

EMCOUNTER



The Magazine of Inverurie West
Parish Church

MAY 2026



He is gone up on high

Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

A Prayer from Bangladesh

In these troubled times, this heartfelt prayer seems relevant to so many countries around our globe. It seems particularly appropriate in this month of focus on Christian Aid.

**Oh Saviour Christ,
In whose way of life lies the secret of all life,
And the hopes of all the people,
We pray for quiet courage to meet this hour.**

**We did not choose to be born or live in such an age.
But let its problems challenge us,
Its discoveries exhilarate us,
Its injustice anger us
Its possibilities inspire us,
And its vigour renew us
For your Kingdom's sake.**



Bangladesh – one of the world's poorest countries

From the West Manse



As something of a language nerd I am well aware that every language has words which are hard to replicate exactly in translation. An easy example for us might be '*dreich*'. Yes, you can come up with rough synonyms in English - damp, overcast, drizzly etc - but none of these manage to capture the fullness of what those of us who have lived in Scotland for any length of time can feel in our bones to be true when we say "it's affa' *dreich* today".

This variety is one of the things I love about language learning. Every time I run into a new word or phrase in a different language which expresses something that has no exact equivalent in English, it is like a little door opens in my mind, allowing in a breeze of fresh understanding.

That happened this week, but not via the haphazard Farsi learning I have been doing, nor with my efforts to revive dormant French in my brain before my next Canada visit in which one of my sisters and I hope to spend a bit of time in Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Instead, it happened when I was reading some of the latest material about Christian Aid in preparation for Christian Aid week this month. There was a reference on the home page to the new chair of Christian Aid: The Most Revd. Dr. Thabo Cecil Makgoba, the Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. In the brief biography, they mentioned that Archbishop Thabo had "pioneered the concept of **indaba** in the Worldwide Anglican Communion". Naturally, I then needed to find out what 'indaba' was or meant. I discovered that '**indaba**' is a Zulu or Xhosa term for an important conference

or council meeting aimed at resolving issues. Within the Anglican Communion this was further described as a *'Zulu-rooted process of deep listening, dialogue and purposeful discussion'* designed to handle conflict and build relationships across differences, particularly regarding divisive issues like sexuality. Importantly, it focuses on mutual respect rather than immediate conflict resolution. One particular description has lingered with me, namely that practising indaba helps us show Christ's love through *'gospel-shaped conversation'* aimed at finding truth together and maintaining community unity despite disagreements. Sometimes in our efforts to be followers of Jesus, to do good, to help others, to be generous to organisations like Christian Aid, we forget that we are not just 'givers', we must also be willing to 'receive'. There is much we can learn from the wisdom of other cultures, traditions and languages. Doing so respectfully does not require us to compromise what we believe, but it does require us to be willing to open those doors in our minds a little, to make space for new concepts or ideas; for differences of opinion or attitudes. Jesus' conversation with a Syro-Phoenician woman in the gospel of Mark shows us Jesus opening just such a door. It's an awkward encounter to say the least, and not one we might initially leap to celebrate as 'gospel shaped conversation'. Jesus apparently harshly rebuffs the woman's request for healing for her daughter. On the surface his words seem to firmly keep each of them in their culturally separate spaces. And yet, so much depends on a tone of voice we cannot hear. Some have argued, for example, that by engaging with the woman at all, Jesus was showing her respect and a willingness to enter into debate. Perhaps the woman's approach and Jesus' reply were the opening steps in the creation of a space, a kind of indaba, where the two of them could show us that it is possible to build relationships

across differences of gender and racial or religious identity through purposeful discussion.

Certainly there is no doubt that Jesus listens deeply to the woman's challenge. Not only that, he acknowledges the validity of her argument. In that space of mutual acknowledgement and a shared seeking of truth, healing happens.

'Gospel shaped conversations' are perhaps not always easy or even *nice*. But they do always involve listening deeply and with respect to each other's point of view, and a willingness to be open to change ourselves. We'll know it is a truly gospel shaped conversation if it opens doors, crosses boundaries, and makes space for healing.

And so, as Christian Aid week arrives and as we continue over the next few weeks as a congregation to explore the question - *'What should we do?'* Let's challenge ourselves not just to be generous with our time, money, talents and so forth but also to be willing to receive the generosity and wisdom of others, to make space for difference, to seek the truth of Christ's healing love together.

Every blessing

Rhona



THE GUILD REPORT

Our April meeting was the last of the session and included a short A.G.M. Our leadership team agreed to remain and were therefore elected for another year, though Tom McMorland pointed out that he considers this to be his last in the post. We will be seeking a replacement in due course so if you are interested, please let us know.

The theme "Living Stones" was concluded by reminiscences of our own church visit to the Living Stones of the Holy Land in 2018 and was led by Ann-Marie with Margaret and Alan Harrow. It concluded with an Easter message from Anton Nasser, headmaster of the Lutheran school in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, who asked us to raise our voices to speak out for peace, to stand for justice and to help bring an end to war.

Our new session will begin on **Monday 14 September** at 2 pm when we will explore "Beyond the Walls".

Come and join us, as a visitor, a member, a friend – you are very welcome.

Ann-Marie Coleman



Acorn Centre Update

Well, it has been a sweet moment since I last had the chance to submit an article to Encounter, so there is much to discuss! The tail end of last year was very busy – not least because Irene was out of action for a number of months, meaning more time spent in the kitchen for me. We had started the year with a significant deficit and slow trading conditions. We spent the rest of the year trying to narrow the gap and only just missed our contribution target for the year. A great effort from all the team to make this happen. With a new year comes new (and the same old) challenges. Economic pressure seems to come from every direction with increased costs and reduced consumer confidence. However, from adversity comes opportunity and the hospitality industry is anticipating an increase in domestic tourism this year. We hope to position ourselves to make the most of this.

Two of the wonderful things that make our business stand out are our kitchen garden and our volunteers. Regarding the first, I have been liaising with our fabulous garden team to plan the crop for the year. (And to all our fellow gardeners, we are always happy to make use of your excess produce!) As to volunteers, we are delighted to welcome **Rebecca, Chloe, Heidi, Mia** and **Tala** to the Team! We are really grateful for their mix of experience and enthusiasm.

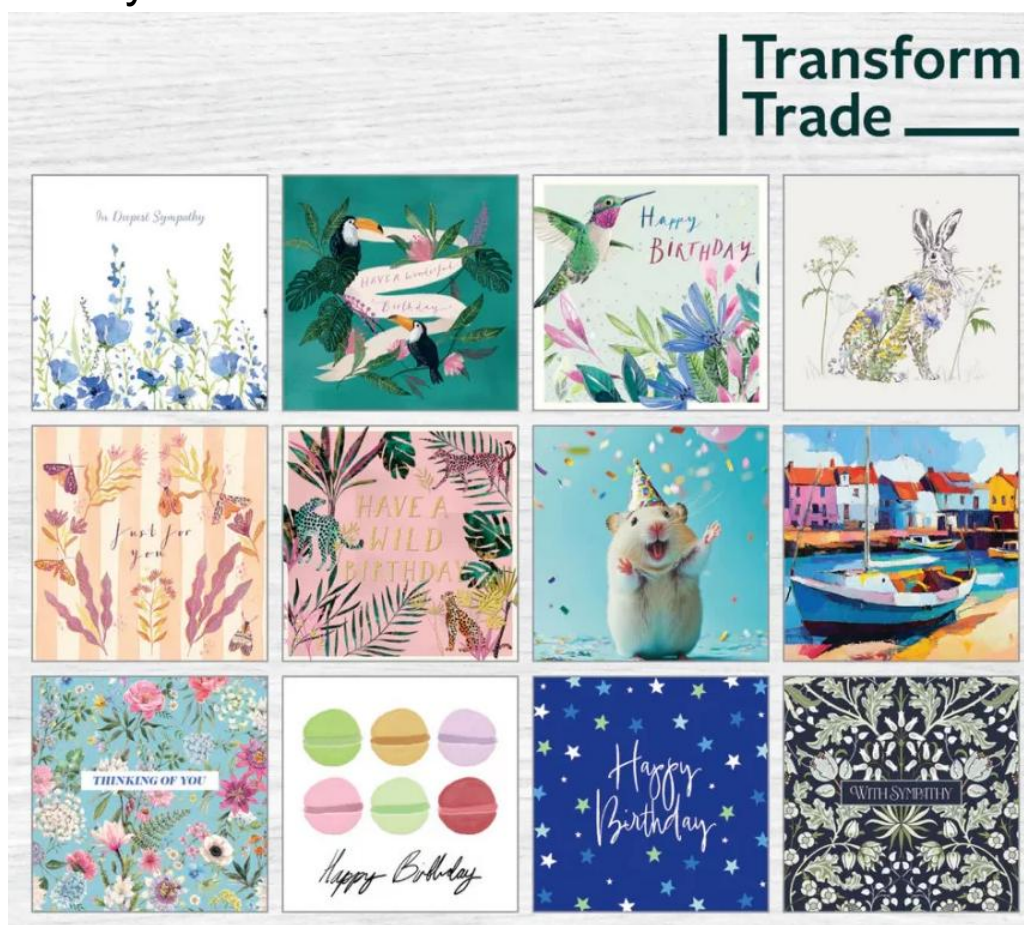
This year we are seeing an increase in **concert and event bookings**, with an emphasis on acoustic musicians. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for upcoming concerts. We have also hosted private catering events very successfully, so if you have a celebration looming then please do consider us.

Finally, I'm repeatedly asked when our next **Pop-up Bistro** night will be. The focus this year is trying to maintain financial stability in a challenging and ever changing market. However, the PTSD from preparing 10kg of sardines should have subsided by the end of the year! ;-) So, whilst I'm not committing fully, the likelihood is that we may do something in November ... watch this space!!

Mike

UBUNTU UPDATE

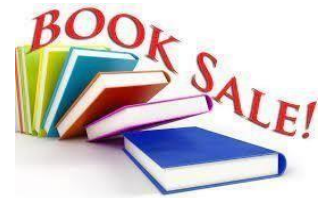
The shop is fully stocked with a large selection of greetings cards, suitable for every occasion. Each card supports *Transform Trade's* work fighting for a world where everybody benefits fairly from trade.





CHRISTIAN AID BOOK SALE

Saturday 9th - Saturday 16th 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 donations of **Jams or Jigsaws**. Donations can be handed in from **Tuesday May 5th**. The Hall will be open from **10 am – 4 pm**. 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 8th**, 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. The sale runs from **Saturday 9th May till 16th May** inclusive. (Sunday opening 12 – 4pm)

The book sale raises around £2000 every year – so it really is worth it!

BAG A BEN



As part of the efforts to raise vital funds, Christian Aid in Scotland is promoting a special fundraiser this year, entitled "**Bag a Ben**". The challenge involves climbing any hill called "Ben" before the end of June, gathering as many sponsors as you can to raise funds for Christian Aid. Fortunately for us, our nearest "Ben" is obviously Bennachie, not perhaps as daunting a climb as other "Bens" in Scotland. Kintore Church is taking up the challenge, and organising a group event, which will take place on Saturday, 16th May, leaving from the Rowantree car park at 12.30, led by Gilian Douglas. Bring your own picnic! But you don't have to be available on that day to be able to take part. People are free to do the climb by any route they choose and on any day they choose. Sponsor forms can be picked up from the Acorn Centre, or if you would prefer to set up a Just Giving page, guidance on how to do this for the Bag a Ben Challenge is available on the Christian Aid Website <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/bag-ben-challenge> Please note that climbers should assess their own health and fitness.



Music Afternoon Tea at Echt Church

Echt Church will be hosting a Music Afternoon Tea to raise funds for Christian Aid on **Sunday, 17th May at 2 pm**. The suggested donation is £5 per person.

All are welcome.

Church Calendar/Ways of Connecting May 2026



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

Sun 3 May 11 am Morning worship
Hospitality time after the service
3pm – 4.30 pm Play Church
Interactive storytelling/drama for the whole family

Sun 10 May 11 am Morning worship
Hospitality time after the service

Wednesdays from 13 May
7.30 pm Zoom Bible Study
All welcome. Contact Rhona for the link

Thu 14 May Ascension Day

Sun 17 May 11 am Morning worship
Hospitality time after the service

Sun 24 May 11 am Pentecost Sunday worship with baptism
Hospitality time after the service.

Sun 31 May 11 am Morning worship followed by informal
communion

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter
email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org
by **Wed 20th May**

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

Ascension Day

Ascension Day is observed 40 days after Easter. It commemorates the bodily ascent of Christ into heaven and is a very significant event. It is always on a Thursday and this year is on Thursday 14th May. Most churches celebrate the ascension on the following Sunday. Although not as widely celebrated as Christmas or Easter it is a very significant part of the Christian Calendar and an important prelude to Pentecost (Whit Sunday). This year Pentecost falls on **Sunday, May 24**. Pentecost always occurs 50 days after Easter Sunday (counting Easter as day 1) and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. The Ascension signifies Christ's victory over death and his ascension to heaven to sit at God's right hand. Importantly this is where the promise is given that he will return again '*to judge the quick and the dead*'. Jesus gives the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to his disciples.

The Bible recounts the event in a number of places. The following extract is Acts 1 vv1-12 but other accounts can be found in Luke 24:50-53 and in Mark 16:19-20.

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven - Acts 1 vv1-12

¹ In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with^[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit.”

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk^[c] from the city.

From the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

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Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	07842 195032
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Fabric Team		
Finance Team	Alan Sharp sharp3@btinternet.com	
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Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Deaths:

Mrs Helen Paton (District 35) on 2nd December 2025

Funerals:

Mr Robert Eunson (District 26) on 22nd April 2026

Lines Given:

Mrs Lynn Boyd (District 44) to Fife
Mr George Bruce (District 17)

FLOWER CALENDAR – MAY

Convener: Eleanor Mitchell

- 3rd May - Linda Walker
10th May - Fred and Carol Barber
17th May - Linda Duncan
24th May - Joy Doorghen
31st May Hazel and Robert Newton



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).



Again, thanks to Dr John Hearne who continues to assist to ensure print copies of Encounter are published and ready for distribution. Again also, a reminder that if you are happy to access Encounter online and do not require a print copy please let the Session Clerk know as it will help to contain costs.

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STOP PRESS

Social/Fundraising Group

On **25th April** Larry and Liz Young hosted a **Quiz Night** in the Acorn Centre. The event was very successful and very entertaining. At the time of writing we can report that in terms of fundraising the quiz raised **£376** for church funds. In terms of the social activities of the group it was a huge success in bringing people together for an evening of friendship, fun and laughter.