christian life together and not just rely on what I hear from those I meet most often. The completed forms will be private and only seen by me, though I may share the broad picture with vestry without identifying what any individual said. I expect that like all good congregations we will have a wide variety of views, the only thing my last congregation agreed on was that they wanted more silence in services!

At the Annual Meeting we heard about our finances and not all of it was good. On the basis of last year's figures we are looking at a deficit well into five figures (our necessary expenditure could significantly exceed our income). On the

positive side we have healthy reserves, we are likely to increase income in a number of areas this year, and donations have significantly increased over the last few months. We have also made some significant savings, for example in cutting staff costs, and vestry has decided that we will save up to £500 a year by no longer buying birthday cakes for members of the congregation. This does not mean that we will no longer celebrate birthdays - things that build up community are really important (typing this made me think of the excellent Sri Lankan meal we had last year) - but we can no longer expect the cathedral to provide things without reflecting on the cost.

One answer to this challenge is just to ask all of us to give more money, but it is possible to go deeper than that. Like many British people I don't like talking about money but Jesus didn't have that problem, he spoke about it a lot. Perhaps this year we can reflect together on stewardship, the right and moral use of our money and other resources. As Christians we believe that everything we have is a gift from God - even if we have earned it, God has given us the health and ability to work. We therefore need to consider God, his poor and his Church, in how we use our riches. While allowing that Jesus really does call for sacrificial giving, this may mean that if our income goes down or our responsibilities increase we will need to decrease our giving or, if we have a small fixed income, it may need to stay the same. Allowing for this, I would like to make two requests on behalf of the vestry:

1. that you give regularly, preferably by standing order as many of us do
2. that in the light of our financial situation you increase your giving by 20% if possible.

Jesus spoke a lot about money but he also said 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you' (Matthew 6:33). Our priority must be to love God and our neighbour. We need to pray for our cathedral and its people and mission, because I believe that God has given us a unique task and if we stay close to Jesus he will not abandon us.

Lent starts in March and it gives us a special opportunity for a new start in our life of faith. In Lent we are called to embrace prayer, fasting and almsgiving - to give them another go if we have got lazy. They are precious ways to approach the

great Mystery of our faith, Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead. This shows that love wins over death, sin and evil, but it is a mystery, something we will never fully understand. But by doing little things we can make things better and go deeper into the mystery.

May God bless you, your families and friends in this new year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

The Very Rev'd Dr Stephen Holmes

Readings and Collects for February

The Presentation of the Lord - 2 February

Collect for the Presentation of the Lord: Almighty and Everlasting God: as your Only-begotten Son was presented and received in the temple, so may we welcome and 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.

Collect for the week of Proper 4: 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: Malachi 3.1-5, Psalm 84, Hebrews 2.14-18, Luke 2.22-40.

Fifth Sunday after The Epiphany - 9 February

Collect: O Lord, watch over your household with constant love: that, supported by you alone, we may always stand firm in your protection; 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: Isaiah 6.1-8, Psalm 138, 1 Corinthians 15.1-11, Luke 5.1-11

Sixth Sunday after The Epiphany - 16 February

Collect: Almighty God, grant that with our minds set always on your wisdom and love, we may pursue both in word and deed those things that are pleasing in your sight; 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: Jeremiah 17.5-10, Psalm 1, 1 Corinthians 15.12-20, Luke 6.17-26

Choral Evensong at 4.00pm - 16 February

Readings: Ephesians 5.1-17, Mark 1.40-45

Seventh Sunday after The Epiphany - 23 February

Collect: Hear the prayers of your people, O Lord: that we, who are weighed down by our sins, may be delivered for the glory of your name; 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: Genesis 45.3-11,15, Psalm 37.1-12,41-42, 1 Corinthians 15.35-38, 42-50, Luke 6.27-38

Sunday next before Lent - 2 March

Collect: Almighty and eternal God: direct our lives according to your gracious will; that in the name of your beloved Son we may be strengthened to abound in good works; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Readings: Ecclesiasticus 27.4-7, Psalm 92.1-4,11-14, 1 Corinthians 15.51-58, Luke 6.39-49

Forthcoming Events and Services

2025 Nicaea Study Day, Saturday 10 May 2025, at St Ninian's Cathedral

Every Sunday we say the Nicene Creed, an ecumenical statement of faith we share with all other orthodox Christians in many churches which sums up the Christian faith. 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea where this creed was first put together, though the form we use is the final version as

completed at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

There are not many things that are 1700 years old and in weekly use by over a billion people, so this is something to celebrate. St Ninian's Cathedral will be joining with the Scottish Episcopal Institute to host a study day on the Council of Nicaea on Saturday 10 May. The main speaker will be Professor Lewis Ayres of Durham University and the Angelicum, Rome. He is the author of the important book *Nicaea and its Legacy* which changed our way of understanding the teaching of Nicaea on the Trinity and its importance for our life of faith and contemplation. Further details will be given later.



A Greek icon depicting the Council of Nicaea

Other Dates

Wednesday 5 March: Ash Wednesday

Saturday 8 March: Diocesan Synod at the cathedral. 10.30am to 3.30pm

Saturday 15 March at 7.00pm: Concert of Early Choral Music by the Edinburgh University Renaissance Singers

Sunday 20 April: Easter Sunday

From the Registers

Baptism

Sunday 24 November, Mary Sophia Heather Holmes

Sunday 26 January, Caitlin May Riach

Funeral

Tuesday 7 January at Perth Crematorium, Lilian Agnes Porter

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

What's Been Going On?

Advent and Christmas at the Cathedral

Two words to summarise Christmas (and for brevity this includes Advent) at the cathedral would be candles and crowds. Perhaps crowds is a little strong but simple observation would suggest that attendances at the various services have been up on recent years. Two possible reasons for this upturn are the large sign, advertising the Christmas services, which faced traffic and pedestrians at the Atholl Street corner, and the truly uplifting singing of the cathedral choir in the St John's Centre on 14 December at which leaflets with details of the services were distributed to the many who paused to listen. The photos below and overleaf show something of the busy month which was December!

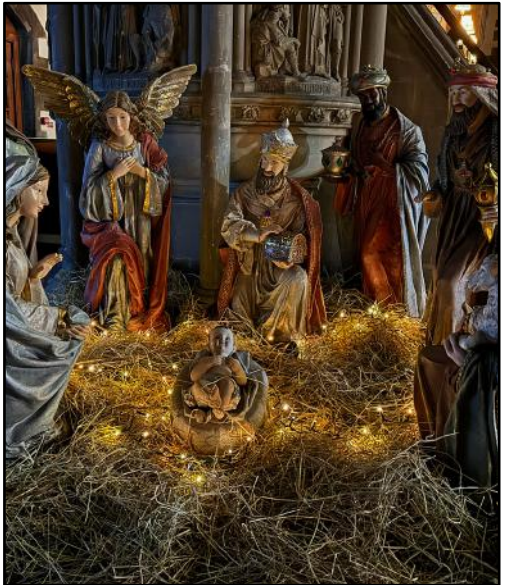


The cathedral choir, augmented by the choristers of Strathallan School, who sang at the Advent carol service on 1 December. This was followed by mince pies and delicious mulled wine in the Chapter House. Many thanks to all our paparazzi, including - and especially - Christopher and Lis.





A small team of cathedral decorators set to work on Saturday 14 December. Wendy and Mithila are shown working on one tree and Jackie and Penny on the other. Alison, meanwhile, was busy decorating the windowsills and hanging the swags on pillars. Huge thanks go to them and the others who arranged flowers and set up the nativity scene.





Servers old and new turned out for the Christmas services and it was good to see acolytes, thurible swingers and crucifers in such numbers! Top right, the Christingle service on Christmas Eve, led by the Rev'd Ross, Jamie and Maihri and, below, the atmospheric carol service by candlelight on 22 December.



The Epiphany



The three wise men made a surprise guest appearance at the Epiphany service on 5 January. Chris, carrying gold in a cash box (this may not be historically accurate), processes towards the altar followed by Andrew and John, all suitably attired and bearing gifts. Thanks to Izzy or Lis for this photo.

The word Epiphany can mean various things including the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2.1-12), and a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. For example: 'a few years ago, I had an epiphany.'

The word can also mean: January 6 observed as a church festival in commemoration of the coming of the Magi as the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles or in the Eastern Church in commemoration of the baptism of Christ; a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something; an intuitive grasp of reality through something (such as an

event) usually simple and striking; an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure; a revealing scene or moment.

Epiphany is also known as 'Theophany' in eastern Christian tradition. It is

sometimes called 'Three Kings Day' and in some traditions is celebrated as 'Little Christmas.' In many western churches, the eve of the feast is celebrated as 'Twelfth Night' (Epiphany Eve) on 5 January. The Monday after Epiphany is known as Plough Monday and marked the start of the English agricultural year.

Music

Johann Sebastian Bach composed two cantatas in Leipzig for the feast which concludes Christmastide: *Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen*, BWV 65 (1724), and *Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen*, BWV 123 (1725). Part VI of his Christmas Oratorio, *Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben*, was also designated to be performed during the service for Epiphany. In Ottorino Respighi's symphonic tone poem *Roman Festivals*, the final movement is subtitled 'Bofana' and takes place during Epiphany.

More on Epiphany

Popular Epiphany customs include Epiphany singing, chalking the door, having one's house blessed, consuming Three King's Cake, winter swimming as well as attending church services. It is customary for Christians in many localities to remove their Christmas decorations on Epiphany Eve (Twelfth Night), although those in other Christian countries historically remove them on Candlemas, the conclusion of Epiphanytide.

The earliest reference to Epiphany as a Christian feast was made in AD 361 by Ammianus Marcellinus. The scope of Epiphany expanded to include the commemoration of Jesus' birth; the visit of the Magi, all of Jesus' childhood events, up to and including the Baptism by John the Baptist; and even the miracle at the wedding at Cana in Galilee. In 385, the pilgrim Egeria (also known as Silvia) described a celebration in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which she called 'Epiphany' that commemorated the Nativity. Saint John Cassian says that even in his time (early fifth century) Egyptian monasteries celebrated the Nativity and the Baptism together on 6 January.

The material in this article is derived from Wikipedia, Oxford Languages and Merriam-Webster.

Emmanuel Patterson

Choir News

Many congratulations to Precious Solanke, the youngest member of the cathedral choir, who was awarded her surplice by Provost Stephen at the morning service on Advent Sunday. Director of Music, Geoff, looks on.



As mentioned earlier our thanks and congratulations should go to the cathedral choir for the huge amount of superb singing they did over the Christmas period. The photo shows some of those who sang in the St John's Centre on 14 December, attracting many favourable comments from Christmas shoppers.



Marion's Retirement

Marion's friendly welcoming face will no longer be regularly seen in the office. Our administrator has switched off her computer for the last time and joined the ranks of the retired. She will be greatly missed as she was very good at her job and always had a smile for everyone who came into the office or who walked past on their way into the cathedral. Her retirement was marked with a special cake, reflecting her love of the Greek islands, although she will of course still be part of the cathedral family. We wish her well in this new phase of life.



Pending a review of all paid employees at the cathedral, to be carried out by the Provost and the vestry, the gap in office administration is temporarily being filled by John and Maureen who have volunteered to man - and woman - the office on Mondays. Anyone with a spare hour or two a week, perhaps with office skills (though not essential by any means), who would be willing to assist in the many jobs of cathedral administration, would be very welcome! Please do have a word with Provost Stephen or John and Maureen.



The photos show Marion with provost and cake and, below, Marion passing on her knowledge to apprentices Maureen and John. Thanks to Christopher and Wendy for the photos.

Annual General Meeting 2025

The cathedral AGM took place after a shortened morning service on Sunday 19 January. Following a prayer and welcome, Provost Stephen read the names of those connected with the cathedral who had died in the past year.

He then handed over to the deputy chairman of the vestry, John Wright, who gave a report on the first half of the year before Stephen's arrival. This period was devoted in particular to the lengthy procedure of selecting of our new provost - as John said, 'Fortunately our first choice accepted!' - and to providing him and his family with a home which met the current eco standards of the SEC. Other matters included dealing with problems of faulty boilers and roof leaks. John continued, 'As well as tackling problems we have tried to make improvements this year. In line with GDPR rules [*on data protection*] we have removed the personal details of those no longer in touch with the cathedral. A new bike shelter in the car park across the grass from the courtyard will soon appear. At the choir's request a new display board for music has been installed. We are very grateful to David Martin Smith, a member of the choir, who has officially become gardener though he offers his services on a voluntary basis. Our cleaner, Harshani, due to new government guidelines, had to resign and was replaced by Jackie Ahern. Margot Dunnachie has agreed to take over the running of the website for which we are grateful.

'In order to increase our revenue and to enhance our outreach we are trying hard to bring new events into the cathedral. Our manager has looked at the pricing of our rooms for hire and devised a new leaflet...We have also re-established a link with Perth Festival of the Arts and, in next May's programme, will be hosting an opera company for two days as well as having an Evensong and organ recital by Geoff included in the official programme. This summer we are also hosting a gathering of the Order of St. John.



'That takes us up to August when Stephen took the reins of power so I will hand over to him but before I do I know that I am speaking for the whole congregation



Many thanks to Christopher for the photo above, and to Lis for the others.

and community when I say how impressed and delighted we are with the way Stephen has embraced the role of Provost. His research and knowledge of our cathedral's history and traditions is quite remarkable. He knows us both as a community and as individuals. His enthusiasm, kindness and positive approach has given us a new spirit and new growth. With more services and outreach Stephen has engaged with the city of Perth in a remarkable way in a short period. It has also been a joy to welcome Izzy, Bess and Mary who have enriched our lives.'

John then handed over to the provost who spoke about developments since his arrival in September. He began with thanks to the cathedral staff and in particular to Marion who has now retired as office administrator. He expressed his gratitude to Provost Hunter who, through the vestry, staff and members of the congregation, had created a very welcoming atmosphere in the cathedral, one which he and his family had experienced before he had even considered applying for the vacant provostship. Pat Butler was thanked for all her years of service to the cathedral and presented with a bouquet of flowers. She has now stepped down as a reader and intercessor, not forgetting all the other activities with which she has been involved over many years, such as the Traidcraft stall.

Stephen continued with statistics: we have 207 members and 130 communicants. There was an 85% increase in numbers attending the Christmas services over the past two or three years and a 25% increase on the pre-Covid figures. He emphasised that we certainly are not a small, elderly, declining congregation.

Shirley Earl and Maihri Cameron have now retired from the vestry and were thanked for their service. The provost announced that Maihri has been accepted for training for ordination. She will remain as safeguarding officer until July after which Jamie Gardner will take over. The number of nominations for the vestry matched the number of vacancies so an election was not required. The provost therefore welcomed Lis Burke, Tyro Panagoda and Maureen Wright (who remains as vestry secretary) as new vestry members, and announced that Wendy Duncan will be our new lay representative, with Emmanuel Patterson as alternate lay representative.



Provost Stephen then spoke about the cathedral finances and in particular the current deficit - the gap between our income and expenditure - of £16,800. Some savings have already been identified and while he was concerned about the situation he said he was not worried. He urged the congregation to consider increasing their giving, if possible by 20%, and perhaps to remember the cathedral in their wills. [We hope to publish a more detailed account of Stephen's report in the next issue, as we feel it should be made available to the whole congregation.]

The provost invited Chris Ahern to give his treasurer's report and he too dwelt on the deficit and said targets were being set for income generation and savings. He thanked Wendy for her work with the Warm Space initiative and pointed out that we were the only local organisation undertaking this work that Scottish Fire and Rescue had chosen to partner with. Heating the cathedral was described as 'a nightmare', owing not just to the cost of fuel but also to problems with the boilers and boiler maintenance firms. On a brighter note he announced that the cathedral was now a recognised venue for Perth Festival of the Arts and that performances will take place here in May.

Toddler Church

In February I'll be starting a new activity at the cathedral called Toddler Church.

It's a collaboration with the Mothers' Union who have been very generous in funding the project.

Toddler Church is a cross between a parent and toddler group, and a church service for 0-5 year olds. We'll meet in the Lady Chapel on Thursday mornings in term time. The first hour is for play and chat. There will be toys and books available, and grown-ups will be offered a hot drink. Then at 11.30 we tidy up and do our 'circle time liturgy'.

To start our liturgy, we sing a welcome song and say our Toddler Church prayer: 'God in heaven hear our prayer. Keep us in your loving care. Bless and guide in all we do and God bless those who love us too. Amen.' Then I'll read a short Bible story and there will be some sort of reflection on or response to it. Sometimes we'll talk about the stories together. Children have the most surprising questions! Sometimes we'll act out the stories, or sing a song about them, or use wooden figures to tell the story. Sometimes, instead of a Bible story, we'll explore the church or meet a member of the ministry team or have a go at flower arranging. The idea is to offer a programme that teaches our faith and helps families to feel at home in our church building and community.

After the story and reflection we play some games with a parachute, which is a great way to get everyone working together and usually involves a lot of laughter. Then, somehow I need to calm the children down a bit (I'm working on that!) before our final element - the blessing. We sing this to the tune of *Sing a Song of Sixpence*:

May the Lord now bless us and keep us all safe.
Send us out from here filled with love and grace.
Take the things we've learnt and the special things we know,
and help us all to make the world a place where love can grow.

Once a term there will be a Toddler Church Communion service. This is a short, interactive service that Stephen (Provost) and I adapted from the 1982 communion liturgy. As with any Toddler Church session, adults and children are welcome to join in at the level that suits them. They can receive communion (if they're baptised), or a blessing, or simply watch and find out what's going on.

That's an outline of what we do at Toddler Church. Now to why we do those things.

Toddler Church works on a few key principles. I could write pages about this but I might get banned from writing for the magazine, so I'll try to restrain myself...

Toddler Church is explicitly Christian. We meet in a church, we teach the faith and we pray. The families who join us don't have to call themselves Christians or be church-goers, but we are, so we open our hearts and share what we have.

Toddler Church is welcoming. We meet families where they are in life. We don't try to change them or judge their parenting or give unsolicited advice. We welcome them into our church building and community, offer them a cup of tea, and seek to learn as much from them as they do from us.

Toddler Church is deliberately 'low key'. We work on the principal that all we need to help children learn are our bodies, our voices and our teaching skills. We present the church as it would be any other time families visit, so we don't have music playing or noisy toys available. There is no special equipment involved in our activities beyond a parachute and perhaps colourful scarves or toy figures. This means anyone can lead sessions or replicate the activities at home, and our costs are very low. Sustainability is a key aspect of good stewardship, which is part of our duty as Christians.

Toddler Church is based on an understanding of healthy child development. Young children need to move; it is a vital biological urge and it helps them to learn. Young children need to be taken seriously and not underestimated. Young children can say Tyrannosaurus Rex so why not procession or Magnificat or Annunciation? Their faith is often more profound than ours because they are not afraid to engage with things they can't see (unicorns, fairies, wizards... God!) and they are not yet cynical or confined in their thinking. Children live with ambiguity and mystery and the unknown every day because they are new to the world and our society and language(s). They don't walk into a room and expect to understand everything. It is we adults who get scared of new words or feel excluded when we don't instantly understand everything or know exactly how to behave. However, in order to learn, children don't need constant novelty. They need repetition and time to process new experiences, hence our fixed 'liturgy' in

each session.

Finally, Toddler Church is free to attend. In the winter months in particular, when it is too cold to be outside all day, it can cost a lot of money to get out of the house with little ones. Providing a free weekly activity is one of the ways in which our church can serve the local community.

To finish, I ask for your prayers for our new venture, for the families that (I hope!) will join us and, please, for me. I have a spectacular ability to doubt myself, so your support in prayer would mean a great deal.

*With love,
Izzy*

Warm Spaces

The Monday morning (9.00 to 11.30am) warm space in the Chapter House goes from strength to strength, offering a warm breakfast or morning coffee to anyone who would welcome a bit of warmth and company. The team were recently presented with a cheque for £250 from the Order of St John which will go to the cathedral to assist with the running of this popular service. Helpers and customers are pictured below at the presentation of the cheque by Alison Milne of the Order of St John. Baxter, a good friend of the late Brandy, looks up at Bob on the far right, hoping he might possibly have spare tin of soup in his pocket.



Thank you!

Good afternoon to everyone at Perth Cathedral. I hope this message finds you well. One of our volunteers, Carmen [*who also volunteers at our warm space, Ed.*], recently made me aware of a donation from yourselves which she brought to the Foodbank. I just wanted to offer a note of thanks, not just for this donation, but for the ongoing support we receive from yourselves and the congregation. Thanks ever so much, we very much appreciate your willingness to stand alongside the community you are rooted in, in the fight against hardship and hunger.

The cathedral community is valued by everyone at the Foodbank, and we are delighted to consider you as part of our Foodbank extended family. Thank you so much for all your support in 2024. Wishing you well.

*Lori Hughes
Foodbank Project Manager*

Happy Birthday!



A belated happy birthday to Andrew, one of the warm space team, who recently celebrated a significant birthday. Pat baked a cake for him which he kindly shared with other team members. Pictured are, at the back, Carmen, Marion, Peter and Maureen, with Pat, Andrew and Wendy at the front.

Cover Photo

Services by candlelight were a feature of our Advent and Christmas services and were greatly appreciated by many. The next candlelit service will be Choral Evensong on Sunday 16 February at 4.00pm. Many thanks to Lis for the photo.

Eco-Congregation News

The team from Home Energy Scotland is visiting our Warm Space on a Monday morning for the next few weeks. Do pop in for a cuppa and have a chat. They are offering free, impartial advice on energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting water waste and more. You could be eligible for support from the Scottish Government-funded Warmer Homes Scotland programme to help make your home warmer and cosier.

Wendy Duncan

Cathedral News

After ten years of no price increase it has been reluctantly decided to put the cost of the printed edition up from £1.10 per issue to £1.50. This may seem like a steep increase but it reflects almost exactly the rate of inflation over the past ten years. The suggested cost for the ten issues per year of *Cathedral News* is therefore £15.00. If you wish the magazine to be posted out to you, then please add a further £8.50 to cover second class postage costs. The digital issue of the magazine, which looks exactly the same as the printed edition, is sent out free of charge, though of course you will need a computer, an iPad or a mobile phone to be able to access it. The most important thing, though, is that you should only pay what you can afford. After all, *Cathedral News* is priceless!

'Are You a Catholic or a Protestant?'

Already in my four months here, I've been asked this about St Ninian's Cathedral loads of times and it has prompted me to address it in a sermon. It is a good question as few people even in Scotland know what our Scottish Episcopal Church is and only about 30,000 people belong to our Church out of a population of 5,490,100. But we have a unique identity which goes back to the beginnings of Christianity in Scotland. So, what is the answer? There are a few good answers...

'Both'. This is a good one which gets people thinking! The Scottish Episcopal Church defines itself in its Canons (its basic law) as 'a branch of the One, Holy,

Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ', so we are without any doubt Catholic. Our history also involved breaking with the Papacy in 1560 so we are 'Reformed' although nowhere does the Scottish Episcopal Church call itself 'Protestant'. In a country still plagued by sectarianism, 'both' is good because it shows we are open and inclusive.

'Catholic without the Pope'. Some cheeky American Episcopalians have said 'Catholic without the guilt'. As a branch of the Catholic Church we don't think we are the only true church but we are part of the One Catholic Church founded by Christ. In 1828 under English influence, the word Protestant was used for the first time to describe our Church but such was the opposition that it was dropped in 1838. So, we are Catholic but don't have the whole Vatican apparatus to decide doctrine and tell us who we should have as bishops.

'Catholic'. This word, which we say in the Creed every Sunday, means 'universal'. Literally it comes from the Greek adjective *katholikos* (καθολικός) which comes from the words *kata* ('according to') *holos* ('the whole'). It means we accept the whole Christian faith as revealed in Christ and handed on in the Church through the Bible and Tradition. St Ninian's Cathedral was built like a medieval Catholic cathedral, our main service is the Eucharist or Mass, we say the Catholic Creed, our clergy wear the same vestments as Catholic clergy around the world, and we have a Lady Chapel to show our love for the Virgin Mary.

'Catholic' meaning 'according to the whole' can also be understood as 'ecumenical' or 'inclusive', i.e. not leaving things or people out. We think we are inclusive because we are welcoming, marry divorced people and same-sex couples, and ordain women. This is good but it is bigger than that (and as we are truly inclusive we include members who have doubts about these developments). Our calendar includes Easter Orthodox saints like Seraphim of Sarov, Roman Catholic saints like Teresa of Avila, and Protestant saints like the Quaker Elizabeth Fry. Our worship might include Reformed metrical psalms, Wesleyan hymns, a Taizé chant, and a Latin Mass Setting. To be an Episcopalian is to belong to the whole Christian tradition, not a small sect.

'The Catholic remainder of the ancient Church of Scotland'. This is more of a mouthful but it is how our bishops described the Scottish Episcopal Church when they agreed to consecrate Samuel Seabury as the first Bishop for America in

1784. Bishop Ian stands in an unbroken line of bishops which goes back to the first bishops at St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane and to St Columba himself, whose relics were moved to Dunkeld in 849 to avoid the Vikings. We are Catholic but also deeply and essentially Scottish, rooted in the original Church in this land - don't call us 'the English Kirk'!

So, are we Protestant in any way? Not really. Except in the way of football or Northern Ireland where if you aren't a Roman Catholic you are a Protestant. I'm sure you know the story about the Algerian visiting Belfast. He was stopped on the street and asked 'are you Catholic or Protestant?'. He said, 'I'm Muslim'. The person asking thought for a while and then said 'Are you a Catholic Muslim or a Protestant Muslim?'

We are a small Church in the North of Europe but the whole inheritance of Christianity belongs to us and we have a lot to give.

Provost Stephen

Brother Harold

The editor recently read the obituary of Brother Harold Palmer who spent 50 years praying on a hill in Northumberland. He had many visitors one of whom, Father George Guiver, apparently had a revelation when praying with him - that prayer did not have to be deeply personal or come from the heart. 'Prayer is just work. You get on with it, simply plugging away at the daily services whether you feel like it or not.' To him, prayer provided a structure which, paradoxically, set you free. Should you be interested in reading further, a number of Brother Harold obituaries can be found online, courtesy of Google.

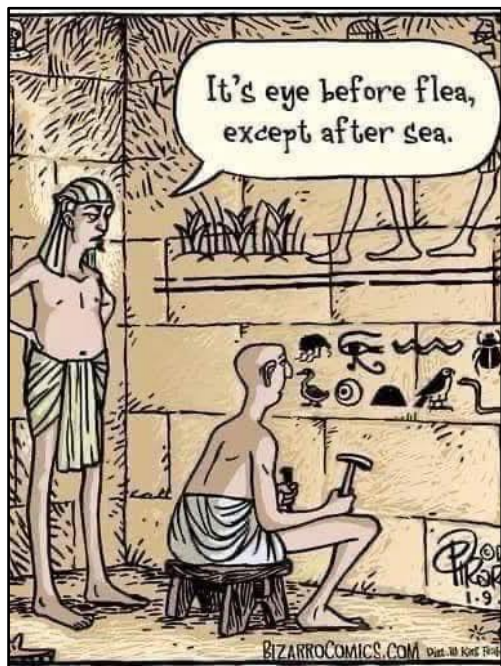
2025 Calendars

Perth Rotary Club have kindly given us a number of calendars to sell to raise funds for the cathedral. Showing scenes of Perth and beyond they are priced at only £5.00, every penny of which will go to the currently rather empty cathedral coffers. They were put on sale too late to be mentioned in last month's issue but we still have a few left, so don't hang back - grab one while you can! They can be picked up in the cloisters.

From the Farquhar Diaries

2 February 1925. Some how or another nothing much has ever before been made either of St Ninian's Day or the Dedication Festival (Dec.) of the Cathedral. But, when towards the close of last year, the Provost (Smythe) found as usual that our income hardly met our expenditure, the thought struck him that he might hold a great Dedication Festival to stir up enthusiasm for the Cathedral. Why he chose the last week in January for it, I cannot imagine. Liturgical correctness is not his strong point. But, having resolved upon the scheme, he threw himself with his usual whole-hearted fervour into it ; pushed through many difficulties...and had the whole scheme thoroughly organised...The special envelopes which were sent out have brought in so far a sum of £90 and the ordinary Collection was £5 above the average. That should relieve anxiety for this year!

The more things change, the more they stay the same! The Very Rev'd G T S Farquhar (1857-1927) was Dean of this diocese and, although never Provost, spent much of his working life in and around the cathedral. His diaries cover the period 1881-1927 and are a wonderful source for the ecclesiastical and social history of Perth.



Duncan Sinclair

Duncan Sinclair, a former cathedral organist in the later 1960s, died in Glasgow on 7 November, aged almost 90. A good friend of Fiona Crighton's brother-in-law, the late Rev'd Drew, and indeed of Fiona herself and husband Bill, he will be sadly missed by his friends in music and teaching.

In trying to think how this cartoon could be vaguely relevant, it occurred to the editor that it must surely represent an Israelite slave trying to master the basics of ancient Egyptian grammar...

Eddie the Eagle says...

Looking back to the inauguration of President Trump's first term, I see I used the Biblical quote about 'the first shall be last'. By that token, the first President Trump would therefore be the Last Trump and it was all sounding rather apocalyptic. Even more so now that this is Trump's second coming! Those who would not describe themselves as fans, and who fear the worst, could perhaps be described as apopleptic apocalyptics - and try saying that after a couple of sips of communion wine!



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	Sung Eucharist 11.00am
Tuesday	Morning Prayer 9.00, Evening Prayer 5.30
Wednesday	Morning Prayer 9.00, Eucharist 11.00, Evening Prayer 5.30
Thursday	Morning Prayer 9.00, Evening Prayer 5.30
Friday	Morning Prayer 9.00, Evening Prayer 5.30

Giving

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

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 March magazine is **16 February**.



**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:

Bishop

The Right Rev'd Ian Paton
Diocesan Office, 28a Balhousie Street, Perth, PH1 5HJ
Tel: 01738 443173

Provost

The Very Rev'd Dr Stephen Holmes
provost.perth@gmail.com

Assisting Clergy

The Rev'd Philip Francis
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The Rev'd Peter J Higson, Vocational Deacon
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The Rev'd Ross Stirling-Young
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