

# Cathedral News



March 2025

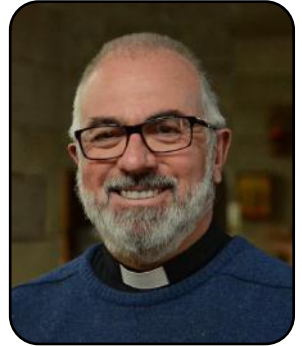
# ***Who's Who at the Cathedral***

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St Ninian's School	Head Teacher	01738 477587
PKAVS (Bookings)	Secretary	01738 567076

# From the Provost

Dear friends,

'Back to basics!' You may remember prime minister John Major's unsuccessful 'back to basics' campaign in 1993, but the idea of returning to the things that are really important is a very good one. It is something to keep in mind as we begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, 5 March. Lent is a time to get back to the basics of our faith - what do we really believe? What does it mean for our life?



The news shows us that the old certainties and alliances are changing. The spirit of hatred and lies is abroad in our world and it is revealing the corruption and dishonesty at the heart of our own nice, liberal democracies. My Polish and Finnish friends have been sharing videos of their children doing national service in the army. They all note that the speeches at their passing out parades are getting more serious about the threat of war.

## Contents

Who's who	2	Jubilee of 1300	23
From the Provost	3	New cathedral logo	23
Readings/collects for March	6	Update from Deacon Ross	24
Forthcoming events/services	8	A stable home?	25
Lent, Holy Week and Easter	8	Seeds	26
Choir news	10	'A Tree'	26
From the registers	10	Bishop's Lent Appeal	28
Candlemas at the cathedral	11	Eco congregation news	29
Baptism	13	Provost's contact details	29
A coincidence?	13	From the Farquhar diaries	30
Provost's report to the AGM	14	The Rev'd Canon Celia	30
Salvation Army	20	Eddie the Eagle	31
Pancake party	21	Times of services etc	31
Lent groups	22	Clergy contact details	32

I don't want to be alarmist, but a dangerous world is a call to return to God. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the traditional three works of Lent, to which we might add going deeper in faith. This year we have two opportunities to start Lent with prayer on Ash Wednesday. I hope to see you all then. A good Lenten practice if you are free on weekdays is to come to the weekly Wednesday 11.00am Eucharist or to the Stations of the Cross each Friday in the cathedral, a chance to follow Jesus on his journey to the cross and be in solidarity with all who walk the road of pain in our world today.

We also have two Lent study groups, one looking at the basics of our faith in the Creed with Christians from around the world and the other looking at the basics of our spirituality by contemplating the pictures on the cathedral Stations of the Cross. These will help us go deeper in faith, but we may also want to do some study at home, perhaps taking a book of the Bible. This year we are reading the Gospel of Luke on Sundays and we might use that; or it might be another book. Books I have enjoyed recently, and which are not too academic, are *Living in Wonder* by Rod Dreher, *Passions of the Soul* by Rowan Williams and *Unforgivable? Exploring the Limits of Forgiveness* by Stephen Cherry, who led our recent diocesan clergy retreat at St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull.

At my not particularly religious school we had a Lenten Collection each year when the different classes competed to raise money for charity in inventive ways. This Lent we are supporting Bishop Ian's Lent Appeal for the work of the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem in Gaza. The Christians of the Middle East are suffering and being persecuted but they still want to serve their neighbours. I wrote about how we Christians should use our money in the last magazine and the vestry and I would like to thank all those who have increased their giving to St Ninian's Cathedral in recent months.

That is prayer and almsgiving, there is also fasting. We Western Christians are VERY bad at this. Fasting means not eating and abstinence means not eating certain foods, for example meat. Our Scottish Prayer Book gives us a 'Table of the Days of Fasting and Abstinence' which includes 'The forty days of Lent' and the Greater Fasts of Ash Wednesday and Holy Week. I am not alone in not liking being told what to do, but we often fast and abstain to get a healthy body so why can't we do it to get a healthy soul? I'd suggest starting by abstaining from meat and fish on Fridays. I have done it for a while, it is not much and I may forget and

eat a burger by mistake, but it does remind me of God and help me get my priorities in order.



*Temptation is all part of Lent and Cathedral News is always happy to oblige!*

The last month has seen the successful start of our two new initiatives for children, Sunday Club and Thursday Toddler Church. Thanks to Izzy and Jamie and their helpers for running these and thanks to them and to all of you for making our cathedral such a welcoming place for children and families. Our Monday Warm Spaces continues to do a great job and Wendy Duncan who organises it (and many other things!) has been chosen to receive the Royal Maundy from the King at Durham Cathedral on Maundy Thursday this year. It is a great honour given for outstanding Christian service in the community, well-deserved by Wendy and also a recognition of our cathedral. Well done, Wendy, and I hope you will share your experience with us!

We have a new cathedral logo. For a long time we have been using a drawing of Bishop Torry's pastoral staff, done by Fr Kelvin Holdsworth when he was Precentor. We will continue to use it where it is appropriate, but being long and thin it is not suitable for all occasions. We wanted a more compact design so, after much consultation and various designs created by our own Margot Dunnachie, we have settled on a design based on a seventh-century cross from St Ninian's monastery at Whithorn. It is simple, clear, and links us to our patron saint. We will use it on its own and with the name of the cathedral. Thanks to Margot and all who took part in the consultation process.

We have our pancake party on Shrove Tuesday. I look forward to seeing you there and wish you and your families and friends a happy and penitential Lent. May we use this Lent to look forward to a joy-filled Easter!

The Very Rev'd Dr Stephen Holmes

# Readings and Collects for March

## 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

## Ash Wednesday - 5 March

**Collect:** Grant, O most merciful God, that we your people may enter this season of penitence with faithfulness, and complete it with steadfast devotion; 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:** Joel 2.1-2,12-17, Psalm 51.1-18, 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10, Matthew 6.1-6,16-21

## First Sunday of Lent - 9 March

**Collect:** Almighty God, whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet did not sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in submission to your Spirit, that, as you know our weakness, so we may know your power to save; 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:** Deuteronomy 26.1-11, Psalm 91.1-2,9-16, Romans 10.8b-13, Luke 4.1-13

## Second Sunday of Lent - 16 March

**Collect:** O God, you see that we lack the strength to help ourselves: protect us both inwardly and outwardly; that our bodies may be guarded from adversity, and our minds may be defended from such thoughts as assault and harm the soul; 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 15.1-12,17-18, Psalm 27, Philippians 3.17-4.1, Luke 9.28-36

### **Choral Evensong at 4.00pm - 16 March**

**Readings:** Galatians 3.1-9,23-29, Luke 14.17-33

### **Third Sunday of Lent - 23 March**

**Collect:** Merciful Father, we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: when we are discouraged by our weakness, give us strength to follow Christ, our pattern and our hope; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

**Readings:** Isaiah 55.1-9, Psalm 63.1-8, 1 Corinthians 10.1-13, Luke 13.1-9

### **The Annunciation of the Lord - Tuesday 25 March**

**Collect:** Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord: that, as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel to the Blessed Virgin Mary; so by his cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection; 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 7.10-14, Psalm 40.5-10, Hebrews 10.4-10, Luke 1.26-38

### **Fourth Sunday of Lent - 30 March**

**Collect:** Almighty God, grant that we, who are weighed down by our sins, may be relieved and encouraged by your grace; 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:** Joshua 5.9-12, Psalm 32, 2 Corinthians 5.16-21, Luke 15.1-3, 11b-32

### **Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday) - 6 April**

**Collect:** Merciful God, look upon your family as we travel to the foot of the cross: and, by your great goodness, guide us in body; that, by your protection, we may also be preserved in heart and mind; 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 43.16-21, Psalm 126, Philippians 3.4b-14, John 12.1-8

# ***Forthcoming Events and Services***

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

**Saturday 3 May**, Scottish Guild of Servers quiet day, led by the Provost.

**Saturday 10 May**, Nicaea Study Day: 'Why is Nicaea Important?', in the Chapter House.

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 1700<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

1430 Welcome by the Very Rev'd Dr Stephen Mark Holmes, Provost

1445 Professor Ayres, Part I : Nicaea as the rule of faith

1545 Refreshments

1615 Professor Ayres, Part II : 'Nicaea's Hidden Depths'

1715 Break

1730 Evensong, the Provost presiding

## ***Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2025***

**Ash Wednesday - 5 March**

Mass with Ashes at 11.00am and Sung Mass with Ashes at 7.00pm



**Each week in Lent: the usual services together with**

Monday: Lent Group (Lis) 11.00am in the Lady Chapel  
Thursday: Lent Group (Stephen) 5.30pm in the Chapter House  
Friday: Stations of the Cross 11.00am in the cathedral

**The Annunciation of the Lord - Tuesday 25 March**

7.00pm Sung Eucharist

**Palm Sunday - 13 April**

Sung Mass with blessing of Palms and Procession at 11.00am. Provost to preside

**Tuesday in Holy Week - 15 April**

*Stainer's Crucifixion* at 7.00pm, sung by our choir

**Wednesday in Holy Week - 16 April**

Mass at 11.00am

**Maundy Thursday - 17 April**

Chrism Mass at 11.00am. Bishop to preside

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7.00pm. Provost to preside. Followed by watching before the altar of repose in the Lady Chapel

**Good Friday - 18 April**

Liturgy of the Passion at 3.00pm. Provost to preside

**Holy Saturday - 19 April**

Easter Vigil at 9.00pm. Provost to preside

**Easter Day - 20 April**

Sung Mass at 11.00am. Bishop to preside

## **Ascension Day - Thursday 29 May**

Mass at 11.00am and Sung Mass at 7.00pm. Bishop to preside

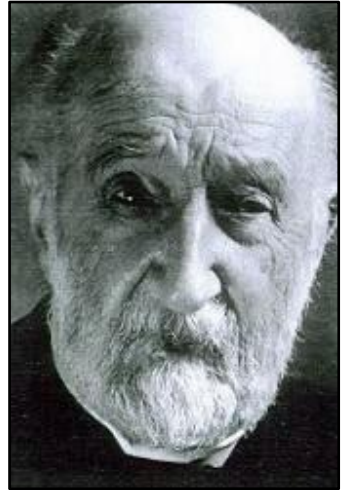
## **Corpus Christi - Thursday 19 June**

Sung Mass at 7.00pm, with procession and benediction. Provost to preside

# **Choir News**

On 15 April at 7.00pm we shall perform *The Crucifixion* by John Stainer (1840-1891). Written for Marylebone Church where his ex-pupil William Hodge was organist, it was first performed on 24 February 1887, with the composer conducting and Hodge as organist. The text was selected and written by the Rev'd W J Sparrow Simpson, deacon at the church. He was 27 years old at the time. The work was an immediate success and is still performed regularly today, though it has its detractors who criticise its 'sentimentality' in particular. It was especially written for a small parish church choir, with solo parts, all male, coming from the choir.

We hope that you will support us in this venture.



*The Rev'd Canon Dr W J  
Sparrow Simpson, 1859-1952*

*Alister Y Allan*

## **From the Registers**

### **Funerals**

Monday 17 February at the cathedral - Audrey Richardson

Wednesday 19 February at the cathedral, Jane (Jean) Gowans

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

# What's Been Going On?

## Candlemas at the Cathedral

The cathedral celebrated Candlemas in fine style on Sunday 2 February. We were joined by the young choristers of Ardvreck School, together with many of their parents, to the extent that numbers were greater than usual. When Provost Stephen announced that not only the clergy and choir would process around the cathedral, but would be followed by the congregation as well, it almost seemed to be a recipe for chaos. And chaos it was too, though in an utterly delightful way. There was a hold-up at the back of the church as the head of the procession had to pause to allow the tail to exit the nave, and similarly too at the chancel steps. But, as Stephen announced, traffic management was invented in Rome during the Jubilee of 1300 when religious processions caused jams on the bridges over the Tiber, so there is an excellent precedent. Before the rest of the service continued in a more usual way, the provost then wished us all a happy Christmas for the last time, Candlemas marking the end of the Christmas season.



*The servers and choir lead the way in the procession round the cathedral. There had been a short pause to allow the congregation to clear the nave before they resumed their way to the chancel steps. The photo shows our new young servers in action - the solemn faces and level candles indicate how well they have been trained. Well done!*

At the same service Chris Ahern was admitted to the Scottish Guild of Servers, and Xander, Eilidh and Avinu started serving for first time, Eilidh as boat girl and the other two as acolytes. When the editor mentioned to granddaughter Eilidh that he too had been trained as a server by Barry, she said, 'Gosh, Barry must be very





old.' Your noble editor, instead of agreeing, pointed out that this was a long time ago and Barry was not much older than he was. Many congratulations to Chris Ahern who was admitted to the Scottish Guild of Servers at the Candlemas service on 2 February. He is pictured below with Provost Stephen and fellow guild member Erica.

Well done to the three new members of the serving team - Avinu, Alexander and Eildh - who have recently had their initial training from Erica and Barry and whose first outing was at the Candlemas service. Also at Candlemas, Provost Stephen blessed the candles to be used in services in the coming year.



Thanks as always to our photographers, including Lis and Izzy.





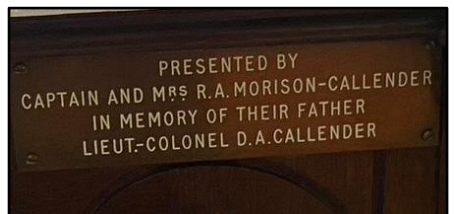
## Baptism

As mentioned last month, Caitlin May Riach was baptised on 26 January. Lis has sent in this lovely photo which shows Provost Stephen, the family of baby Caitlin - the newest member of our cathedral family - and of course Caitlin herself.



## Coincidence?

The editor happened to notice the plaque on the large table - once near the entrance to the cathedral and now at the back - which states that it had been given in memory of D A Callender. A quick browse through the British Newspaper Index online revealed that Lt Col Callender had died in 1953 at 40 Hay St, Perth. Those with memories stretching back to the time of Provost Graham Forbes will perhaps recognise that address as belonging to the cathedral. However, according to Mrs Editor, St Ninian's House at 40 Hay Street was bought in the early 1980s so it would appear to be simply coincidence.



# Provost's Report to the AGM 2025

*Provost Stephen gave this report to the AGM on 19 January. As a number of people were absent from the AGM, and many of our cathedral family are unable to get to church, it felt important to print the report in full so that as many as possible can read the provost's first impressions and his ideas and vision for the future.*

Thanks to John for his report and for continuing as deputy chair on my arrival. As a community we have rightly said thanks to the vestry and ministry team last year for holding things together during the transition period, and I would like to pay special thanks to the cathedral staff, Chris (manager, worked closely with John), Marion (admin) and Jackie (cleaner and welcomer) for your work and allowing the cathedral to remain open through the week. Special mention to Marion, the friendly and efficient public face of the cathedral, who has retired but, I am very pleased to say, won't be going away.

I have now been in post for four months. John said it feels like ages... in a good sense. I feel at home here as does my family, for which thanks. A good test of a church for a rector or provost is to ask, is it a place you would choose to come to if you weren't provost? The answer is yes. We've been here as a family while on holiday and had good choral worship and a fabulous welcome - this congregation is especially good at welcoming children and families. Thanks must go to Hunter who had a lot to do with creating this culture of love and welcome. As the psalm says 'yea I have come into a goodly heritage' (Ps. 16.6). I feel a bit like the man in the 1980s advert for the Remington shaver who said 'I liked it so much, I bought the company.' In this case the company or cathedral bought me, or at least invited the bishop to appoint me Provost. Thank you and Bishop Ian for your confidence in me and let's pray that God will give the grace to support us in this new phase of the life of St Ninian's Cathedral, starting in its 175<sup>th</sup> year.

I often ask myself what is a church? How are we different from the Rotary Club? It is that we are a community built around Jesus and the Easter Mystery of his Cross and Resurrection. You may have noticed that mystery is a word I am keen on, but this mystery has a core, an inner reality which is the Mystery of Love. This tells us how to live, in Jesus' great commandment, 'love God and love your neighbour as

yourself'. Love is not a vague feeling, it has hard edges and a shape which defines who we are and I will structure the rest of this report on this triple commandment of love. Love God; Love neighbour; Love yourself. As a Christian community we can't have a better set of priorities.

Love God. We love God in prayer and worship and this must come first. Jesus said 'pray at all times' and St Benedict said 'let nothing come before the work of God' by which he meant our worship. Many contribute in different ways to our worship. We in the ministry team are blessed to have all orders of ministry here: clergy - bishop, priests, deacons - and it's a particular joy to have the recently-ordained Ross on our team (I am his training incumbent), and we support his pioneering work at St Columba's, Stanley. And laity, both Lis as lay reader and others who make a big contribution to our worship. Especial thanks to our faithful sacristans, Margaret and Andrew (who would appreciate more help) and our servers, with Chris added to our team, and Erica, Ian and Barry working to train new servers so we can have a full team each Sunday. Our worship is not a one-man band with the minister up front and everyone else listening, but is impressive in that many take part in their different roles, including readers, sidespeople, and those leading intercessions. Thanks to Jennifer and Cate for organising these ministries, and to Shirley for the flowers. I can't mention everyone by name but Pat Butler is retiring from reading and leading intercessions and by thanking her we do thank everyone.

Love God. Music is central to our life, St Augustine says - 'He who sings prays twice' - and the choir contributes so much to our worship. Canon 22.7 states '...responsibility for divine worship in every congregation shall rest with the Rector [or Provost] and shall extend to overall control of all aspects of divine worship, including organ music and choir.' One of the pleasures of being here is working with Geoff and the choir - many thanks to you all. I have enjoyed joining them at rehearsals and their annual lunch, and so much has been done in four short months: Fauré's *Requiem* at All Souls; The Robert Lyon Mass remembering our local martyr; singing in the St John Centre; the two carol concerts. It is also good to hear Emmanuel and others playing the piano and organ during the week and to have music before and after the Wednesday Eucharist. Our choir is also important for outreach - for example, connections with local schools. I hope we can develop our musical life on this good foundation, and look forward to



working with Geoff on our worship and dealing with issues such as the slowness of our hymns, which a number of you have mentioned.

Loving God in worship is not, however, only sounds and gestures, important though they are. The Eucharist is the centre of our life together but it is not our only worship. Silence is also important, when we silence the chatter of our minds so we can hear God. It is good to learn to be silent together and I want to thank all of you who pray daily for the cathedral. From the start I have tried to be present here and to pray and sing Morning and Evening Prayer, Tuesday to Friday. Sometimes I am alone with the angels but often I am joined by other people and I hope this will develop.

If we turn to the Love of neighbour, we should note that the three commandments are really only one and I have already mentioned many 'neighbours' who help us love God. Now we think about our love directed to people, of which our spirit of welcome I mentioned at the start is an important part. Each year the Provost sends a set of statistics to the diocese. We are a community of 207 with 130 communicants, but that is not all. At the communion rail we are all equal before God; someone who has been a member for 60 years and their parents before them has no more status here than the new-born baby from a family who has just arrived. I noted before I came here that St Ninian's is characterised by a warm welcome and it has been a joy to see that extended to more people this year. We are a growing Church. I looked at the Christmas statistics for the four big Christmas services (Carols, Christingle, Midnight and Christmas Day) and this year 606 people attended, last year was 327, 2022 was 266 and the previous years were affected by covid. An 85% increase this year and the numbers are now about 25% higher than before covid when total attendance was 490. There has been a similar increase in attendance at the Wednesday Eucharist and I'm told our Sunday numbers have also increased recently. Numbers are not all, but it is important to note this as churches decline because they buy into a story that 'we are a small, declining elderly congregation'. We are not, although one of our strengths is the friendliness and commitment of our elderly members.

At the other end of the age range it has been great to see so many children here on a Sunday over the last few months. After a consultation with the other parents

I have set up a children's ministry team with Izzy, James and Maihri and our first projects starting in February are Sunday Club and Toddler Church on Thursday mornings. Toddler Church has attracted funding and support from the Mothers' Union and a link to the Episcopalian children's charity Aberlour. Partnerships like this will be even more important in the future. Our link with education goes back to the foundation of the cathedral and we still support St Ninian's Primary School. Thanks to Deacon Peter for providing chaplaincy and I hope to be more involved with the school. We had a successful cathedral visit before Christmas where the pupils sniffed incense and debated the difference between a priest and a vampire!

The importance of partnerships can be seen in another really important cathedral project for loving our neighbours, the Monday Warm Spaces supported by the Fire and Rescue Service and YMCA (both of whom took part in our Community Carol Service). Thanks to Wendy Duncan for organising that and so many other things. These include our Eco Group from which she will step back a bit this year. Ministry, giving people pastoral support, is not just done by the clergy. Recently I noticed both Wendy and Chris Ahern giving profound personal support to two people in need who just turned up here - the advantage of keeping the doors open. Lis Burke and others are also active in a more official sense in visiting the housebound and bringing them the sacraments, and we hope to develop this this year.

Lord Reith famously said in 1922 that the purpose of the BBC was to inform, educate, entertain. Education - hopefully with a bit of entertainment - is at the heart of our mission in our links with schools, our sermons, and study groups, as Lis and I led Advent groups last year. We need to communicate with as many people as possible the message of Jesus and let them know what we are up to. I found out a lot about the cathedral from our excellent magazine, for which thanks to Jeremy and his team. Thanks to Margot for looking after our website and the administrators of our social media. We hope to develop our online presence this year, though some of our growth was the result of our old-fashioned massive red Christmas poster.

Love yourself. If we don't open our doors and engage with others we are not loving our neighbour, but Jesus said 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Self-love

is a sin but we need to learn a right love of self to enable us to love others. I understand this to mean that a church must be well administered to allow it to love God and our neighbour. If we have no money and the roof has fallen in, our love of God and neighbour is hindered - Scotland is littered with the closed doors of former Presbyterian churches; we don't want to join them.

I have thanked the vestry for holding things together but they are also a joy to work with and very proactive. Among others, thanks must go to our very efficient secretary Maureen, to John our urbane deputy chair and to Erica who has the challenging brief of looking after our buildings. Izzy and I want to thank her, Chris and the vestry for finding us a lovely home which will also be a good investment for the cathedral. It says something about the quality of our vestry that they invited us to be involved in the search as we would live there. It seems obvious, but not all vestries would have done that.

This year Shirley Earl retires from vestry as does Maihri Cameron, and thanks to them for their service. Maihri has to leave vestry as she is starting training for the priesthood with the Scottish Episcopal Institute, and we wish her every blessing in her vocation. We thank her for her work as safeguarding officer, a really important job as we must be a safe place for children and vulnerable adults. Maihri will stay in post until her studies start in the summer and I'm glad that James Gardner will take on this portfolio in addition to all his other work with the council and the diocese.

In addition to his work as cathedral manager, Chris Ahern is also our volunteer treasurer and I have seen him and Liz Gardiner do a huge amount of work to put our accounts together for this year. Thanks to them for all this. Accounts are hard to read but, leaving out an unrealised gain on investments of £62,500, our expenditure exceeds income by £16,800. This deficit was in a year when only one month of the provost's stipend was paid so if our income stays the same we are looking at a deficit of £58,000. Now, we have already made savings of about £14,000 by reducing staff hours, which brings the possible deficit down to £44,000 and we have realistic hopes of increasing income and cutting costs in other ways, but we still need to spend to support our mission. The treasurer will say more about our finances later but I want to mention this here as it is directly relevant to our mission and long-term survival. I am concerned, but not unduly worried. Compared to other churches we are blessed with resources and

different income streams but we will need to consider stewardship this year - perhaps increasing our giving or setting up a standing order, if you don't already have one. It is important to remember that what we do with our money is a barometer of our Christian life and while we should all consider increasing our giving, perhaps even by 20%, our circumstances and responsibilities may mean we need to reduce it. We can also ensure that St Ninian's Cathedral is remembered in our wills as legacies make a real difference. Thanks to those who have left us money this year and to all of you who give regularly to our cathedral.

I don't, however, want to end with financial challenges. I have mentioned many people who contribute so much and there are more who have not been mentioned. We are rich in faith and generosity. There are exciting green shoots of growth everywhere and I will send a questionnaire to the congregation later in the year to help me discern where we might grow. I am confident that, thinking of the three-fold commandment of love, in this our 175<sup>th</sup> year, by God's help we will continue to grow in prayer, in the number of those we serve, and in resources (including money). Thank you for your generous welcome and let us work together to serve God and our neighbour in this beautiful and holy place.

# The Salvation Army

*The Sally Army, to use an affectionate name, is a popular charity to support, particularly at Christmas. Here's a little bit of its history, taken from its own website*

The Salvation Army began on the streets of East London in 1865 when Methodists, William and Catherine Booth, abandoned the traditional concept of a church pulpit to take God's word directly to the people.

The Booths preached and lived out a doctrine of practical Christianity – soup, soap and salvation – to encourage both social and spiritual transformation among society's most vulnerable and marginalised people.

Their work included setting up shelters for people who were homeless, a family tracing service, running soup kitchens, helping people living in the slums and setting up rescue homes for women fleeing domestic abuse and prostitution. The couple also oversaw the world's first free labour exchange and campaigned to improve working conditions.

The movement grew rapidly outside of London and became known as the Christian Mission, with William Booth as its General-Superintendent. In 1878 the name was changed to The Salvation Army and the organisation adopted a quasi-military structure with officers and members wearing a military-style uniform.

The Salvation Army movement spread rapidly across the British Isles and within decades was established across the globe in countries such as America, Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, India, South Africa, Iceland, and Germany.

The Salvation Army's International Heritage Centre collects, preserves and researches material about the work and ministry undertaken across the globe over its history of more than 150 years.

The challenges people were facing in the late 19th Century – homelessness, addiction, loneliness and unemployment – are much the same as today. The Salvation Army has continued its founders work, tackling issues and working at the heart of communities to offer practical help, unconditional assistance and support to transform lives.

Today, The Salvation Army is a church and charity that is active in virtually every corner of the world and serves in more than 130 countries offering God's hope and love to all those in need without discrimination.

# Perth Cathedral- St Ninians

# PANCAKE



Party

Free to attend.  
All are  
Welcome!

**TUESDAY 4TH MARCH**

**15:15-16:00**

Perth Cathedral, North Methven Street, Perth,  
PH1 5PP

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**GAMES  
& RACES**

**FREE PANCAKES  
WITH FAVOURITE  
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COLD  
DRINKS**

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# Lent Groups

The Thursday Lent Group, led by Provost Stephen will be on the theme 'We believe'. There are six sessions, starting on 6 March at 5.30pm in the Chapter House.

Provost Stephen writes: We will be looking at the Nicene Creed, the summary of our Christian faith which we say each Sunday. This year is the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ecumenical Council at Nicaea. We will be using the Lent Course 'We believe' prepared by the international Anglican mission partnership organisation USPG - we will also be supporting their Lent Appeal for the Anglican hospital in Gaza. This course is based around a free booklet which mixes reflections on the Creed and its roots in the Bible with stories from Christian communities on different continents. Each of the six sessions is written by a Christian teacher, from Manila, St Kitts, Nazareth, Virginia, Malabar, and London. The sessions will begin with prayer and the booklet and the words of the Creed will be our base but, like the Advent course, I expect the discussion to go in all sorts of interesting directions. This course is open to all and while I expect it will go deep into the mystery of our faith, it will be less academic than the Nicaea study day in May.

The Monday Lent Group, led by Lis, will be on the 'Stations of the Cross', using our pictures for each station. This will start on Monday 10 March at 11.00am in the Lady Chapel.

Lis writes: This year's Lent discussion group will focus on the embroidered images of the Stations of the Cross that you can see around the cathedral. Each week we will look at a few images and share our thoughts about what we see in them, as well as reading the Gospel accounts and other reflections on them. We will meet in the Lady Chapel at 10.30am on Mondays, starting 10 March





and ending 7 April.

Please contact Lis if you'd like to take part, or sign the sheet on the cathedral notice board.

## The Jubilee of 1300

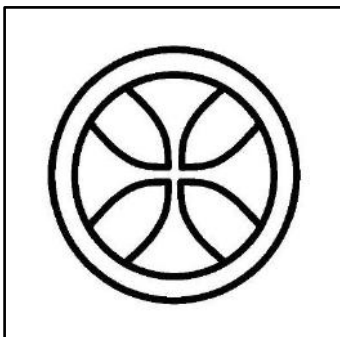


As mentioned earlier Provost Stephen, at the end of the Candlemas procession, pointed out that traffic control was used during the first and great Jubilee of 1300 when many thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe flocked to Rome (pictured left) in the hope of benefiting in the afterlife

from an indulgence. So great were the numbers arriving in the city that a new gate in the city wall had to be created and the Sant' Angelo bridge, which crossed the Tiber to the Vatican, had a small wall built along the centre, creating one lane for pilgrim arrivals and one for departures.

## New Cathedral Logo

Provost Stephen talks about the new cathedral logo in this month's letter. Designed by Margot, and based on the seventh-century St Peter carved stone at Whithorn - where can be found the St Ninian's Shrine - it is simple and attractive and will complement the logo based on Bishop Torry's staff.



## *An Update from Deacon Ross*

As your assistant curate at Perth Cathedral, I thought it would be good to share an update on what I've been up to when I'm not with you! It's hard to believe that nearly five months have passed since my ordination to the diaconate. I cannot thank the Provost, the cathedral congregation, the choir, the vestry, and the ministry team enough for the warmth and kindness you have shown me. I look forward to my time with you every Wednesday, during Evensong, and on the fourth Sunday of each month.



I've certainly hit the ground running at St Columba's, where I serve most of my time as assistant curate. One of the most exciting initiatives we've introduced is our Warm Space, open every Monday from 9.30am to 1.00pm. On average, we welcome around 24 community members weekly – a fantastic turnout for a village setting. The space has fostered a sense of community and belonging, and our guests have already clarified that they don't want it to end! Listening to their feedback and insights from a community survey I conducted, I have applied for funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to expand this initiative. If successful, we can offer a twice-weekly three-hour session featuring arts, crafts, knitting, and upcycling activities. A decision is expected in March, and I'll keep you updated in the next edition.

As many of you may know, we are also blessed to have Maihri Cameron, a member of your choir, on placement with us at St Columba's. Maihri begins her formation training with the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) this August, but she has already made a significant impact in her short time with us. She has led intercessions, preached, assisted at the altar, administered the chalice, supported our Warm Space initiative, planned and will co-lead a Lent study group, and led Taizé-inspired worship. She will remain with us until the summer, and I know she will be greatly missed by our small but growing congregation when she moves on to the next stage of her training. It has also been a joy to welcome another choir member, Annabelle, to join us for some of our worship services.

Speaking of growth, I'm delighted that our congregation is expanding! We recently welcomed two new members from the village, who are now regular worshippers with us – a real sign of encouragement that the Holy Spirit is at work!

Beyond my ministry, I continue my studies with SEI and am currently undertaking a module on Church Planting. This fascinating and enriching topic ties in well with my passion for community engagement.

Finally, I'm sure you've all noticed – I love a chat! If anyone would like a pastoral visit or just a coffee and a catch-up, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'd be delighted!

*With every blessing,  
Rev'd Ross*

## **A Stable Home?**



A few days after Candlemas, which Provost Stephen reminded us marked the end of the Christmas season, he and a band of helpers gathered on a chilly afternoon to dismantle the stable which had been erected in the cathedral garden in Advent. During the demolition a female passer-by, a Christian, was kind enough to stop and say how much she had appreciated seeing it over the Advent and Christmas period. Unfortunately the council team which for the past few years has erected and dismantled it recently

announced that they could no longer do this work for us and nor could they store the stable during the year. It was a physically hard job but with Erica and Jamie, in particular, bravely risking life and limb the team eventually succeeded. The stable is now stored temporarily in the entrance porch and elsewhere but we do need a permanent home for it. Does anyone have spare storage space?

*It is a pleasure to record here the great help given by John Spark and his council team over the past few years in storing, erecting and dismantling the stable on our behalf - thank you guys!*

# Seeds

Seeds grow in God's handiwork. We can see this in beautiful nature and in the way spring bulbs pop up, bringing us all such joy that spring is upon us. Seeds also become the plants we eat and the flowers we grow in our garden. We all enjoy God's handiwork and see it everywhere in nature. Planting our seeds in the spring time we can see a little of God's handiwork, as they grow and become a beautiful part of nature.

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' [Gen. 1.1] 'And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth," and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the



tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.' [Gen.1.11-12]

We can so enjoy all of nature, from watching natural wildlife to listening to bird song; from admiring the beauty of a rainbow to the wonders of nature and seeds; from the scent of fresh cut flowers to the fragility of a dew-dropped spider's web. All of God's handiwork is marvellous.

*Alodie Orr*

*Many thanks to Alodie for her article and for the accompanying picture of a bee.*

# A Tree

I think that I shall never see  
A poem as lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed  
Against the earth's sweet flowery breast;  
A tree that lifts her leafy arms to pray,  
A tree which may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;  
Upon whose body snow has lain  
Which intimately lives with rain;  
Poems are made by fools like me -  
But only God can make a tree.

*Anon.*

After Provost Stephen's recent sermon on the text from John 15.5, 'I am the vine, you are the branches', I called to mind a family friend, Isabella McRorie, who recited this poem by heart aged 100 years in Stanley. She used to go tattie pickin' to pay for her daughter's school uniform. She died in 2023 aged 105 and asked me to recite this poem at her funeral. She had been born in Airdrie and came to Ballathie House in Kinclaven as a lady's maid where she met her husband, George, who drove the milk lorry.

*Rev'd Geoffrey Hall*



## Cover Image

Early spring flowers begin to give the cathedral garden a bit of colour. There are plenty of snowdrops, such as these in the garden of remembrance, and even the daffodils are recovering from having the heavy stable on top of them!



# ***Bishop's Lent Appeal 2025***

Bishop Ian writes:



We have been praying and working for the war in Gaza to end, for aid to reach its people, and for the hostages to be released. There is at last a temporary ceasefire, and we pray for it to become permanent.

Now is the time for reconstruction in Gaza. There is a desperate need for the rebuilding of ruined hospitals and communities. USPG is working with the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, to support the work of reconstruction and to give medical aid.

Please support my Bishop's Lent Appeal, and through it the USPG Lent Appeal, as generously and sacrificially as you can. Your donation will enable people in Gaza to rebuild hope.

Sawson Aranki-Batato, Programme Developer, Diocese of Jerusalem, writes:

Your generosity helps hospitals and clinics continue their life-saving mission by:

- supplying essential medicines and medical equipment
- providing emergency care for those injured in the conflict
- offering maternal and paediatric care to families in need
- supporting staff who work tirelessly in overwhelming conditions

Every donation not only sustains lives but affirms that compassion knows no borders.

More information and resources can be found at <https://lent.uspg.org.uk/>

Thank you for your donation to the Lent Appeal 2025.

Please send it to your local Scottish Episcopal Church Treasurer or by Bank transfer to: Diocese of St Andrews Lent Appeal (SC017654)

# Eco-Congregation News



The team from Home Energy Scotland (pictured left talking to Andrew) 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*

## Provost's Contact Details

The best way to contact the provost is by email at [provost.perth@gmail.com](mailto:provost.perth@gmail.com) or by phone on ..... His day off is Monday and, whenever possible, Saturday.



## Family Bingo

For any players of Holmes family bingo [Izzy can explain the rules], here's a photo a little Mary to even things up in her favour!





# From the Farquhar Diaries

**10 March 1925.** But the great feature, and alas, a very sad one, of the present is that Francis [GTSF's relation] has put Pitscandly up for sale. We Farquhars have been there for 200 years; and to Mother for 86 years, and to us until she died in 1911, it was an earthly paradise, and it is a terrible grief, not only to me, James, Mary & Edward, but also to James's six children - in fact the whole Farquhar family except Francis & his Mother, that it should be sold. We cannot bear to think of it. Of course, I admit that an enormous number of land-owners have been obliged to sell their estates recently throughout Scotland and Francis would have needed to manage very well to keep Pitscandly going, but he has not managed very well. To say no more (as I do not want to write down anything while my heart is sore) his quarrel with his wife, by which he is bound to make her an allowance of £250 per year, has helped to cripple his resources - and none of us are [sic] inclined to blame Ruth for the quarrel, not one of us.

*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.*

## Celia

It is with great sadness that we learn of the death, today, as we are about to print the magazine, of our dear friend Celia. The Rev'd Canon Celia Matthews, to use her Sunday name, but known to so many as simply Celia, died at around 5.00am on Tuesday 25 February, having suffered a stroke a few days earlier. A trail-blazer, an educator, a gifted artist and a friend and mentor to many, she will have, we hope, a full obituary in a later issue. The photo, unfortunately not a particularly good one, shows Celia in 2019, back in mufti after the great service in the cathedral to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood.



## ***Eddie the Eagle says...***

Alodie's picture of a bee (on page 26) makes me realise that there is a real buzz about the cathedral these days. Come in during the week and you will find people working away in the office, visitors using our rooms, Emmanuel playing, locals enjoying the companionship of our Warm Space, and people just catching up with each other over a coffee. In these days when so many churches are closed, or barely open - or so I'm told, I don't get out much - it feels good to be bucking the trend.



### ***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 9.30, Evening Prayer 5.30
Wednesday	Morning Prayer 9.30, Eucharist 11.00, Evening Prayer 5.30
Thursday	Morning Prayer 9.30, Evening Prayer 5.30
Friday	Morning Prayer 9.30, 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](mailto:cathedralmagazine@gmail.com) . The closing date for inclusion in the April magazine is **23 March**.



**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  
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Tel: 01738 443173

**Provost**

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

**Assisting Clergy**

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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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