

### The Magazine of Inverurie West Parish Church

### **NOVEMBER 2025**







Scottish Charity SC016907

#### REFLECTION

During the season of Remembrance we not only reflect on conflicts past but inevitably consider current conflicts, of which, sadly, there seem to be so many. We can but pray and hope for more peaceful days. Emily Dickinson and Vaclav Havel express the concept of hope in different but thoughtful ways.

### 'Hope' - Emily Dickinson, 1891

'Hope' is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.

And sweetest in the Gale is heard And sore must be the storm, That could abash this little Bird That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land, And on the strangest Sea; Yet never in Extremity, It asked a crumb of me.

Quotation - Vaclav Havel (1936 - 2011)

'Hope' is definitely not the same as optimism.

It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out.

It is a dimension of the soul.





#### From the West Manse

I've been thinking a little bit this week about the connections between memory, reflection and hope.



It feels like a November way of thinking - partly, of course, because of the presence of Remembrance Sunday in the monthly calendar - but also because it has always felt like a reflective kind of month. Maybe it's because at this time of year my body starts to want to slow down, coorie in, and conserve as much as possible of the warmth and light of earlier seasons.

Looking 'back' to past seasons, times, or eras is very much a human skill. Elephants may famously 'never forget' but as far as we know they cannot process their memories the way we do. Humans are able to link past, present and future and move back and forth among them; creating and telling stories that help make sense of things. Memories - whether individual or collective - are an integral part of this. Alan Harrow's excellent recent Guild talk (transcribed in this month's magazine) about the arrival of soldiers to Inverurie post-Dunkirk is built upon the memories of that period written down and published in a couple of small booklets kept by the Garioch Heritage Centre.

It is great to have such documents, because memories can be malleable, elusive things. Studies repeatedly show they aren't as fixed or accurate as we think. They can be profoundly affected by things like the emotions they evoke. The stronger the emotion experienced at the time, the less likely it is that our memories are perfectly accurate. It is also common for small errors of recollection to creep in every time we 'repeat' a memory in our head. This can subtly or sometimes significantly, alter the memory itself.

As a sporadic diary/journal writer I am sometimes surprised to discover, when I look back on an old entry, that the way I described an experience or an emotional response is significantly different from how I remember it. It's one of the reasons I like to write things down. I find it interesting and helpful to reflect on those differences and what they might suggest about how I, those around me, or the world, have or haven't grown or changed.

We often under-use this unique human ability, using our sophisticated memories as a tool for simple nostalgia, rather than as something to reflect on and learn from. Sometimes we actively misuse our ability in order to stoke or keep alive old resentments or fears.

The bible in some ways is a library of memories. The memories of the people of God - expressed in a whole variety of literary forms from diary to letter to fable to history to poetry to prophesy. Like any collection of memories they can be well used or misused. And so it's important to recognise that these 'memories' have a purpose - several purposes really.

First and foremost they help us encounter God - not just in its pages, but in our own lives and in the world around us. Secondly they connect us - our own memories and stories and lives - to the wider context of the community of God's people, that great 'cloud of witnesses'. Thirdly, these collective memories are designed to teach us to hope.

Our hope comes from the sense of meaning and purpose that the memories of the people of God evoke. As our chosen reflection pieces for the magazine this month emphasise, hope isn't mere optimism. It's not about looking around us or ahead at the future

and being sure that we will have everything we desire. Vaclav Havel describes hope as an orientation of the spirit or of the heart. In one striking turn of phrase he wrote that hope is "the ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed".

Christian hope is rooted in the goodness of God, and our trust in his purposes. The knowledge of that goodness is stored in our collective memories, memories kept alive in our scriptures, our rituals, our prayers, our fellowship.

And so, as many of us think back this month - to the sacrifices and heroism of the past, as well as the everyday sacrifices and heroisms practised for decades by organisations like Crossreach in caring for others - may those memories inspire purposeful hope, and not just nostalgia.

And may the stored and shared memories of being part of God's people help us to be a source of hope for all regardless of the season.

**Every blessing** 

Rhona



### THE GUILD REPORT Inverurie Past

This month one of our own members, Alan Harrow, gave us a feel for how life was in the Inverurie area from the 1650's, when the first hospital opened out at Balgalhardy, through to our new Health Hub opened in 2018.

We plotted a course along the High Street looking at old images from 1850 ending up at the West Church Old Hall and Canteen. We heard a very interesting story telling of "When Dunkirk came to Inverurie". In June 1940 hundreds of soldiers from the 5th Division arrived in Inverurie direct from Dover in train loads.

It was a very moving story of how the people rallied together and fed and watered them all.

Our next meeting is on Monday **10th Nov 2pm** when Andrew Wainwright will talk about "Pittodrie Excavations". All are welcome to join us. **Margaret Harrow** 





Grampian Hospitals' Christmas
Carol Concert – Young Lives vs
Cancer. Sunday 14th Dec 2.30 pm.
The Grampian Hospitals' Choir
proudly return to the Music Hall
this Christmas. Conducted by Tim
Tricker, accompanied by the
Concordia String Orchestra and
the Bon Accord Brass Quintet.

#### How Dunkirk came to Inverurie.

"If Inverurie was able to deal in any effective way with the demands made upon it in June 1940, a considerable measure of credit was due to the Church of Scotland Huts and Canteens Committee" (Rev Alex S. Crichton)



Note the entrance shielded for blackout and the "Canteen" wooden building

In the early hours of Thursday 6th June the Market Square of Inverurie presented an extraordinary spectacle. A train had arrived overnight direct from Dover. The men were released from the train after a 27-hour journey and lay down in the square to the number of several hundreds. They lay propped up against the walls and railings, many

of them sound asleep from sheer exhaustion after the terrible experience of the last days on the continent, the excitement of the embarkation and the weariness of the long journey without food. A few had rifles - most had none. Many were hatless and coatless.

The hearts of Inverurie people were touched. Shopkeepers opened their doors, brewed tea and coffee within the premises and gave of their best. Residents hastened to do all that lay in their power, handed food and cups of tea out of windows, or invited men into their homes and the canteen went full steam ahead. These men lying in the streets were the forerunners of the 5th Division which had been ordered to assemble in this part of Aberdeenshire and establish an HQ in Inverurie.

The busiest nights were Friday 7th and Saturday 8th June when on one night 4 trains arrived at 10pm, 2am, 4am and 6am. Each train bringing hundreds of weary soldiers. Men were marched to the

Central Garage where spray baths awaited, afterwards they were clothed and free to find food in the military cooks' department or in the Church Canteen.

After having food they were marched to local billets or to trains for Turriff, Huntly and other parts of the county.

The peak period for the canteen was Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 9th June, when the energies of the workers and the resources of the community were taxed to the full. The work continued relentlessly for 43 hours. Residents slept on the benches within the canteen. Bakers, grocers and others gave the canteen everything they had to spare, baking and cooking throughout the days. Inverurie housewives donated baskets of scones, pancakes, oatcakes and "fine pieces". Farmers gave eggs and cakes. Inverurie Academy Pupils brought many contributions from their homes.

The majority of soldiers came from London and the home counties mingled with men from Yorkshire and Lancashire. There were also a considerable number of soldiers who, in the confusion, had been sent to Invertie by mistake and who belonged to other divisions. These poor men were dispatched back to the south of England after being given a cup of tea and a bun.

This is how Inverurie Churches and local people came together, providing food and comfort, opening their own homes to help soldiers who were very much battle weary.

That is how "Dunkirk came to Inverurie". Alan Harrow

NB: More information can be found in two books written by Rev Alex S. Crichton held in the West Church library.

## For the Fallen vv. 3,4,6 and 7 - Laurence Binyon

They went with songs to the battle, they were young, Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow. They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted; They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound, Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight, To the innermost heart of their own land they are known As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust, Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain; As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness, To the end, to the end, they remain.









### **Christian Aid Christmas Card Delivery Service 2025**

Planning for the annual collection and delivery of Christmas cards within Inverurie/Port Elphinstone/Osprey Village has begun. Post boxes will be placed in the Acorn Centre, St Andrew's Church, Strachan's, Morrisons, Tesco, and J.G. Ross at Highclere during the course of the evening of 5<sup>th</sup> **December**, allowing people to post their local cards from 6<sup>th</sup> December until the last posting date of 15<sup>th</sup> December.



The minimum donation requested per card is **50p** which is the same as it was last year. All funds raised go to Christian Aid.



Current volunteers, for whose help we are very grateful, will be contacted nearer the time. We are always on the look-out for new volunteers to help deliver the cards, and if you would like to get

involved we would do our best to match you to a street or two close to your home. Only one delivery is made, once all the cards have been sorted, so it is not very time-consuming, but many hands make light work! If you are at all interested in helping to deliver, or to sort the cards at St Andrew's Church, please ring either Alison Young on **07790976939 or** Robert Newton on **07773155015.** 

We would be delighted to have your help!





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

# Carers' Cuppa

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Drop in any time between 2 - 4 pm

Tel 07905 580371 for more information









### Preparing for Advent 2025

I am hoping to get some sort of Advent Art display organised for December. If you would like to be involved please drop me a message. All are welcome - if you have ideas - great! If you just want to join in - great! I am anticipating a couple of evening sessions and there is always cake involved. Please contact me on 07922172351 or huxtable424@btinternet.com if you are interested.

Sharon



ADVENT NOVEMBER 30<sup>th</sup> – DECEMBER 25th

### CrossReach Sunday - November 16th



Care you can put your faith in

CrossReach Sunday is an opportunity for congregations to be kept informed of the valuable work this organisation does. Run by Church of Scotland Social Care Council, CrossReach delivers help which is practical, and often life-changing, to so many people through its differing strands of care. Its Service Areas are: Children and Families; Counselling and Support; Justice System; Homelessness; Learning Disabilities: Mental Health; Older People and Substance Use.

Members of our Guild will be aware of the Three Year Partnership with CrossReach, namely *Playful Beginnings - Building Stronger Families*. In the past six months Guilds have raised £25,000 to help young families and give children these 'playful beginnings'.

Care Homes - CrossReach runs 15 Homes across Scotland, with three in Aberdeenshire: Balmedie House, Bellfield in Banchory and Clashfarquhar House in Stonehaven. The aim in all these houses is for older people to maintain their independence amidst friendship, support and activity. Staff have specialist experience and have an enhanced level of training. Residents' families may visit any time.

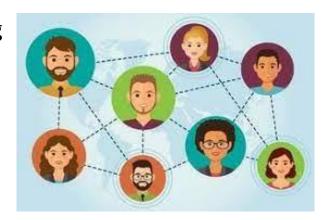
Fundraising - this is a vital element to enable CrossReach to function well. Many of us purchase Xmas cards, calendars or make monetary donations. Cards and calendars are always well-produced and are a delight to receive. The recent sale here in the West raised £240.65.

Thus on Sunday November 16th, let us think of the splendid work of CrossReach done on our behalf. As their Mission Statement reads: *In Christ's name we seek to support people to achieve the highest quality of life of which they are capable.* 

CrossReach Sunday - 'Let the light shine out of darkness'

### Church Calendar/Ways of connecting November/December 2025

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



Lest We Forget

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them"

Sun 2 Nov 11 am Morning Worship.

Hospitality time after the service

3 pm-4.30 pm Play Church. Interactive storytelling

and drama for the whole family

Wed 5 Nov 7.30 pm Bible study via Zoom - contact Rhona for

the link

Sun 9 Nov 10 am Remembrance Sunday Worship followed

by shared act of Remembrance in

town square

Sun16 Nov 11 am Morning

Worship led by our

team. Crossreach Sunday.

Hospitality time after the service

Thu 20 Nov 2pm - 4pm "Carers' cuppa". Drop-

in chat and cuppa for anyone in a

caring role

7.30 pm Kirk Session meeting

Sun 23 Nov 11 am Morning Worship.

Hospitality time after the service

Sun 30 Nov 11 am Advent Morning Worship followed by

informal communion

2pm - 5pm 'Lights on at the West'

(downstairs). Festive Craft activities and

fine pieces

3pm - 4.30 Play Church (upstairs)

Interactive storytelling and drama for the

whole family

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by Wed 19 November

### Plus some Advent dates to add to your diary

Tue 2 Dec 7 pm Christian Education Advent

Evening. Advent reflection and mince

pies led by our Christian Education

team

Sun 7 Dec 11 am Advent Morning Worship.

3 pm 'Hope and Light' reflective service

(for those who find this time of year difficult or just want a quiet pause)

Sun 14 Dec 11am Advent Morning Worship.

Fri 18 Dec Lunchtime - Working carols at the

West with Inverurie District

Churches Together. Bring your own

picnic!

Sun 21 Dec 11am Advent Morning Worship

including all age Pop up nativity









Wed 24 Dec 4 pm IDCT Christingle Service at St

Andrew's

11.30 pm joint watch night service at the

West (Carol singing from 11pm)



Thu 25 Dec 10 am joint Christmas Day family worship.

12 - 5 pm 'Jingle and Mingle'.

This year Inverurie West Parish Church will be one of the host venues for 'Jingle and Mingle', an Aberdeenshire community Christmas Day event offering a Christmas Dinner for those who find Christmas a struggle or might otherwise be spending it on their own.

If you think you might have an hour or two to spare between 12-5 on Christmas Day to be a duty officer for the church (being in the background keeping things running smoothly) please contact Rhona.

Alternatively, the Jingle and Mingle group are still looking for people to 'host' a table (free Christmas Meal included). This would involve serving food to and dining with a table of guests, facilitating some jingling and mingling. If interested in volunteering for this, you can register to do so here: <a href="https://forms.office.com/e/X2Jn06kJkY">https://forms.office.com/e/X2Jn06kJkY</a>

### Rhona is on annual leave from November 10 to 17. Rev. Carl Irvine will provide pastoral cover during this period.

Children are welcome at all services. Most weeks during school terms 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.lindal@btinternet.com

### **SOCIAL/FUNDRAISING TEAM UPDATES**

Our next event is a quiz from Larry Young on **Saturday 22 November.** Nibbles/snacks will be provided, BYOB and there will be a raffle too. Teams of up to 4 and tickets at £5 each will be available from the Acorn Centre soon.



We will also be running our reuse/recycle pre-loved baubles and other Christmas decorations again.

From late **November** we will have a table set up in the Acorn Centre with Christmas items which you can pick up for a donation to church funds. Items can be dropped off at church on Sundays after **26 October** or at the Acorn Centre from **Tuesday 28 October**. If you need items collected, please let us know.





### **Funding Success**

The Grants Group are delighted to report that they have secured funding to install mineral wool floor insulation in the roof space above the Sanctuary from the **Vattenfall** 



Unlock our Future Fund that supports projects in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire contributing towards a 'climate smart' future. Out of the £200,000 available to charitable groups, four times as much was requested overall. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have been given the entire sum, as one of 23 projects supported. Hopefully by the time you are reading this the installation work will be successfully completed and all users of the Sanctuary can look forward to feeling warmer this winter.

### WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart	620285
Willister	r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	
Session Clerk	Morag Mitchell	629312
	sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org	
<b>Church and Acorn Centre</b>	Judith Will	670850
Administration	admin@inveruriewestchurch.org	070050
Church Officer	A team approach will be implemented.	
Rollkeeper	Chris Gardner	07791
	rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org	630495
Life & Work	Irene Jamieson	
	irenejamieson@live.co.uk	
Safeguarding Co-	Valerie Napier	623279
ordinators	Gail Buchan	622145
Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	07842
	Zinau muneto	195032
Acorn Centre	Laura Gray	
Management Team	lauragray25@btinternet.com	620658
Environmental Matters	Joy Doorghen	620823
Team	doorghens@outlook.com	020823
Fabric Team		
Finance Team	Alan Sharp sharp3@btinternet.com	
Treasurer	Alison Blair treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org	620677
<b>Committed Giving</b>	Cindy Farquhar	
Envelopes	Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com	
Gift Aid	Mark Paterson	01467
	mgpaterson@talktalk.net	625675
	Biff Barrow	
Junior Church Team	biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk	623096
Pastoral Care Team	Rev Rhona Cathcart	620285
	r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	020283
Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie	620932
	joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	020932

#### **CONGREGATIONAL ROLL**

### Lines Given:

Mr Gordon Dawson (Postal) to West Gordon Parish Alford Mrs Hengie Dawson (Postal) to West Gordon Parish Alford

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

#### FLOWER CALENDAR - NOVEMBER

**November Convener:** Margaret Sangster 672043

2<sup>nd</sup> Nov Fran Nice

9<sup>th</sup> Nov Joyce Petrie

16<sup>th</sup> Nov Alan and Alison Sharpe

23<sup>rd</sup> Nov Ian and Liz Nelson

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).

