



APRIL 2026



The Risen Christ
Oil painting by Carl Heinrich Bloch

Scottish Charity SC016907



REFLECTION

Descent – by Malcolm Guite

They sought to soar into the skies
Those classic gods of high renown
For lofty pride aspires to rise
But you came down.

You dropped down from the mountains sheer
Forsook the eagle for the dove
The other Gods demanded fear
But you gave love.

Where chiselled marble seemed to freeze
Their abstract and perfected form
Compassion brought you to your knees
Your blood was warm.

They called for blood in sacrifice
Their victims on an altar bled
When no one else could pay the price
You died instead.

They towered above our mortal plain,
Dismissed this restless flesh with scorn,
Aloof from birth and death and pain,
But you were born.

Born to these burdens, borne by all
Born with us all 'astride the grave'
Weak, to be with us when we fall,
And strong to save.

From the West Manse



All going well, I am looking forward to a week off after Easter. I hope to take the term ‘spring break’ less literally than last year when I broke my wrist five minutes after arriving in Bath.

This time around I’ve planned a London theatre excursion for a few days. One of the plays I am planning to see is a production of Ibsen’s classic, “*A Doll’s House*”, re-imagined for the 21st century.

In the play the character of Nora realises that society’s expectations have turned her into a kind of ‘doll’, without her own independent thought or agency. This includes an inability to form her own beliefs about what is true or not. She says, “*I am afraid, Torvald, I do not exactly know what religion is. ... When I am away from all this, and am alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see if what the clergyman said is true, or at all events if it is true for me.*”

I will be interested to see how Nora’s struggle is portrayed within the context of a very different modern society, where some long-held ‘truths’ feel shaky and trust in truth itself is being eroded or manipulated at will by powerful voices, technologies and agents.

For this reason, it is all the more important as Christians that we remember that our faith includes some core, fundamental truths. Fundamental, it should be said, doesn’t mean easy or simplistic. We can and should continue to question and challenge and expand our understanding.

But at Easter we want to remember that whatever the nuances of our collective and individual beliefs, we accept as truth that God is good. That we are forgiven and loved and are called to offer this forgiveness and love to others. That the best and most complete

picture we have of God's nature and relationship with us is portrayed in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Holding onto this truth gives us hope, and keeps us steady. As the first letter of John says, *"For this is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him ... Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us"*. (1 John 4: 9; 11-12)

The truth of this love is what we celebrate at Easter, and it's a truth that defies all efforts to suppress it. As the writer Anne Lamott has put it so beautifully:

"On Easter we remember that you can bury the truth in the ground, but you can't keep it there."

Christ is risen. Glory Hallelujah!
Happy Easter all

Every blessing
Rhona

Social/Fundraising Group

On **25th April at 7 pm** Larry Young will be running a **Quiz Night** in the Acorn Centre. Tickets cost £5 per person. Nibbles will be provided and you can bring your own bottle. Teams of no more than 4 people. After the quiz there will be a raffle.



The Guild met in March to hear Margaret Hearne and Larry Young's 'Stories and Poems' which had been rescheduled from January when we had to cancel due to the winter weather.

It was well worth the wait as their choice of pieces and related delivery were superb. We laughed and, perhaps, even wiped away a tear. Everyone left smiling after a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Our April meeting on Monday 13 April is the last in this session and will include our very brief A.G.M. We will then continue with a catch up from our church visit to Israel/Palestine in 2018 encountering the '**Living Stones**'.

Ann-Marie Coleman

UBUNTU NEWS

Ubuntu is well stocked with a selection of fairly traded chocolate products from Whitakers. The company, which was founded in 1889, is strongly committed to ethical and sustainable practices and now uses Fairtrade cocoa across their entire retail range. They believe that providing a delicious treat shouldn't come at the expense of those who work hard to produce cocoa and consequently made the conscious choice to support the Fairtrade movement, ensuring that their products contribute to a more equitable and sustainable world. Choosing Fairtrade chocolate guarantees cocoa farmers a fair wage, promotes safe and decent working conditions, and fosters sustainable farming practices. Current stock includes:

- *Fondant creams - peppermint, raspberry, and strawberry*
- *Milk chocolate salted caramel honeycomb crisps*
- *"Happy Birthday" and "Thank You" milk chocolate bars*
- *Wafers - ginger and coffee*

OUR SESSION CLERK - ONE YEAR ON!

It is one year since Morag Mitchell took up the role of Session Clerk at the West. So how has she found it? Here are some of her reflections.

Overall, it has been a good experience. I very much enjoy working alongside Rhona who “makes it so easy”. Mark and Gillian (previous Session Clerks) have been very helpful. Mark is a font of knowledge and has a fantastic memory!

I was surprised at the amount of admin which has to be dealt with, mainly coming from Church of Scotland Head Office in Edinburgh. Again, Mark is good at advising how to deal with the issues.

Last year I was slightly disappointed at the decision to reduce the General Assembly from one week to four days, thus giving less opportunity for parishioners to contribute to debates. A strength of the Church of Scotland is its non-hierarchical structure. The minister leads a parish but the congregations have a voice. This might be reduced if the Assembly Week reduces the opportunity to hear this.

Aims for the year ahead: to continue "keeping in touch" with all members, especially those who cannot attend weekly services. During the snow days, elders phoned their districts, to check all was well and the Pastoral Team's commitment is strong, hosting the monthly 'Carer's Cuppa', keeping their ear to the ground, and passing any concerns on to Rhona.

We aim to support increased participation by families with children. There are signs of young families increasingly attending services, while the monthly 'Playchurch' sessions, in which Bible stories are explored in a creative, imaginative way, are truly enjoyed by the wee ones - and their participating parents!

Morag Mitchell



SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

It's that time of year again, when we will be distributing Small Grants to local groups. The maximum amount is £1,000, but we spread the money across a number of groups, so a large grant is rare. The money available is due to the generosity of the Acorn Centre customers. We welcome many regulars and visitors alike, and we are thankful for any donations they leave. The Acorn is a very happy place to volunteer, so if you have any spare time think about joining us.

We welcome applications again this year. These must be from the local area and groups can request amounts up to £1,000.

Application forms can be obtained by e-mailing admin@inveruriwestchurch.org or from the reception desk at the Acorn Centre or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to – The Acorn Centre, West High Street, Inverurie, AB51 3SA. These will be available from **the middle of April and throughout May** and the closing date for applications is **Friday 29th 2026**. All applicants will be notified shortly thereafter, whether successful or not.

We thank you all for your continued support which makes this possible.

Morag Mitchell

FUNDRAISING FOR A NEW DISHWASHER

The Yarn Group Sales of 'beasties' at the Farmers' Market came to an impressive **£170.30** (around 56 'beasties'). Donations have now passed the **£8,000** mark, **£3,000** coming from customer donations and for 'beasties'. Our customers have been very generous.

Alison Blair

POEM

Many thanks to **Margaret Sangster** for submitting this poem.

The Cross in my Pocket

*I carry a cross in my pocket; a simple reminder to me
Of the fact that I am a Christian no matter where I may be.*

*This little cross is not magic, nor is it a good luck charm.
It isn't meant to protect me from any physical harm.*

*It's not for identification for all the world to see.
It's simply an understanding between my Saviour and me.*

*When I put my hand in my pocket to bring out a coin or a key
The cross is there to remind me of the price He paid for me.*

*It reminds me, too, to be thankful for my blessings day by day,
And to strive to serve him better in all that I do and say.*

*It's also a daily reminder of the peace and comfort I share
With all who know my Master and give themselves to His care.*

*So, I carry a cross in my pocket reminding no one but me
That Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life, if only I'll let Him be.*

Vera Mae Thomas

Church Calendar/Ways of Connecting April 2026



If you are worshipping from home, you can connect as usual via the West church website and youtube channels.

Regular Sunday services continue at the usual time of 11 am. However, **please note the 10 am start on Easter Sunday and for the following week.**

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Mon-Fri (30 Mar - 3 Apr) 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week services at St Andrew's
Speakers: Keith and Lindsay Potter

Fri 3 Apr 8 am Good Friday walk of witness beginning at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, followed by breakfast at St Andrew's

Sun 5 Apr 8 am Early morning Easter service up the Bass (ground level alternative at St Andrew's) followed by Easter breakfast at the West Church

10 am Easter Sunday joint worship at the West Church

Sun 12 Apr **10 am Joint service at St Andrew's** (Rhona on annual leave)

Sun 19 Apr 11 am Morning worship
Hospitality time after the service

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter
email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org
by **Wed 22 Apr**

Sun 26 Apr 11 am Communion service
3 pm Family communion (informal service, all
ages welcome)

Children are welcome at all services. Most weeks during term time 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 Week – 10th-16th May 2025

The dates for Christian Aid Week this year are **10th-16th May**, and the Inverurie Christian Aid Group will be holding their usual Book Sale, opening on **Saturday 9th May**, and running until **16th May** inclusive. We are fortunate in still (just!) 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/evening of **Friday 8th 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**.

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
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	Valerie Napier Gail Buchan	623279 622145
Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	07842 195032
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	Mark Paterson mgpaterson@talktalk.net	01467 625675
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

Deaths:

Mr Allan Booth (District 16) on 15th February 2026

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

FLOWER CALENDAR – APRIL

April Convener: Joan Feltham

5th April - Morag Mitchell

12th April - Ian and Liz Nelson

19th April - Doreen Tough

26th April - Eleanor Mitchell



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 629312).



Thanks to Dr John Hearne who again came to the rescue by printing, copying and collating Encounter. **NB** – to contain costs we are going to produce the magazine **in black and white**. We will also put articles which have a number of photographs or other colour graphics into the **online magazine only**.