

ENCOUNTER



The Magazine of Inverurie West Parish Church

APRIL 2025



[RISEN CHRIST at the Columbarium of San Francisco](#)

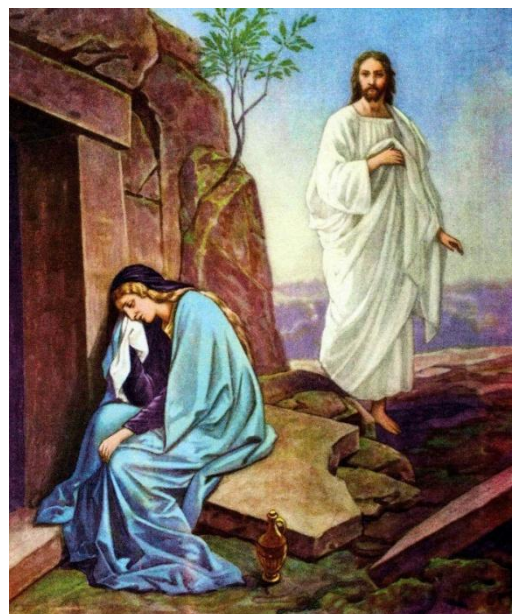
Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

[A Sonnet for Easter Dawn](#)

*He blesses every love which weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love's
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognise the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question 'Why,
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
'They took my love away, my day is night'
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.*

*'A Sonnet for Easter Dawn' by
Malcolm Guite. The fifteenth in a
series of Sonnets from 'Sounding
the Seasons': Norfolk, Canterbury
Press, 2012. Used with kind
permission.*



From the West Manse



It's hard to believe that it has been five years since I sat in my back garden on Easter morning, laptop precariously balanced on a garden chair and some books, live-streaming a solitary lockdown Easter service.

There was so much that was terrible and difficult about those weeks, and the future felt very uncertain. And yet what I felt that morning, sitting on my own surrounded by daffodils, sunshine and bird song, was a welling joy. A joy which seemed richer and more profound than usual in the midst of all that we were experiencing. I also felt surprisingly connected to all of you, even though I could neither see nor hear you.

I was reminded of this, reading the Malcom Guite poem we chose for the reflection piece in the magazine this month. The poem describes Mary weeping in the garden when, *"A sound behind her stirs. A scatter of bright birdsong through the air ... And then she hears her name, she hears Love say The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day."*

The wonderful thing about poets and poems is that they continue to find new ways of expressing feelings and moments that are both uniquely personal and yet often somehow universal. One of my concerns about the increasing use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is the flattening effect it might have on the vital personal element of creativity. AI works by harvesting information from a huge range of sources. And so, by borrowing from the work of human creators, it might come up with a poem, or song, or story, or painting which has all the essential ingredients to be effective. However, without an original human creator there

is something lacking. At best, it is creativity by committee. At worst it is mechanical, lacking the essential uniqueness of 'soul' which our creator gave to each of us as creators. It is this uniqueness which draws out a soul deep response from others.

Guite captures such a soul deep moment for Mary - when she hears her name, and with slowly dawning wonder comes face to face with the impossible truth that the saviour whom she saw die is nevertheless alive and standing before her. There is nothing 'artificial' about this moment. Guite conveys, in his own unique way, the intensity of feeling which resonates from John's gospel. We feel, with Mary, the wonder and astonishment of realising that even death cannot separate us from the love of God through Jesus.

Easter insists that our God is not some distant or impersonal 'intelligence', whether artificial or organic. Our God is real, incarnate, personal. God can and does speak to each of us by name. It happened to Mary, and, as Guite makes clear, it happens to us too.

And so my wish for you this Resurrection Sunday and beyond is that you will feel God's creative, organic love rise up within and around you, ready to be expressed in your own unique and personal fashion, even as we share the old familiar words:

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed
Alleluia!

Every blessing

Rhona





THE GUILD

Guild report 10th March 2025

We were teated to a very impressive talk from Mrs Patricia Ware. We were told of her “God given” skills allowing her to create some wonderfully crafted, decorated painted eggs.

Patricia told us he she was a devout Christian despite having endured a traumatic childhood and a few health challenges as an adult. She explained how she felt God had been with her during all her life journeys.

Patricia’s working life was spent as a medical illustrator. Now retired, her hobby and business keeps her very busy crafting all sizes of eggs. The smallest she showed us was a quail’s egg and the largest was an ostrich egg. Patricia let us see around 50 eggs, some with elaborate designs inside the egg and others being musical boxes. Each piece of work was truly magnificent and each piece told a different story.

Patricia takes commissions for her work and is known as “Halcyon Designs”.

Our next meeting is on **Monday 14th April at 2 pm**, when Ian Nelson will be telling us about the **Changi Murals in Singapore**. It is also our AGM. Everyone is welcome.

Margaret Harrow



Meet Morag - our new Session Clerk!

Morag's early life was spent in Oyne but, being involved in farming, the family moved around – Inch, Belhelvie, Findon, and ended up back in Inch from where she attended Inverurie Academy.

Post school, Morag's first degree was in Youth & Community, which led to a decade working in Lossiemouth then Aberdeen. She later studied at Glasgow University, gaining a degree, then a PhD, in economics. However with her farming background it was no surprise that her next post was with the Scottish Agricultural College, based at Auchincruive, Ayrshire, and at Craibstone. Here Morag was both teaching and researching. One element she really enjoyed there was witnessing the impact of the Young Farmers' Clubs, and the benefits that such organisations can bring.

In those days, as now, farming was subject to "red tape" and the then "Scottish Office" would impose certain legislative changes relating to agriculture. Thus Morag travelled throughout the Highlands & Islands interviewing farmers and crofters on the economic impact of any new proposals or legislative changes.

In 2006 Morag returned to Inverurie and began to attend Inverurie West. On the first day of Morag's retiral Anne Groves suggested she might like to volunteer at Ubuntu; this Morag did until Covid. Morag regards that invitation as a bonus in her life; it became a pathway to experiencing the fellowship and inclusive nature of the West. As she says, *"someone always has your back"*.

Morag attended the General Assembly in 2024 and was impressed by the standard of debate. This was an

experience she values, and it played a part in her accepting the post of Session Clerk. At present she is slightly apprehensive, following Mark & Gillian, but equally she knows that they, and Eleanor, will be there to guide and support, as necessary.

Morag's personal aims for The West include extending pastoral care to more of our elderly community, and thus is pleased to see the re-formation of the Pastoral Care Team. This support would not be intrusive but, as she says, "*would be quietly in the background providing support*" - which is exactly what Morag has been doing in her time with us thus far!



We in the congregation have already been aware of Morag's involvement in worship and in the wider church community, with her friendly informal manner, her sensible judgements and her personal commitment to so many aspects of life at The West. We wish her well and have every confidence in her new role.

(Morag and Rhona at the General Assembly, 2024).

Holy Week services - Reconciliation and Unity

Sunday 13 Apr 7.00 pm 'Christ in the Passover' talk at St Andrew's led by Boris Skvortsov from *'Jews for Jesus'*.



Mon 14 - 18 Apr 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week services each evening led by local churches and hosted this year at St Mary's Church

Monday 14 Apr 7.30 pm. IDCT Holy Week service led by Catalyst Vineyard, and Daviot, Culsalmond and Rayne churches.

Tuesday 15 Apr 7.30 pm. IDCT Holy Week service led by Fountain of Love church.

Wednesday 16 Apr 7.30 pm. IDCT Holy Week service led by Kintore and St Andrew's Parish churches.

Thursday 17 Apr 7.30 pm. IDCT Holy Week service led by St Mary's Episcopal and New Community churches.

Friday 18 Apr 8.00 am. Walk of witness beginning at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, followed by bacon rolls at St Mary's. 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week service led by the West Church.

Sunday 20 Apr 8.00 am Early Easter service on the Bass
(Ground level option at St Andrew's).
10.00 am Easter Sunday Joint Worship at St
Andrew's

HOLY WEEK



Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, commemorates Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where crowds waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna". This marks the beginning of the week leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Other days commemorate important events in the Life of Jesus – particularly in relation to events leading up to the crucifixion. The days between Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday are associated with reflection on particular events as recounted in the Gospels.

Holy Monday – may focus on ‘Jesus cursing the fig tree’, the ‘cleansing of the temple’ and ‘the anointing of Jesus at Bethany’ (John 12: 1-11)

Holy Tuesday – may focus on Christ’s predictions of his own death (John 12: 12-19)

Holy Wednesday (also known as Spy Wednesday) is when the account of Judas arranging the betrayal of Jesus with the chief priests is remembered. In some denominations *Tenebrae* may be a feature of some services. (Latin for darkness). A Tenebrae service is distinctive for the gradual extinguishing of lights while a series of readings and psalms are recited.

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) commemorates the Last Supper where Christ set out the model for Holy Communion. Some Christian denominations traditionally practice the ceremony of foot washing on this day. In the UK specially minted silver coins – Maundy money - are distributed by the monarch in recognition of the new commandment ‘to love one another’.

Good Friday commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus. For many Christians it is marked as a time of self-guided reflection on the Passion, and in some denominations, this is assisted by reflection on the Stations of the Cross.



UBUNTU UPDATE

With Easter just a few weeks away, we have new stock of Easter cards from Transform

**Transform
Trade** —
So everybody benefits.

Trade which are perfect for wishing friends and family a happy Easter! Transform Trade, formerly known as Traidcraft Exchange, works to transform trade so that everyone benefits, focusing on issues like fair wages, ethical sourcing, and sustainable practices.

Transform Trade:

- supports producers, including farmers and craft workers, in South Asia and East Africa, by providing resources and market access;
- works with networks of workers to ensure fair labour practices and decent working conditions;
- works alongside communities experiencing injustice, fighting for trade that values people over profit.

The cards are made in the UK, 100% recyclable and made with vegetable inks and water-based coatings. 100% of the profits from the sale of these cards go towards Transform Trade's work with farmers and artisans and the money raised helps producers and businesses to strengthen their operations, access new markets, improve their products, thereby ensuring that producers receive fair prices and have their rights protected.



Church Calendar/Ways of connecting – April 2025

Sunday services continue at the usual time of 11 am at the West, however please note that there are two occasions this month when we will be worshipping with, and at, St Andrew's Church. These services start at 10 am.*



If you are worshipping from home you can connect as usual on the Sundays we are in the West Church. When worshipping with St Andrew's you can access the service through their live stream.

Sun 6 April ***10 am** Joint Morning Worship at St Andrew's.
Hospitality time after the service.

Sun 13 April 11 am Palm Sunday Worship.
Hospitality time after the service.

Mon 14 - 18 Apr 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week services each
evening led by local churches and hosted this
year at St Mary's Church.

Sun 20 Apr 8.00 am Early Easter service on the Bass with ground
level option at St Andrew's followed by Easter
breakfast at St Andrew's.

***10 am** Easter Sunday joint worship at St Andrew's.

Sun 27 Apr 11 am Communion service.
3 pm family communion (informal service, all ages
welcome).

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter email:
encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by Wed 16 April.

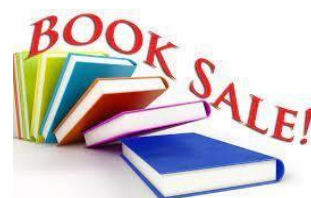
Children are welcome at all services. Most weeks we offer Junior Church for children who wish to go downstairs partway through the service. Activities and toys can also be found in our 'play as you worship' box in the sanctuary.

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



CHRISTIAN AID

The dates for Christian Aid Week this year are 11th-17th May, and it is anticipated that the Garioch Christian Aid Group will be holding their usual Book Sale, opening on Saturday 10th May, and running until **17th May** inclusive. We are fortunate in still being able to use the West Church Hall as the venue, and we look forward nearer the time to all your donations of books, jams, and jigsaws to make the sale a success.



Set-up is planned for the afternoon and evening of **Friday 9th May**. Anyone who would like to be involved in either setting up or manning the sale, or both, is invited to phone Margaret Hearne on **01651 882274**. If you have any donations you would like to have picked up, please phone Hazel Newton on **01467 620414**.

Christian Aid is celebrating its **80th anniversary** this year, and a special Christian Aid Anniversary Praise Service is to be held on **Tuesday 13th May at 7 pm** in St Andrew's Church. All welcome.



Are you a caregiver?
Loved one in a care setting?
Would you like to meet others for support?

Come along to
Inverurie West Church

For a

Carer's Cuppa

Thursday 24th April 2025
Drop in anytime between 2 - 4 pm

Tel 07905 580371 for more information



CAN YOU HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

As you will be aware we (Westhill Community Church), alongside Kingshill Parish Church, are looking to support the male asylum seekers housed in our community with clothing. Currently we are looking for the following items:

LIGHTLY USED MEN'S CLOTHING

- Cosy, waterproof jackets (S, M, L)
- Jumpers, sweatshirts and fleeces (S, M, L)
- Joggers and trousers (S, M, L)
- Shoes and trainers (size 6-12)
- **New** underwear and **New** socks (S, M, L)
- **Suitcases, holdalls and backpacks**



Donations can be dropped off at:

WESTHILL COMMUNITY CHURCH on:

Tuesday, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10am – 3pm

KINGSHILL CHURCH on:

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9 - 12 noon

If you have any questions or need your donations picked up, please contact Sandra McGregor on

sandramcgregor@westhillcommunitychurch.org

WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Session Clerk	Morag Mitchell sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org	629312
Church and Acorn Centre Administration	Judith Will admin@inveruriewestchurch.org	670850
Church Officer	A team approach will be implemented.	
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@outlook.com	620823
Fabric Team		
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

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Lines Received:

Mr David Locke	(District 24)
Mrs Marie Locke	(District 24)
Mrs Isobel John	(District 7)

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

FLOWER CALENDAR – APRIL

Convener – Joan Feltham

6th April Fred and Carol Barber

13th April Ian and Liz Nelson

20th April Morag Mitchell

27th April Janet Duncan



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 629312).

