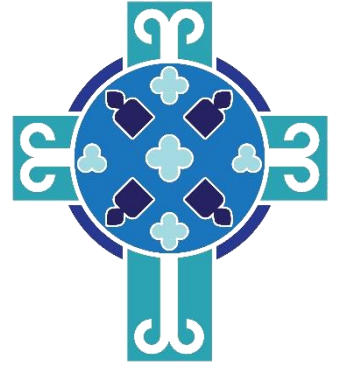


The Magazine of Inverurie West
Parish Church

JULY-AUGUST 2023



ENCOUNTER



"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (*Ecclesiastes 3:1*).

Scottish Charity SC0169



REFLECTION

Think on These Things

Ask the loveliness of the earth,
ask the loveliness of the sea,
ask the loveliness of the wide airy spaces,
ask the loveliness of the sky;

ask the order of the stars,
ask the sun making the daylight with its beams,
ask the moon tempering the darkness of the night that follows;

ask the living things which move in the waters,
which tarry on the land,
which fly in the air;
ask the souls that are hidden,
the bodies that are perceptive,
the visible things which must be governed –

Ask all these things, and they will answer you,
'Look, see, we are lovely.'

Their loveliness is their confession,
And these lovely but mutable things,
who has made them, save beauty immutable?

St Augustine of Hippo, 354-430



From the West Manse



As I write this we are coming to the end of a long warm June. Today's rain is both something of a relief, and prompts me to the typically wry Scottish observation "well, that's our summer over then."

As someone who grew up with sweltering July/Augusts in Canada, it took me a number of years to recognise that Scottish summer weather - if it is going to come at all - is most likely to come in May/June. My brain still struggles to accept the idea that August is pretty much autumn here.

Of course we all know how foolish it is to try to predict the Scottish weather too confidently. The only thing we can be reasonably sure of is that the rain always does come back.

It's sometimes equally difficult to predict the paths life will take, but as with the rain, we do know that some things are inevitable.

The inevitability of some things is on my mind as I am currently unsure what my own summer is going to look like. My 91 year old mother in Canada has had a major stroke and it looks like I will be needing to take a few weeks of unexpected compassionate leave to visit and support her and my sisters as they prepare for the inevitable.

As I lay in bed in the wee small hours last night, a tangle of contingencies, arrangements and to do lists in my head - dates to confirm, flights to change, pastoral & service cover to organise, people to contact about school assemblies and summer weddings, last minute packing to think about, MOT needed on the car and so forth - I remembered my own words on Sunday when I spoke about biblical happiness as a

kind of steadiness that comes as a gift from God. I reminded myself that this kind of happiness or blessedness - one that doesn't depend on our emotions or our circumstances - can come in the midst of the waiting.

And so I prayed for some of that steadiness of mind - and slept.

By the time this letter is published on Sunday I should have a clearer idea of plans. I might even be *en route*. In the meantime, I wait. I remind myself that just as I have no say over the sun or rain, neither can I control other inevitabilities. I'm tired, and I'm sad, and I still don't relish the wrangling I may have to do with the airline or the fact that I will have to let some folks down over the next few weeks.

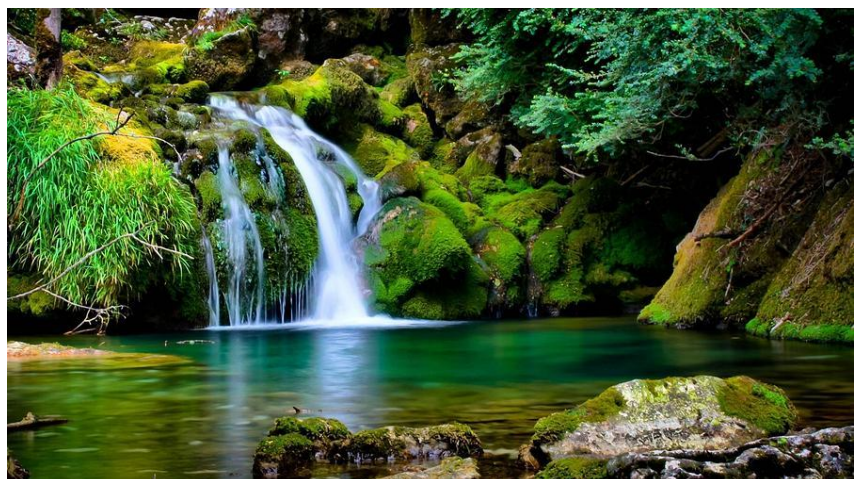
Nevertheless, I know I am blessed - not least by the community here - and there is a steadiness in that.

May you all know blessing this summer, no matter what else life, or the weather, brings.

Every blessing

Rhona

*God's Gift – Natural Beauty
Photograph. Ashish Devan
(Toronto Tourism Art)*



SOCIAL/FUNDRAISING TEAM

We are delighted that fundraising for the Acorn Centre has raised over **£2,000** to date. The fund will remain open over the summer so there is still time to make your £15 grow with your own creative fundraising ideas! Donations can be dropped off at the Acorn Centre, or transferred online to – sort code 82-65-21, account No. 40300079. Please mark your donation as **Centre 15**.

Bennachie Bike Ride



The Bennachie Bike Ride on **Saturday 12 August** will leave and return to Fetternear Hall. Help is needed with registration, marshalling and hospitality on the day. Please contact Joyce Petrie if you are free! And make sure your cycling contacts

know too. We'd also appreciate help with the organisation of the bike ride. If this is something you'd like to be involved with, please let Joyce know.

Save the date

An Italian evening with entertainment is planned for **Friday 6 October**. Tickets will be available nearer the time.



ITALY



A reminder that over the Summer months the Acorn Centre would very much welcome **additional volunteers** to provide cover for the vacations. *Please let Mike know if you can help out.*



UBUNTU NEWS

Sitting writing this in the glorious sunshine what better weather to talk about the summer season in Ubuntu.

At long last the Fair Mail greetings cards have been reunited with their envelopes and are now in the shop. Also new in the card department are beautifully handmade Salay cards made from handmade paper, pressed flowers, and other natural materials. Salay make eco-friendly paper products and provide much needed employment in the tiny fishing village of Salay, near Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines.

New bags - The Rag Chindi Tote Bag. Made from recycled sari material using the same technique as making rag rugs. The motto of this supplier is '*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*'. They are specialists in managing waste and minimising the raw materials used. They also aim to reduce energy consumption by using machines which are more energy efficient. They try to work especially with the poorer sectors of society to uplift them, their families and the community.

Re-cycled Silk Foldaway Bags. Perfect for carrying in a pocket or a handbag, this shopping bag folds into an inside pocket of the bag. Made in various workshops in the slums of Kolkata or in villages nearby by producer group Sasha. Sasha helps the women who make them to acquire skills in drawing, cutting, stitching etc, and they become not just economically empowered but more confident in raising their voices against domestic violence, discrimination, etc.

I now have garden themed **bamboo socks** so why not pair up with the recently added **garden themed jute bag** and you can sport a matching bag and socks!

New bits and bobs in Ubuntu

Bamboo Ladybird and Bug Hotel. Invite wild insects into your garden and give them a place to live thus enhancing biodiversity. The bamboo tubes are tough and waterproof, making a great home

for ladybirds and other insects. They feature two decorative painted ladybirds on the front.

Be Happy Suncatcher. A bright and cheerful accessory for your window made with rainbow coloured resin and beads and featuring a *Be Happy* slogan and the sun.

Scooter Pizza Cutter. Impress your guests with this quirky retro scooter style pizza cutter made by Fairtrade artisans in India.

Also new for summer - Wooden Mini Chests with a Single Ceramic Drawer, Soapstone Heart Shaped Tree of Life Trinket Boxes, Terracotta Plant Pot with Saucer, and the ever-popular Recycled Denim Bunting is now back in stock. Do visit as there is more to see in the shop.

New to the Food Cupboard

Fancy a healthy snack? Why not try the *Just 5 Banana and Cocoa snack bar*? It is organic, Fairtrade, vegan and contains only 5 ingredients ensuring it is good for you, good for the environment and good for the communities who produce it. Alternatively, if you want to treat yourself, why not try the Seed and Bean Fairtrade Cornish Sea Salt and Lime Chocolate? It's a mini bar so no need to feel too guilty. For the honey lovers I now have *Equal Exchange* raw organic runny honey. *Equal Exchange* produce this product working with a handful of small farmer co-ops in Mexico.

The much-loved Zaytoun Medjoul Dates are now back in the shop, and the most popular of Cafe Direct Instant Coffees (Machu Picchu (+decaf), Smooth Roast, and Mayan Gold) are all in stock.

Thank you for your continued support for Fairtrade.

Have a lovely summer.

Anthea







BB REPORT

The BB year finished with the Annual Display and Awards Night on Friday 16th of June at the Town Hall where one of the many highlights was the award of the Queen's Badge - the BB's highest honour - to **Jack Kelman & Andrew Strachan**.



The Inspecting Officer was Mr Hendry, Head Teacher at Inverurie Academy, who was a member of the BB for many years as a boy. He reminded the boys that they should adhere to the four principles of the *BB Object* – Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, and Self-Respect.

The Officers for each section gave details of their activities and thanked parents for their support and the boys for their hard work and enthusiasm.

The Captain's report, in looking ahead to the coming session in September, asked for *volunteers to become helpers and officers*. Tribute and thanks were paid to Chloe who volunteered for a year as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award and stayed for 3 years, becoming a valuable member of staff – she leaves to attend University in Edinburgh.

Climate Cafe in the Garden – ‘Green Fingers – Healthy Minds’

As part of Aberdeenshire’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Week the Church’s *Climate Matters Group* hosted an Open Morning in the garden to extol the benefits of gardening.

Joy Doorgen was on hand next to the polytunnel, offering helpful tips and recipes on vegetarian cookery; Sharon Huxtable had prepared a lovely little booklet on the uses and benefits of lavender; and Biff Barrow was over by our bird feeder and bird box sharing some fascinating tips about the birds currently visiting the garden.



It was an overcast morning but several of you defied the impending rain and came along to see for yourselves what has been going on in the garden. We look forward to welcoming many more of you over the (hopefully) sunny summer months ahead!



CHRISTIAN AID – A FEW ENCOURAGING FIGURES

Total amount raised by the Garioch Area Christian Aid Group for the year ended March 2023 was **£7,373.01**.

Total amount raised by the Garioch Area Christian Aid Group during Christian Aid week this year was £5,406.77, of which the Inverurie Christian Aid Group raised £1,909.53.

Thank you for all your support

**COME AND SING YOUR
FAVOURITE HYMNS**
Sunday 10th September
2023 at 7pm
West Church Inverurie



Join us for an evening of favourite hymn singing led by the West Church music group. Please fill in the favourite hymn sheet at the Acorn Centre desk or contact Alison Sharp: 01467 671488 to make sure your favourite choice is included.

We will endeavour to include as many hymn choices as possible and introduce some new hymns too.

Hymn choices should be submitted by **Sunday 27th August**. Donations towards the Centre 15 fund to help replace equipment in the Acorn Centre will be much appreciated.

Tea, coffee and a fine piece will also be served.

Come And Sing Your Favourite Hymns
Sunday 10th September 7pm

Please fill in the form with your favourite hymns or worship songs (as in the example below). We will do our best to include at least one or two verses of your favourite hymns. Ideally hymns should be chosen from CH4, Songs of God's People, Common Ground or Mission Praise. Please leave your name and number so we can contact you about your choices if necessary.

Book/Number	Name of Hymn		Contact Details
e.g. CH4 - 448	e.g. Shine Jesus Shine		Joe Bloggs - email /phone number

GARDEN PARTY

Sharon Huxtable and I, Isla Maitland, are hoping to make our £15 Acorn Centre anniversary fund donation grow by holding a garden party, so put it in your diaries and let's enjoy a nice sunny afternoon (fingers crossed!! 🍀) with friends - a nice finish to what, so far anyway, has been a lovely summer.

As a reminder it will be in the intimations over the summer. It would be useful if you could let us know if you're planning to come, so that we can organise the refreshments - contact details on poster.

The party is at my house - post code AB51 5DR - up at the top of the hill past the Harlaw Monument and my house is right next to the big one with the turrets - name on fence Hillhead of Harlaw.

FUNDRAISING
GARDEN
Party

SATURDAY 19TH AUGUST FROM 2PM
HILLHEAD OF HARLAW, AB51 5DR

COLD DRINKS/TEA & HOME BAKES WILL BE SERVED

RSVP TO:
ISLA - 07745075665 OR SHARON - 07922172351

DONATIONS ON THE DAY FOR THE
ACORN CENTRE 15TH ANNIVERSARY
FUND

Hope to see you there.

THE SWIFT CONSERVATION PROJECT AT THE WEST CHURCH

'You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know'. William Wilberforce

Humanity's calling from the beginning has been to 'reign' over creation. But before we get ideas above our station, we should remember that we are to reign God's way – as servants. We are to serve and care for the fish, birds, plants ... all our global neighbours!

In early May the Common Swift arrived on our shores after an 8,000 mile migration journey from Sub-Saharan Africa to the UK to breed.



This incredible bird will have completed its entire journey without once touching the ground! Swifts spend more time airborne than any other species, eating, sleeping, drinking and mating on the wing. You will be hard pressed to find a more fascinating bird. Sadly, during the '**Climate Matters**' Festival at the West Church in October last year, the audience were dismayed to learn from Cally Smith of the Huntly and NE Swift Group, that in the last 25 years over half of the UK population of swifts (63%) have disappeared from our skies.

The sad fact is that climate change – prolonged periods of intense heat and drought; poor food availability (insects on which they feast have also been affected by climate change) and modern building practice in the UK (the open eaves and crevices in local buildings which they need for nesting being demolished) have all had a massive impact on swift numbers.

It didn't take long for her audience however to see why Cally is passionate about swifts – they really are the most beautiful and charismatic little birds.

They weigh just 30/50 grams (the same weight as a cream egg), are 16-17cm in length, and have slender scythe-shaped wings, a forked tail and a pale throat patch.

It's not its appearance however, but its lifestyle that makes these wee birds so amazing. They spend 10 months of the year airborne flying non-stop without landing (3 million miles a year - that's seven times round the moon), stopping only for two months to breed.

Having heard Cally's talk at the '**Climate Matters**' Festival, members at the West Church decided they should do something to help protect the Inverurie swifts.

With the help of a grant from *North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN)* and the *Huntly & NE Swift Group*, what we are planning to do is to install swift nesting boxes behind the louvres in the steeple as a way of providing safe, permanent nesting opportunities for the declining Inverurie swift population. It may take a year or two for the swifts to find them, but once they do, they will return each year to breed. This will not only be a vitally important conservation project but a wonderful way to engage the local community and raise awareness. We look forward to promoting our project together through Church events, talks and activities.

Please do offer your support as the project develops.

Nesting boxes like these will provide the swifts with somewhere safe to land and breed and hopefully ensure that the skies above Inverurie will continue to be filled with these wonderful little aviators for many more years to come.



THE CREATION OF A CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AT THE WEST CHURCH GARDEN

One of the biggest barriers to employment for refugees in this country is learning the language. Aware of this, Claire Murray, the Employability Worker for Aberdeenshire Council, approached the *Friends of the Amal Project* for help in bringing together a group of Syrian ladies willing to improve their language skills and hone their skills to make them better prepared for the labour market.

The idea for a theme for the project came from the ladies themselves. Having visited the Church Garden, the women were keen to create a child friendly area for wee ones when their parents were working on their plots. The ideas included: making resources to enable children to play hopscotch and 'X's & O's'; creating raised beds for children to tend; making bunting; and making and installing a wall mounted xylophone.

All very ambitious, I thought to myself, but of course I wasn't counting on the resilience and creativity of women who had been refugees! Before long they had formed a group, and over 7 weeks their plans started to come to fruition.

The first task was to collect and clean some large stones. These were then painted as either bumble bees or ladybirds and were then ready to be placed by children on a slice of tree trunk which had the lines for 'X's & O's' carved out.





The concentration on the ladies' faces show how seriously they took the project, but there was also lots of uproarious laughter and learning about the importance of health & safety going on, especially when it came to donning protective painting overalls and masks when they sprayed the tyres used for the raised beds.

They took constructing a free-standing upright xylophone in their stride ...



...and the finished results are truly spectacular!



Before ...

and after.....



A small presentation of certificates of achievement was held in the garden with local councillors and family members present. The weather just about held that morning and spirits were high as we gathered in the Hall afterwards for tea and cake.

The women, using mainly recycled articles, have created something of which they can rightfully be very proud and which visitors to the garden (of all ages) can enjoy!

If anyone would like to see it for themselves, please pop round to the garden on a **Wednesday morning between 10 – 12** when volunteers are guaranteed to be there - or ask for a key to the garden from Acorn Reception at other times. So what's next?

The women are keen to continue meeting on a Friday morning and if you fancy **joining us as a volunteer** – just to chat to the women in English - you will be made very welcome. We are also looking for more male volunteers for a Men's Conversation Cafe one weekday evening (day to be arranged) after the Summer holidays.

For more details please contact Biff Barrow: 07587705641

Church Calendar/Ways of Connecting July & August 2023



If you are worshipping from home, you can connect as usual via the West church website and YouTube channels or access the service by phone on 01467 343790 (calls are charged at local rates).

**Please note that our shared summer services start at 10 am!
During July they will be in the West Church building and in
August they will be in St Andrew's.**

Sunday 2 July 10 am joint worship at the West
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 9 July 10 am joint worship at the West
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 16 July 10 am joint worship at the West
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 23 July 10am joint worship at the West
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 30 July 10am joint worship at the West
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 6 August 10am joint worship at St Andrew's
Hospitality time after the service

Saturday 12 August Bennachie Bike Ride

Sunday 13 August 10 am joint worship at St Andrew's
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 20 August 10 am joint worship at St Andrew's
Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 27 August 10 am joint worship at St Andrew's
Hospitality time after the service

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter please
email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by
23rd August 2023.

There is no junior church running during July and August but
children are welcome at all services. Please feel free to use the
craft/activity box in the corner of the sanctuary and/or stretch
your legs downstairs as needed.

The prayer group continues to meet regularly on a Thursday
morning. Prayer requests can be sent to
olive.duncan@hotmail.co.uk or duncan.linda1@btinternet.com

Our contact email address for those looking for help with
collection/delivery of supplies or medication is
help@inveruriewestchurch.org

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Blessing and Dedication:

Isabella Ann Davies (Dist. 42)

18 June

***Please advise the Roll Keeper of any change of address:
rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org***

WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Session Clerks	Mark and Gillian Paterson sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.o	625675
Church and Acorn Centre Administration	Judith Will admin@inveruriewestchurch.org	670850
Church Officer	Kenneth Gray kennethgray@hotmail.co.uk	620658
Rollkeeper	Chris Gardner rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org	07791 630495
Life & Work	Irene Jamieson irenejamieson@live.co.uk	
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	Valerie Napier Gail Buchan	623279 622145
Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	622586
Acorn Centre Management Team	Laura Gray lauragray25@btinternet.com	620658
Environmental Matters Team	Joy Doorghen doorghens@hotmail.com	620823
Fabric Team	Jim Lyle jimlyle@hotmail.co.uk	624159
Finance Team	Alan Sharp sharp3@btinternet.com	
Treasurer	Alison Blair treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org	620677
Committed Giving Envelopes	Cindy Farquhar Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com	
Gift Aid	Mandy Aitken mandyaitken@sky.com	07532 487788
Junior Church Team	Biff Barrow biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk	623096
Pastoral Care Team	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

FLOWER CALENDAR JULY



CONVENER – Margaret Sangster

2nd July Dorothy Susdorf

9th July Jane Angus

16th July Morag Mitchell

23rd July Joan Feltham

30th July Margaret Sangster

Thanks to all who donate, arrange, or deliver flowers.

ENCOUNTER ONLINE – Currently we are producing and distributing Encounter online and in print. If you have not already provided details of your e-mail and would like to ensure you receive the online version, please contact the Session Clerk (01467 625675).

