

ENCOUNTER



The Magazine of Inverurie West Parish Church

MAY 2025



*Christian Aid Week –
Guatemala : a 'hunger hotspot'*

Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

The following poem was submitted by Linda Duncan. It's a Sufi poem that often appears in various contexts. It is commonly attributed to Hazrat Inayat Khan.

*I asked God for strength
that I might achieve.
I was made weak
that I might learn to obey.*

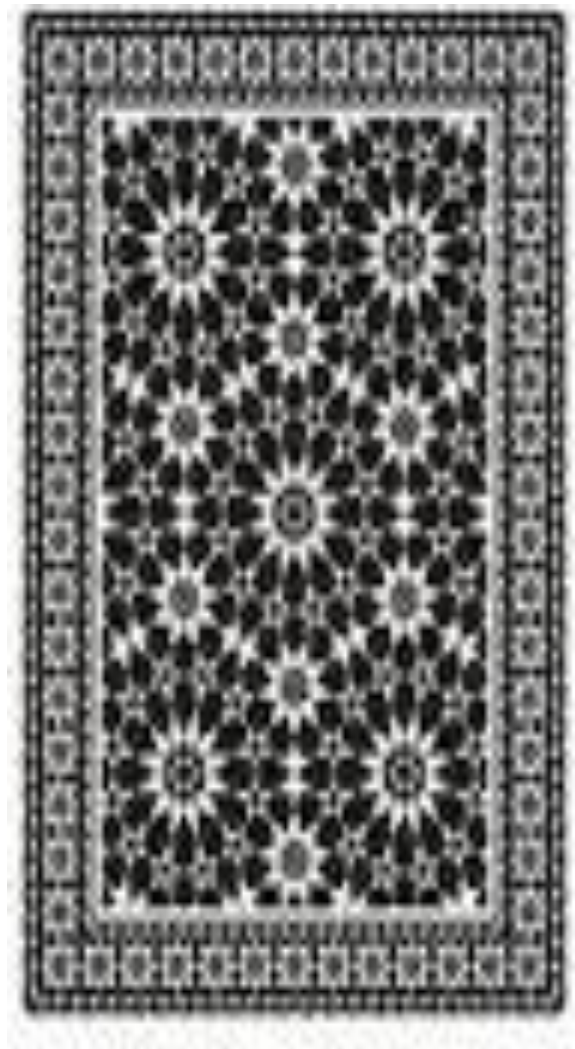
*I asked God for health
that I might do great things.
I was given infirmity
that I might do better things.*

*I asked God for riches
that I might be happy.
I was given poverty
that I might be wise.*

*I asked God for power
that I might have approval.
I was given weakness
that I might feel the need for God.*

*I asked for all things
that I might enjoy life.
I was given life
that I might enjoy all things*

*I got nothing that I asked for,
but everything I hoped for.
I am, among all people,
most richly blessed.*



From the West Manse



It was somewhat unexpected to find myself 'grounded' this Easter and unable to climb the Bass for our early service. The grounding was the result of me taking the term '*city break*' far too literally and breaking my wrist while on holiday recently in Bristol and Bath.

How I managed to fall, minutes after arriving in Bath and about to enjoy a day of gentle exploring and relaxation, is a bit of a mystery. Maybe that's why, when I took the ground level early service instead of making the climb up the Bass, my thoughts turned to the mystery of the resurrection and Luke's determination to '*investigate everything from the beginning*'.

I wondered how his investigative efforts would fare against the '*Ten Commandments of Detective Fiction*' created by early 20th century writer Ronald Knox. Knox was clearly irritated by the detective cliches of his time and made such rules as '*No more than one secret room or passage allowed*', or '*Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them*'.

I could imagine Luke similarly checking the witnesses' accounts for holes. 'Could Jesus' body have been smuggled out in secret? Did anyone **really** see Jesus after his death, or did Jesus have a double?'

Luke's ultimate conclusion, however, broke one of Knox's core commandments - which was to rule out any supernatural or preternatural explanation. Knox insisted that divine interference had no place in a fictional whodunnit.

But here's the twist - Knox was also a Catholic priest. It would appear, that for Knox divine mystery belonged in the realm of reality, not fiction.

It seems that Luke agreed. His 'orderly account' became what we know as the gospel of Luke.

Many people make the mistake of thinking that faith is about dogmatic certainty - like a detective novel that neatly wraps up all the loose ends for us and gives us clear human agents and answers.

But I think more often faith involves a tolerance for a bit of mystery. The mystery of the resurrection. The mystery of Christ's presence in communion which we have recently celebrated together. The mystery of the Spirit's empowering at Pentecost, which lies around the corner for us in the church calendar. The mystery of how the accounts of one man's life and death could shape the course of history for over 2000 years and still change people's lives now.

Our desire for certainty is understandable. This month we mark 80 years since VE Day. At a time when war is once again a reality in Europe, and the world order feels shaky, the idea that there are clear, unambiguous answers to all the questions that trouble us is appealing.

This last month also brought us the death of Pope Francis, a man billions of people - both Catholics and non-Catholics - looked to for inspiration and reassurance. In Pope Francis' case this was due not only to his role, but also to his personal qualities.

Perhaps my favourite tribute to him comes from singer Bob Dylan
“Pope Francis was a voice of mercy in a time of noise. He walked with humility, spoke with fire and dared to love the unloved. He reminded the world that compassion isn’t weakness, and faith doesn’t have to shout to be heard. May he rest in the eternal peace he so often preached.”

Pope Francis once admitted he sometimes fell asleep while praying. But he contentedly compared this to a child falling asleep in his Father’s arms. In the end that was the only certainty he needed.

If you like everything to be smooth sailing and predictable, a bit of mystery can trip you up. But if all you need is the certainty that we are loved and a commitment to share that love with others, then some divine mystery can also intrigue and inspire and lead us to interesting places - hopefully without the need for a detour to A&E!

Blessings Rhona

Garden Party - Save the Date

Isla, Sharon & Alison have decided to have another of their popular garden parties this summer, in aid of the organ maintenance.



It’s going to be on **Sunday July 27th** at Hillhead of Harlaw so please put it in your diary. More information will follow in next month’s magazine.

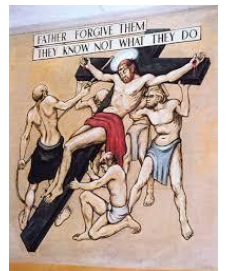


THE GUILD

We held our final Guild meeting of the session on 14 April when a short AGM saw the current team re-elected to serve for another year. We are:

Ann-Marie Coleman, Linda Duncan, Joan Feltham, Chris Gardner, Lynwen Greavey, Margaret Harrow, Morag Mitchell, Tom McMorland and Margaret Sangster. Roles will be decided when the team meets to plan for the next session which is entitled *"Living Stones"*.

Following the business of the AGM we heard from Ian Nelson about the Changi murals which he had seen during his time serving in the RAF in Singapore. It was an enlightening story of faith, hope and courage. The murals were painted, using what materials could be found, on the walls of part of a medical block in the infamous Changi internment camp during the Japanese occupation of Singapore in WW2 to create a chapel for those imprisoned there. Restoration work by the original artist Stanley Warren in the 60s has meant that they are still available to see – if you are lucky enough to know where to look. They must have provided peace, calm and solace to those who used the chapel as, indeed, they still do.



REMINDER

Fetternear Hall is now booked on **Saturday 30 August** for the Bennachie Bike Ride. Plenty time to get 'race fit'!





ACORN CENTRE UPDATE

Music in May

Aberdeenshire Saxophone Orchestra

return to us performing Edvard Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite 1 and Gustav Holst's Second Suite on **Saturday 3rd May at 7 pm**. This is a big orchestra and they create a fabulous sound in the wonderful acoustics of the sanctuary.

Also making a welcome return to the Acorn Centre are singer songwriters **Fiona Bevan & Adam Beattie** with their beautiful blend of original music and dream folk. Adam is a local loon, back for another hometown gig. His partner Fiona is an award-winning songwriter with the voice (and smile) of an angel! They are both multi-instrumentalists and masters of their craft. You can meet them both on **Sunday 18th May** and the concert starts at **6pm**.



Links to both concerts and online box office are available via our Facebook page.

Wave Hello, Say Goodbye

If you have been in at the weekend or over the Easter Holidays you may have seen **Alexa, Cara or Davina** serving. They are our latest cohort of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers and are a welcome addition to the team.

We have also said farewell to **Caroline**, who has left the kitchen team after 2 years, but is going to stay on the payroll to help out with holiday cover, so we'll still get a regular dose of laughter from her! Also, **Douglas Young**, who has been doing dishes since day one, has sadly hung up his marigolds and apron. We'd like to take

this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Douglas for his outstanding service and we will miss his cheery smile on a Tuesday.

Challenges, Challenges, Challenges

If you watch the news, or even if you don't, you'll know that the price of everything still seems to be rising and geopolitical uncertainty affects all of us. Small businesses – particularly in the hospitality industry - are feeling it more than most. So, how do we meet this challenge? Well, it is mostly belt-tightening. We are very blessed to have staff who are willing to be flexible and do whatever needs to be done – cooking, cleaning, serving, admin – our fabulous team seem to be able to do it all. With help from our volunteers we continue to operate the centre *with fewer than half the staff numbers we started with*. In terms of managing the business, we are tactical with our purchasing, always looking for the best deals without compromising on quality, and now that we are coming into the growing season again, the kitchen garden will help to reduce our food costs.

However, we do need **YOUR** help too!

Please, please, please support the centre in any way you can – either as a volunteer or as a customer. All help is greatly appreciated!



The Acorn Centre Team



CHRISTIAN AID – LOCAL CONNECTIONS AND GLOBAL OUTREACH

This year Christian Aid is celebrating its 80th anniversary. Originally set up by British and Irish Churches in order to help refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War, the organisation works with people of all faiths and none to alleviate poverty and turn hope into action.

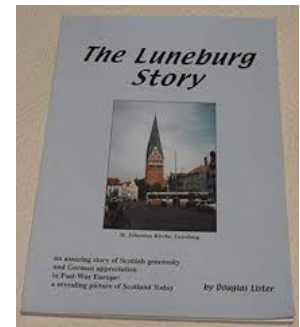
Many of you will know of Inverurie's particular connection to the origins of Christian Aid through the significant role played by **Douglas Lister** (1920-2010), who served as minister of St Andrew's Parish Church between 1957 and 1967 and later retired to Inverurie in 1987.



When he was garrison chaplain attached to the Royal Scots Greys in Lüneburg in Northern Germany in 1947, he was approached one day in the middle of the worst winter of the century by a German officer, with a plea for help for 80,000 nearby refugees, who were struggling in the freezing conditions, with little or nothing to eat. Douglas Lister immediately asked High Command for permission to help these people.

His request was refused, on the grounds that this would be fraternisation with the enemy. Encouraged by his friend, Captain John Althorp (later Earl Spencer), Douglas Lister appealed against the decision, citing his obligation as chaplain to serve people regardless of race, colour or religion. He won the appeal, and a letter was sent out all over Scotland entitled *"Germany calling – an appeal for your help"*.

In his booklet, *"The Lüneburg Story"*, Douglas Lister wrote that he was overwhelmed by the generosity of the people of Scotland. In recognition of his work in Lüneburg, the people of the town named a street after him, and held a civic reception in his honour in 1996.



A special service to celebrate Douglas Lister's contribution to the origins of Christian Aid will be held in St Andrew's Church on **Tuesday, 13th May at 7 pm.** The Rev Carl Irvine, Charlie Meiklejohn and Christian Aid Global Thematic advisor for Health and Gender, Temwa Kasakula will lead the service.

Other British and Irish churches had been working across Europe to help those who had lost everything, under the banner of *"Christian Reconstruction in Europe"*, later renamed the *"Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service"*, which in 1964 became *"Christian Aid"*. Refugees were still the main focus of their work, but Christian Aid began working with poor communities around the world.

Just as Christian Aid supported, equipped and enabled partner churches in mainland Europe to provide what people needed as a result of war 80 years ago, today they are doing the same. Sadly the need is even greater, particularly with the reduction



in governments' funding for foreign aid. Through the generosity of donors to Christian Aid, the organisation has been able to provide assistance and support to people who are surviving

crises and rebuilding their lives, whether in South Sudan, Gaza, or Ukraine. In the last year Christian Aid has funded more than 400 projects and taken humanitarian aid to 3.2 million people. While global neighbours experience conflict, poverty and injustice, the efforts of Christian Aid will not stop.

This year, Christian Aid Week highlights the stories of **indigenous farmers in Guatemala**, who are bearing the full force of climate change. Christian Aid week is an important seven-day period which highlights the need to support those to support families who are working hard to protect their children from hunger and malnutrition.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

The dates for Christian Aid Week this year are Sunday **11th May** - **Saturday 17th May**.

Christian Aid envelopes will be available in church on Sunday, 11th May, or you can donate via the link below to the Garioch District Christian Aid Group's efforts.

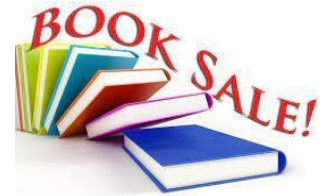
To make a donation online you click on the following link to Garioch Christian Aid or go to <https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2025/garioch-district-group>





CHRISTIAN AID BOOK SALE

Saturday 10th- Saturday 17th May



Once again we will be hosting the Book Sale here in the West Church Hall during Christian Aid Week. **Can you help us?**



Donate books in good condition please. Especially welcome will be children's books and paperback fiction. We will also be pleased to have donation of jams or jigsaws. Donations can be handed in from Monday May 5th. Check in to Acorn Reception to be told where to put them. If you have any donations you would like to have picked up, please phone Hazel Newton on 01467 620414.



Help us to Set Up the Book Sale on **Friday 9th**, anytime between **4 pm and 7 pm**.



Volunteer for the rota to sell the books – Monday to Saturday, either **10 am to 1 pm** or **1 pm to 4 pm**. Anyone who would like to be involved in either setting up or manning the sale, or both, please phone Margaret Hearne on 01651 882274 or e-mail hearne.longship@gmail.com.



Visit us and pick up bargains. Two paperbacks for £1 – perfect for your summer reading. West Church Hall opening on **Saturday 10th May**, and running until **17th May** inclusive.

The book sale raises around £1000 every year – so it really is worth it!



Small Grants Scheme

This year has been a busy year at the Acorn! As always, we send our sincerest thanks to all the staff and volunteers who keep it all going so successfully, and it's thanks to them that we are able to carry on the **Small Grants Scheme**. We are always looking to welcome new volunteers, so if anyone has a morning or afternoon to spare, do get in touch.

We would also like to thank the generosity of the customers who provide the donations that allow us to present these grants. We have a lot of "*regulars*" at the Acorn, and we really look forward to seeing them, and wonder what's happened to them if they miss their regular time. Also, the *innovative menus* for the start of this year have seen new people coming to the Acorn, and it's good to see new faces. Therefore, this year again, we are once again able to disburse small grants to local groups. Applications must be from the local area and can request amounts up to **£1,000**. Application forms can be obtained by e-mailing admin@inveruriewestchurch.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 **30th May 2025**. 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

RECENTLY RESTOCKED IN UBUNTU



Divine Chocolate was launched in 1998 and is a global social enterprise driven by the aim of helping to end exploitation in the cocoa industry and thereby create a world where farmers thrive and prosper. Their business model reflects the belief that producers should earn a share of the profits they help to create, and this is why Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Union, a co-operative of over 100,000 cocoa farmers in Ghana, co-own *Divine* Chocolate. Most Ghanaian cocoa is grown on small family farms, typically of between 2-3 hectares. It is usually intercropped with other plants and trees, such as plantains, maize and spices. These not only provide shade while the cocoa trees are growing, but they can also provide up to 65% of the family's own food supply as well as additional income.



Through their relationships with cocoa growers in Ghana, *Divine* can trace the cocoa in any bar of chocolate back to the co-operative from which it originated. This 'bean-to-bar' approach demonstrates their commitment to social and economic issues and ensures excellence in quality control. All the cocoa, sugar and vanilla used to make *Divine* chocolate is certified Fairtrade. *Divine* also endeavours to source other ingredients from Fairtrade suppliers, such as almonds from Pakistan, mangos from Burkina Faso, and coconut from Sri Lanka. In addition to paying farmers their share of profits and the Fairtrade Premium, *Divine* also invests in farmer projects geared particularly towards gender equality, securing land rights and improving farming techniques.



Church Calendar/Ways of connecting May 2025

Sunday services continue at the usual time of 11 am at the West.

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



Sun 4 May 11 am Morning Worship.
Hospitality time after the service.

Thu 8 May 7.30 pm Kirk session.

Sat 10 May-Sat 17 May
10 am-4 pm (12 noon-4 pm on Sunday)
Christian Aid book sale in hall. Jam &
Jigsaws outside hall 10 am-1pm 10th May.

Sun 11 May 11 am Morning Worship.
Hospitality time after the service.

Sun 18 May 11 am Morning Worship.
Hospitality time after the service.

Sun 25 May 11 am Morning Worship.
followed by informal communion.

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter
email encounter@inveruriwestchurch.org by
Wed 21 May.

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



Inverurie Music is an important local charity supporting music events and performers. It provides awards to fund local musicians e.g. providing help to purchase instruments, assistance to young people to pay for music lessons or to attend music workshops.

A Quiz Night fundraiser is planned for **7 pm Friday 23 May 2025 at St Andrew's Church, Inverurie.**

Tickets can be purchased from **Novello Gifts** or from **Rosie Milne.**

Thank You

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the congregation for the flowers, engraved vase, champagne and the very generous cheque presented to us on Sunday, 13 April to mark our retirement as Session Clerks at Inverurie West. The vase will serve as a warm reminder of your friendship and kindness, and of our ten years in office, and the money will be used for an appropriate treat. We are also very appreciative of all the good wishes we have received at this time.



It has been a privilege to serve as Session Clerks and we could not have done it without the help and support of Rhona, Ian, the Kirk Session and the congregation. It is this collaborative teamwork, involving the skills and talents of so many individuals, and the shared faith of the congregation that makes the West Church the warm, welcoming and inclusive place that it is.

We wish Morag all the very best as she takes over as Session Clerk, and we look forward to continuing to share the journey of faith with everyone at Inverurie West.

Gillian and Mark



RHP IN CONCERT

**a cabaret evening of top class entertainment from
Right Here Productions' talented performers!**

**Saturday 28th June
Acorn Centre, Inverurie
7.30pm • £12 • Raffle**

**Tickets available via the
Acorn Centre, or online**



Joint fundraiser for Inverurie West Parish Church and 'Celtic Roots'

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

Deaths:

Mrs Janette Booth (District 16)

27th March 2025

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

FLOWER CALENDAR – MAY

Convener: Eleanor Mitchell

May 4 th	Joy Doorghen
May 11 th	Fred and Carol Barbour
May 18 th	Paterson family
May 25 th	Margaret Sangster



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).

