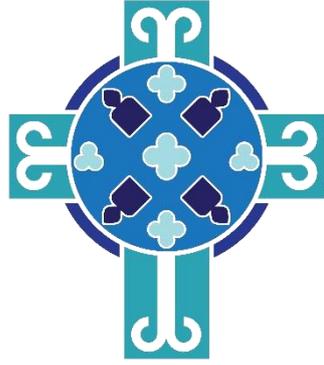


# EMCOUNTER



The Magazine of Inverurie West  
Parish Church

MARCH 2026



*The  
Season  
of  
Lent*



Scottish Charity SC016907

## **REFLECTION**

### ***A BLESSING FOR A MEDIUM-SAD JOURNEY THROUGH LENT***

Blessed are you  
who have found yourself – yet again –  
among the fellowship of the afflicted.  
Making the long, long walk toward the cross.

Blessed are you,  
who are tired of pretending  
that raw effort is the secret to perfection.  
That that which breaks your heart  
is overcomeable.  
It's not and you know that now.

Blessed are you  
who need a gentle reminder that  
even now, even today,  
God is here,  
walking with us,  
meeting us in our places  
of sorrow and despair,  
desperation and grief.  
Not promising to erase the pain.  
but to carry it with us.

Blessed are we who realize  
We are never – were never – alone.  
And somehow,  
That is good enough.

***From: [https://katebowler.com/seasonal\\_devotional/agoodenoughlent/](https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/agoodenoughlent/)***

## ***From the West Manse***



A strange thing happened this morning. I woke up not feeling slightly groggy. What made it more unexpected was that my light alarm had been accidentally unplugged the night before, leaving just the radio to awaken me.

Had I gone to bed early? No, I had stayed up too late looking up “Australian Labradoodles” - just in case I ever do decide to get a dog.

Had I had a particularly good night’s sleep? No, I’d had one middle of the night loo trip and odd dreams.

In fact, I know myself well enough by now that I should have been expecting this. If you’ve been reading and/or listening to me over the last nine years you can probably anticipate what I am going to say, as I’m sure I’ve said it before. So I’ll cut to the chase.

For years this has happened virtually every February - usually the second or third week. It’s the moment when my body registers that it now has enough light.

For someone who thinks about things a lot it took me a surprisingly long time to recognise the pattern. And even now that I do recognise it, it still takes me by surprise sometimes. This is partly because it often feels like a sudden change, rather than the gradual one I know it must be. I’m also rarely aware that I have lost energy until it starts to come back.

But my body knows, and probably isn’t surprised, by the things my brain hasn’t always acknowledged.

Our bodies can be pretty effective at teaching us about rhythms and patterns, if we pay attention. That is why Lent, at its best, can be much more than just a period of paying lip service to the idea of

‘giving something up’. Lent offers the opportunity to translate the things we say we are committed to, or believe with our minds, into the daily rhythm of our bodies. It’s a kind of mini incarnation or embodiment of spirit into flesh.

We are far from the only faith with such practices. This year Lent runs in parallel with the big festivals of the other two Abrahamic faiths, Islam and Judaism, with Ramadan starting on Shrove Tuesday and Passover occurring over our Easter weekend. Both Ramadan and Passover involve their own kinds of fasting and feasting. Both embed these rhythms in community practice - arguably better than we do in modern Western culture.

In these hostile, suspicious times, it is good to celebrate what we share in common with these ‘faith cousins’, and to embrace a spirit of multi-faith hospitality. But it’s also okay to celebrate what is unique in Christianity - namely that we believe that God was willing to embed himself in our daily bodily rhythms by living among us in the flesh.

Our brains may not always be able to grasp the concept of ‘incarnation’ or explain how Christ can still be uniquely present among us, but I think our bodies, if we allow them to, can help it make sense. Faith, after all, is not just about what we think, it’s about what we do.

So let’s fast and reflect. Let’s worship and gather. Let’s repent and prepare. Let’s pray and serve. And let’s demonstrate, with our bodies and our brains, that we love our neighbours - without exception - in the name of the Christ who loves and lives among us.

*“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.” (John 1:14 The Message)*

Every blessing - Rhona



## Guild Report February 2026

Our February meeting was led by Morag Mitchell. The topic was "Travel".

Morag introduced our own Ann Marie Coleman who took us on a grand tour of New Zealand. We were treated to some wonderful pictures of the countryside, mountains and coastline. The images we saw were excellent and showed how wonderful the country and its islands look.

Ann Marie told us of her family's history with the country and read a very moving letter her mother wrote whilst in New Zealand. The letter spoke of a very bad storm in 1968 and the sinking of the Ferry "*Wahine*" resulting in the loss of 51 lives.

Our next meeting **at 2pm Monday 9th March** when Margaret Hearne and Larry Young will be entertaining us with "Stories and Poems".

All are welcome.

Margaret Harrow



## POEM

*Many thanks to Linda Duncan for submitting this poem.*

God, teach me to be patient,  
teach me to be slow,  
Teach me how to wait on You  
when my way I do not know.

Teach me sweet forbearance  
when things do not go right,  
So I remain unruffled  
when others grow uptight.

Teach me how to quiet  
my racing, rising heart,  
So I may hear the answer  
you are trying to impart.

Teach me to let go, dear God,  
and pray undisturbed until  
my heart is filled with inner peace  
and I will learn to do Your will.

*Helen Steiner Rice*

## YARN – BOTH WAYS!

Whether it's using wool, or having a blether, the Yarn Group are busy. Look out for their fund-raising efforts for the Dishwasher Fund. Some will be available for Easter, and some for the World Cup. The knits will be filled with a variety of goodies - Easter eggs, marshmallows, sweets, etc. They will be on sale on the counter at the Acorn Centre, so please support their efforts! *Morag Mitchell.*



## EASTER AT UBUNTU

Ubuntu is currently well stocked with a selection of Easter eggs, cards and gifts from a number of our regular suppliers. This includes:

- a range of milk and dark chocolate eggs from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. The chocolate shells are made with cocoa from cooperatives in the Ivory Coast, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Panama and Ecuador and the sugar comes from cooperatives in Paraguay and Belize. The Meaningful Chocolate Company give a donation of the profits to their farmers and an extra Fairtrade Premium cash payment.
- gifts from Whitaker chocolates, a UK company which is committed to ethical and sustainable practices and now uses Fairtrade cocoa across their entire retail range.
- a selection of Easter cards from Transform Trade, a UK-based trade justice charity working to make trade equitable, prioritising people and the planet over profit. It partners with farmers, artisans, and workers in South Asia and East Africa to ensure fair wages and sustainable, ethical practices.
- *choosing a Fairtrade egg, card or gift means standing with farmers for fairness and equality, and helping build a fairer, brighter future this Easter.*



## **EMBRACE THE MIDDLE EAST**

The charity has taken ‘Acts of Hope’ as its theme this Easter. In its latest magazine it encourages people to reflect on Easter by taking a meditative journey along the Via Dolorosa (Sorrowful way or Way of Suffering). This is a route through the city centre of Jerusalem which features Stations of the Cross. On their web site they are selling **Stations of the Cross Reflection Cards**.

The series of nine A5 reflection cards cost £4.45 and **‘allow us to journey with Jesus in our thoughts, prayers and reflections in this season of Lent and Easter’**.

The cards feature original artwork from the Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey, Bedford, accompanying scriptures, questions for reflection and stories from our Middle East partners. These beautiful cards allow you to take a meditative journey through the following themes:

- **The Garden of Olives - Jesus is Betrayed**
- **Jesus Before Pilate**
- **Simon Carries Jesus' Cross**
- **The Women of Jerusalem**
- **Jesus is Crucified and his Clothes Divided**
- **Jesus' Promise to the Thief**
- **Jesus Dies on the Cross**
- **Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**
- **Jesus Risen from the Dead**



The web site is well worth a visit and also provides a description of current initiatives to bring peace to the region, practical guidance on how you can help, a range of gifts for purchase and other devotional material.

***<https://embraceme.org/>***

## Church Calendar/Ways of Connecting March 2026



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

Sun 1 Mar 11am Morning Worship. Hospitality after service.  
3 - 4.30pm Play Church  
Interactive storytelling and drama for the whole family.

Every Wed 7.30pm Zoom Bible study. All are welcome.  
Contact Rhona for the link.

Sun 8 Mar 11am Morning Worship. Hospitality time after service.

Mon 9 Mar 2pm Guild meeting.

Sun 15 Mar 11am Morning Worship. Hospitality after service.

Wed 18 Mar If you have any material for Encounter email:  
[encounter@inveruriwestchurch.org](mailto:encounter@inveruriwestchurch.org) by Wed 18

Sun 22 Mar 11am Morning worship. Hospitality after service.

Sun 29 Mar 11am Palm Sunday Worship. Followed by informal  
communion

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 Thursday mornings. Prayer requests can be sent to [olive.duncan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:olive.duncan@hotmail.co.uk) or [duncan.linda1@btinternet.com](mailto:duncan.linda1@btinternet.com)

## **UPCOMING HOLY WEEK/EASTER SERVICES**

**This year's IDCT Holy Week services are hosted by St Andrew's. Our speakers are Kevin and Linsey Potter.**

Monday 30 March 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week service led by Kintore, and Immaculate Conception Churches.

Tuesday 31 March 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week service led by Daviot and New Community Churches.

Wednesday 1 Apr 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week service led by Inverurie West and Fountain of Love Churches.

Thursday 2 Apr 7.30 pm IDCT Holy Week service led by Inverurie St Andrew's and Catalyst Churches.

Friday 3 Apr 8.00 am walk of witness beginning at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Followed by bacon rolls at St Andrew's.

Friday 3 Apr 7.30pm IDCT Holy Week service led by St Mary's Church.

**Easter Sunday 5 Apr 8.00 am** Early Easter service up the Bass (Ground level option at St Andrew's). Followed by Easter breakfast at the West.  
**10.00 am** Easter Sunday joint worship at the West Church. **Note start time of 10.00 am.**

## WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

<b>Minister</b>	Rev Rhona Cathcart <a href="mailto:r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org">r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	620285
<b>Session Clerk</b>	Morag Mitchell <a href="mailto:sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org">sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	629312
<b>Church and Acorn Centre Administration</b>	Judith Will <a href="mailto:admin@inveruriewestchurch.org">admin@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	670850
<b>Church Officer</b>	A team approach will be implemented.	
<b>Rollkeeper</b>	Chris Gardner <a href="mailto:rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org">rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	07791 630495
<b>Safeguarding Co-ordinators</b>	Valerie Napier Gail Buchan	623279 622145
<b>Transport Co-ordinator</b>	Linda Mathers	07842 195032
<b>Acorn Centre Management Team</b>	Laura Gray <a href="mailto:lauragray25@btinternet.com">lauragray25@btinternet.com</a>	620658
<b>Environmental Matters Team</b>	Joy Doorghen <a href="mailto:doorghens@outlook.com">doorghens@outlook.com</a>	620823
<b>Fabric Team</b>		
<b>Finance Team</b>	Alan Sharp <a href="mailto:sharp3@btinternet.com">sharp3@btinternet.com</a>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Alison Blair <a href="mailto:treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org">treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	620677
<b>Committed Giving Envelopes</b>	Cindy Farquhar <a href="mailto:Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com">Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com</a>	
<b>Gift Aid</b>	Mark Paterson <a href="mailto:mgpateron@talktalk.net">mgpateron@talktalk.net</a>	01467 625675
<b>Junior Church Team</b>	Biff Barrow <a href="mailto:biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk">biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk</a>	623096
<b>Pastoral Care Team</b>	Rev Rhona Cathcart <a href="mailto:r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org">r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org</a>	620285
<b>Social/Fundraising Team</b>	Joyce Petrie <a href="mailto:joycepetrie21@hotmail.com">joycepetrie21@hotmail.com</a>	620932

## CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

### Funerals:

Mrs Jessie Crighton (Postal District) on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### Change of address:

Mr Ian and Mrs Margaret (Liz) Nelson from District 37 to Kinellar (Postal District)

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

## **FLOWER CALENDAR – MARCH**

*March Convener: Margaret Sangster 672043*

1 <sup>st</sup> March	Fred and Carol Barber
8th March	-
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Irene Jamieson and Linda Mathers
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Ann Milne
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Fred and Carol Barber



**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 came to the rescue last month and will do so again this month by printing, copying and collating Encounter.