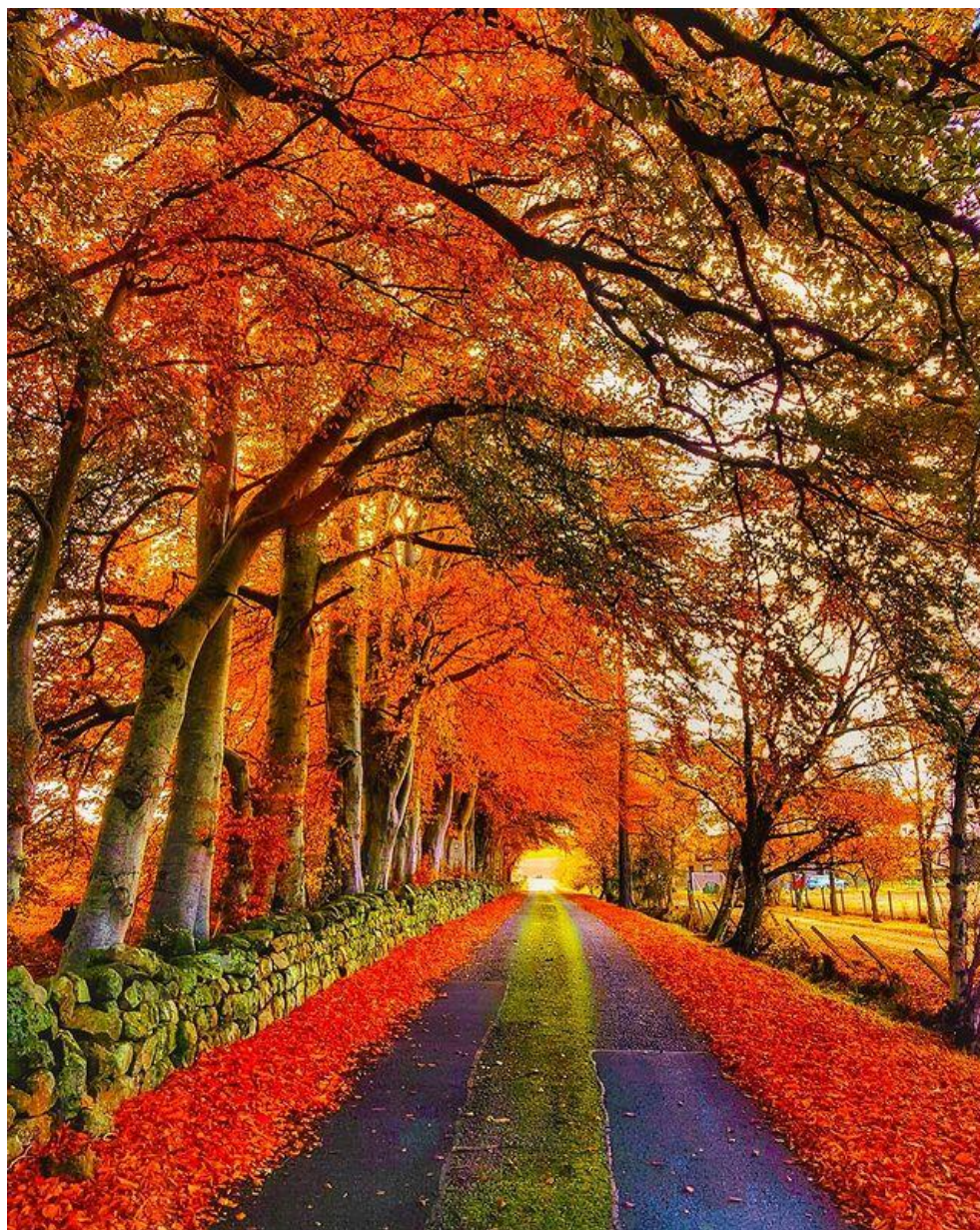


ENCOUNTER



The Magazine of Inverurie West Parish Church

OCTOBER 2025



From 'Visit Scotland' website
Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

Autumn - the season of Harvest - is marvellously created in field and in forest. In her letter, Rhona references 2025 as a “mast year”, one in which trees offload an unusually large abundance of fruit, nuts, etc. Thus the land becomes rich for people and wildlife alike. The American poet, John Jay Chapman, acknowledges this in his poem celebrating the joys of this season.

Trees in Autumn

*The poets have made Autumn sorrowful;
I find her joyous, radiant, serene.
Her pomp is hung in a deep azure sky
That turns about the world by day and night,
Nor loses its bright charm.*

*And when the trees resign their foliage,
Loosing their leaves upon the cradling air
As liberally as if they ne’er had owned them,
They show the richer for the nakedness
That weds them, with the clarity of heav’n.*

John Jay Chapman - 1862 - 1933



From the West Manse



I heard someone on the radio this morning talking about 2025 being a 'mast' year. If you don't know the term (and I didn't), a mast year is a year in which trees and shrubs produce an unusually large number of fruits, nuts and seeds. This happens about every three to five years, but is thought to be more common after a warm spring.

I'm not sure the groaning trees and shrubs will be much comfort to farmers, some of whose own harvests have not similarly benefitted from this year's weather. However, it is a reminder all around us of both the abundance of God's gift of creation and of how the whole system works to attain balance.

Harvest has long been celebrated in the church, reminding us every year to be thankful for God's abundance and generosity. It seems to me that in 2025 we need this message more than ever.

Unfortunately much of our public sphere is currently not dominated by a spirit of generosity and thankfulness but by a spirit of scarcity and resentment. Instead of leaders or would-be leaders telling us how much we have to give, too many are telling us how much we lack or have to lose.

It's very easy to buy into this spirit of scarcity. Every day we are told there aren't enough houses, or NHS appointments, or local services, or jobs, or educational support workers, or carers, or business investment etc. There's enough truth in this to make people anxious and stressed and from there it is an easy step to look for someone to blame.

This is indeed a perfectly reasonable and healthy response. After all, Jesus never complacently accepted the fact that he lived in an unjust society. But Jesus also never aimed his criticism or his anger at vulnerable groups or individuals. When Jesus got angry it was at those in positions of power who profited from keeping people in a state of vulnerability, poverty, instability, dependency.

Jesus was crystal clear that those who will '*inherit the kingdom*' are those who feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit those in prison (*Matthew 25:31-46*). In the parable of the Good Samaritan he also makes it clear that this generosity applies to how we treat our enemies or those whom we might see as rivals for limited resources.

I think one reason why Jesus insisted that those who acted with generosity and kindness, even to their enemies, would '*inherit the kingdom*' was because to be generous is to show that we understand something profound about the nature of God's creation. When we act with generosity we are showing that we know that God designed a world with more than enough to go around.

If things are out of balance and there is scarcity, then perhaps it is because we have not stewarded things well. I'm not naive. I know economics and politics are complicated. But surely we could have made, and still could more consistently make, choices in the name of generosity or compassion, even if it comes at the cost of reducing our own comfort somewhat.

Jewish tradition had its own version of a 'mast' year. In Leviticus we are told that every fifty years all debts were to

be forgiven; land that had been sold or lost was returned to its original owners and slaves were freed.

What would our global geo-political landscape or our market capitalist network look like if we practised something like that today? If everyone could settle on their own land, debt free, safe from oppression? If all of us had equal access to the abundance which harvest celebrates? It might look a bit more like the kingdom we have been promised.

Impossible? Maybe. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't hold onto that vision and as much of that practice as we can manage.

People use Christ's name to justify all kinds of things, including some which surely would make Jesus weep. It's up to us as a church to show the world that our saviour teaches us to love our enemies and to take particular care of the vulnerable, not to look out for ourselves.

So this harvest, as we look at the overflowing trees, shrubs and bushes which, even without our help, continue to witness to God's abundance, let's strengthen our commitment to be a church overflowing with generosity of spirit, of heart, and of action.

Every blessing

Rhona



LIVING STONES

Our introduction to this session's focus on 'Living Stones' was given by Rhona who led us in interesting, unexpected and creative ways to explore the topic. Who knew that building with Lego was such fun!

Alan Harrow will take us back to Inverurie of the past at our October meeting, so if you'd like to wander down memory lane with us come along and hear him on **Monday 13 October at 2 pm**, a warm welcome awaits you.

Further 2025 dates:

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|-------------|--|
| 19 October | West Fest Stall – after church harvest bakes, jams, chutneys and more . . |
| 10 November | Andrew Wainwright 'Pittodrie Excavations' |
| 8 December | Christmas Celebration 'By Ourselves' |

Members, please note that subs (£16) should be paid at the October or November meetings.

Ann-Marie Coleman





Save the Date



UBUNTU



Christmas Open Evening
Monday, 10 November 2025
6.30 - 8.00 pm

Make a difference this Christmas by choosing ethical gifts that support farmers and their families around the world. By choosing Fairtrade you are sharing good tidings, fairer prices and better terms of trade with the producers who play a huge, yet overlooked, role in our lives and celebrations.

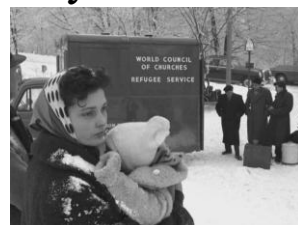


Christian Aid is 80!!



Last month we featured the Garioch District group gaining the *Standing Together “Power of Hope”* award, and the subsequent celebrations in Westminster Abbey. This month, in recognition of Christian Aid’s 80 years we feature some highlights from its history.

In the **1940s** aid activities were undertaken in response to the devastation which followed WWII. Douglas Lister (who subsequently became minister at St Andrew’s Church Inverurie) and others from British and Irish churches were instrumental in forming a committee for Christian Reconstruction in Europe. This developed into Christian Aid in 1945 and raised over £80,000. The funds were distributed by partner churches to support their war-stricken communities.



The **1950s** saw the launch of the first ever *Christian Aid Week*, at that time the largest public act of witness. It raised £26,000. Refugees in Europe were still being supported as were those in the occupied Palestinian territory, Korea and Hong Kong. To capture the public’s attention, a replica refugee camp was set up, in St Martin-in-the-Fields, in London. “*See how they live*”- photographs brought the message home!

In the **1960’s** the remit of the group was broadened to encompass not only refugees but groups around the world who had suffered deprivation through war, famine or natural disasters. The name “*Christian Aid*” was firmly established, but the group stressed the fact that while the denomination of the group was predominantly Christian, the aid would be delivered to all faith groups, as well as those with no faith. This was clearly demonstrated by the “*Freedom from Hunger*” campaign which raised over £2 million and funded over 90 programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



During the **1970s - 1990s** because of significant political upheaval in these decades funding was once more focussed on world-wide conflicts. These included providing medical aid for Vietnam, assisting refugees fleeing the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and, later, refugees from Kosovo, fighting to avert famine caused by wars in Mozambique and Ethiopia. Unveiled at this time was the famous poster “***Do you believe in life before death?***” Following calls for a fair wage from coffee farmers in Mexico, Christian Aid was a co-founder of the Fairtrade Foundation.

Sadly, in the 21st century, natural disasters have become more frequent. £47 million was raised following the Asian Tsunami and similar help after earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti.

Here in the UK the “***Make Poverty History***” campaign featured mass demonstrations of people who were against this injustice. At present climate change is very much on the agenda - Christian Aid was a partner in “***The Big Switch***” campaign which supported 3,500 churches to change to clean energy suppliers. Most recently, assistance has been given to 800,000 people affected by the war in Ukraine.



This October our **Harvest Collection** will be in support of ***The Silk and Saffron*** project in Afghanistan. Under the current regime few women are allowed to work. However silk and saffron production are acceptable. The women involved will produce the material from climate resilient crops; process, market and sell their products. This will offer them economic, social and physiological benefits.



And so the work of Christian Aid goes on ...



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 21st August 2025
Thursday 18th September 2025
Thursday 23rd October 2025

Drop in any time between 2 - 4 pm

Tel 07905 580371 for more information



Church Calendar/Ways of connecting October 2025

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



5th Oct 11 am Morning Harvest Worship. Hospitality time after the service.

3-4.30 pm Play Church. Interactive storytelling and drama for the whole family

12th Oct 11 am Morning Worship. Hospitality time after the service

14th Oct 7.30 pm Kirk Session meeting

19th Oct 11 am Morning Worship. Hospitality time after the service and Guild West Fest Stall - Harvest bakes, jams, chutneys and more

23rd October 2-4 pm “Carers’ cuppa” - drop-in chat and cuppa’ for anyone in a caring role

26th Oct 11 am Communion Service.
3 pm Family Communion

Wednesdays – 7.30 pm Bible Study via Zoom – Contact Rhona for the link

Encounter - If you have any material for Encounter email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by 22nd October.

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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

Social/Fundraising Team updates

Thanks to all who helped support our recent events. The *Bennachie Bike Ride* on 30 August raised **over £380** and our *Soup and Sweet* on 14 September raised **£520** (both totals will increase once some gift aid is claimed).

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.



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 | 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 mgpateron@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

Baptism:

James Andrew Nelson Lees (District 23) on 7th September 2025

Funerals:

Mrs M Lorimer (District 38) on 9th September 2025

Change of Address:

Rev Lorna Murray from District 39 to District 28

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

FLOWER CALENDAR – OCTOBER

October Convener: Linda Duncan 620800

5th Oct Laura and Kenneth Gray

12th Oct Fred and Carol Barbour

19th Oct Laura and Kenneth Gray

26th Oct Linda Duncan

**Thanks to all who donate, arrange,
or deliver flowers.**

**Thanks also to all who are involved
in any way in creating and delivering the posies which decorate
the church for Harvest Worship and are then distributed to
members of the congregation who find it hard to attend. They
are very much appreciated.**





The Church of Scotland

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The following email was sent to: Presbytery Clerks, Ministers, OLMs & Auxiliaries, Interim Moderators & Locums, Readers, the Diaconate, MDS, Ministry Candidates & Probationers, and Session Clerks.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

In Luke 4 we read of Jesus returning to Nazareth, and reading from the scroll

**God's Spirit is on me;
He's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor,
Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and
recovery of sight to the blind,
To set the burdened and battered free,
to announce, "This is God's time to shine!"**
(From *The Message* translation)

In Scotland we know too well that we need God to shine, to enter the hearts and homes of those who struggle against poverty and marginalisation.

In May the General Assembly endorsed [Scotland Demands Better](#), a broad civil society movement of people and organisations seeking to transform our society and challenge the injustices which make life so much harder for people who have less to begin with.

The main part of Scotland Demands Better is a march and rally in Edinburgh on **Saturday 25 October**. I'm writing to you to say – you are invited! Let's hit the streets together and show Scotland that Christians are witnesses to a God who puts the poorest and the least at the forefront. Simply turn up outside the Scottish Parliament from 1030 for a 1100 start with your banners, flags and placards. Church folk from all traditions and denominations are invited to journey together and to meet behind the visitor entrance building at this spot: <https://what3words.com/wiping.small.chief>

If you want to find out more, come to a special free webinar which is being organised by our Public Life and Social Justice team, on **Monday 6 October at 7pm**. Follow [this link](#) to register for your place.

If you can't make it to Edinburgh on **25 October** then we ask you to remember this movement in your prayers, and to spread the news among your congregation and communities. Resources for prayer and communication will be made available on a dedicated Scotland Demands Better section of the [Church of Scotland website](#) shortly. With the Scottish Parliament elections taking place in May, now is the time to get people thinking about what can be done to support our neighbours and be a visible witness to Christ's teaching and inclusion on the streets as well as in our churches.

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).

