

ENCOUNTER

The Magazine of Inverurie West
Parish Church

SEPTEMBER 2025



Psalm 19
Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

*Rhona writes in her letter about the reflective peace one can find in nature. This version of Psalm 19 - **The Heavens declare God's Glory** is adapted by Robert Stephen.*

*The heavens declare God's glory,
The skies his works proclaim;
Day unto day, and nicht to nicht,
His wisdom and his fame.*

*To every speech and language
Their message has gaen forth;
Their words oot to the world's end,
Their voice tae aa the earth.*

*In the heavens has he set
The pavilion o' the sun.
Like a bridegroom tae his marriage,
In glory daes he come.*

*He rejoices and is glad
Like a strong man in a race,
As he strides across the heavens,
Naething hidden fae his face.*

*The law of God is perfect,
The weary soul revives.
His word is true and steadfast;
It makes the simple wise.*

*From "**In The Beginning**" - Psalms and Biblical stories told in simple Scots; published by Aulton Press, 1991.*

From the West Manse



Depending on how far word has travelled by publication date, you may or may not know that I managed to injure myself - again - while on holiday. It seems to have been ‘only’ a sprained ankle, but a very painful one and, for the better part of a week, a non-weight-bearing one.

It’s not exactly what I had planned for my second week of holiday. But there are worse places to convalesce than the house of an old friend, with no responsibility other than to sit and look at the beautiful view of Conception Bay in Newfoundland, bathed in untypical daily sunshine.

It wasn’t entirely peaceful. I was sore for one thing, especially the first couple of days. I also had the background pressure of how I was going to handle the trip home, and simple tasks are complicated when chair bound for three days and on crutches for four. The evacuation alerts that kept ping-ponging on our phones due to wildfires getting closer also added a little extra drama!

Nevertheless, the circumstances, the company, and the injury did combine to force on me more rest than I might otherwise have managed. I realised that it has been a long time since I allowed my body, and, perhaps more importantly, my brain, to properly rest for a sustained period.

At the same time, as my battered limbs and dodgy circulation have been reminding me, we aren’t designed to be still all the time. Life is full of movement and change, growth and decline.

I was very conscious of these cycles as I sat with my injured foot propped up looking out at the bay, in front of which sits a church and a cemetery. In the foreground was the reminder of life and

death, of faith and community. In the background was the sea and sky, the opposite shore and the wide horizon.



And there I sat, limited in mobility, relegated for a while to observer status, and yet still somehow part of it all.

I'm on two feet again, if still a bit achy, and able to step back into busy community life here. One of the pleasures of being back at work is that sense of

community here at the West, and my place within it. I'm happy to immerse myself once again in all that we do. But I'm also grateful for the pauses when I can lift my eyes to the horizon; for the ability and the space to look beyond as well as around.

Psalm 121's famous opening, "I lift my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come" echoes that human instinct to look above and beyond ourselves when in need. The psalm then goes on to answer its own question, "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

The same Lord inhabits our foreground and our background. The same saviour works within our faith and our community and across distant horizons we can barely grasp. The same spirit guides our eyes to see and respond to what lies beyond and to what and whom is around us.

So, let's open our hearts and our eyes this season to the community around us and the horizons ahead, as we move on together in faith and in love.

Every blessing
Rhona

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The Presbytery of the North East and Northern Isles (NENI) held a special service as part of the visit of the last Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Reverend Dr Shaw Paterson. The event was hosted by Inverurie West Church and featured the presentation of Long Service Certificates. You may identify one or two people!





Listed below are the recipients from this year's Small Grants scheme. Thanks to the generosity of our customers and volunteers, we were able to give away **£6,000!** It really is heartwarming to be able to help some local groups. None of the grants are life changing, but every little helps. The Acorn is such a mainstay in the centre of town and it's lovely to hear the customers' stories. It's a really friendly place to work and we look forward to our regulars coming back. However, we do rely on the help of volunteers. So, if you know of anyone who has a spare morning or afternoon who might like to join our team, please tell them to drop in and have a chat. We'd love to see them. And thank you again for making the Small Grants possible.

Small Grant Recipients 2025

Aberdeenshire North Foodbank
1st Daviot Oldmeldrum Scout Group
Fyvie Guide House Management Committee
Garioch Carriage Driving for Disabled
Garioch Community Kitchen
Girlguiding Gordon
Gordon District Scout Council
Grampian Opportunities
Halfpenny Farm Animal Sanctuary
3rd Inverurie Brownies
Inverurie District Men's Shed
Inverurie Music
Jingle & Mingle
Kemnay Youth Club
Let's All Talk North East Mums
Peer Support Group Inverurie
Port Elphinstone Community House
Port Elphinstone School & Nursery
Right at Home Theatre Project CIC
St Andrew's School

THE GUILD



LIVING STONES

Our Guild meets on Mondays at 2 pm in the hospitality area of the Acorn Centre where we welcome friends old and new to share an afternoon together. After a short time of worship, we hear a speaker then enjoy a cuppa with a fine piece before wending our way home – an afternoon well spent.

Our first meeting of the new session is on **Monday 8 September** when our own Rhona Cathcart will speak to the current theme 'Living Stones'.

Further 2025 dates:

13 October Alan Harrow - '*Past Inverurie*'

10 November Andrew Wainwright - '*Pittodrie Excavations*'

8 December Christmas Celebration - '*By Ourselves*'

And to tempt you into returning in 2026 we begin with:

12 January Larry Young & Margaret Hearne '*Stories and Poems*'.

NB We will also have our '**West Fest**' stall after church on Sunday **19 October** selling harvest bakes, jams, chutneys and more.

Ann-Marie Coleman



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2025



22 September – 5 October 2025

This year Fairtrade fortnight focuses on the *"Brew it Fair"* campaign, urging consumers to choose Fairtrade tea and other products to support farmers struggling with low wages and poverty.

Tea facts :

- Globally, tea production employs around 13 million people.
- Smallholder farmers produce around 60% of the world's tea.
- Nearly 50% of tea is produced in China, followed by India, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey. Tea is also a significant industry in countries such as Uganda, Malawi, Indonesia and Bangladesh.
- In many countries, more than half of all tea workers are women. In their labour-intensive, low-paid jobs, they often face gender-based violence and discrimination, and exclusion from decision-making and union representation.
- Tea plantation workers in India, Kenya and Sri Lanka are often migrants or the descendants of immigrants. They face discrimination in many forms, including gender-based, as well as ethnic violence.
- Tea cultivation is labour-intensive. Picking is done by hand and involves carrying heavy loads over long distances. The lack of protective gear exposes workers to health risks from agrochemicals.
- Global tea production faces growing threats from climate change as our weather patterns become increasingly erratic and unpredictable. Key challenges include warmer temperatures and droughts, reduced rainfall and the spread of tea-related pests and diseases.



- In the UK, we drink 100 million cups of tea every day and the price of an average tea bag today is just around two or three pence.
- However, only 7% of tea sold in the UK is on Fairtrade terms.
- Clipper is the largest Fairtrade tea brand and supported the creation of the Fairtrade tea standards over 30 years ago.
- In 2008, Co-op was the first UK retailer to sell Fairtrade own brand tea.
- Marks & Spencer has the longest commitment to working with Fairtrade on 100% of its own-brand Fairtrade tea and coffee of any UK retailer, and generates more Fairtrade Premium for tea growers than any other UK retailer.
- Sainsbury's has converted all of its black tea sourcing to Fairtrade this year. This move builds on a longstanding 23-year partnership between the retailer and Fairtrade and will contribute to building a sustainable tea sector and a resilient food system.

FAIRTRADE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Political turmoil around trade and tariffs have a disproportionate effect on the poor who are most vulnerable to fluctuations and uncertainty in trade and also bear the brunt of dealing with climate change.

Marie Rumsby, the charity's director said, "*every Fairtrade purchase makes a difference*" at a time when farmers have told the organisation that global heating is "*making it harder to grow crops*".



So, in stark contrast to the sentiments expressed in ***Psalm 19***, rather than preserving and reflecting on the wonders of creation we are in danger of destroying that precious gift from God. (*More on Fairtrade in the online version of Encounter*)

DO IT FAIR FOR A FAIRER WORLD



In a snapshot survey of more than 250 people who grow and pick our tea in Kenya, carried out by the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Africa in March 2025:

- Only 1 in 5 of the tea workers and tea farmers surveyed said they earn enough income every month to support their families with the essentials.
- Over 70% of tea workers said their biggest challenge is wages. Many, particularly women, mentioned they had not received wage increases or promotions after years of work and struggled to meet costs for their families, including education for their children.
- 55% of tea farmers said their biggest challenge is changing weather patterns on their farms, raising costs and impacting their ability to maintain an adequate income from their farms.
- 99% of both tea workers and tea farmers surveyed said that Fairtrade Premium has been spent on projects that address their main challenges, including education and health care, community improvements such as schools and roads and projects to add make extra money, such as beekeeping and growing other crops.

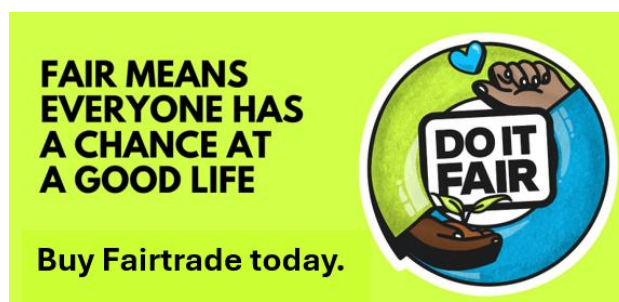
The Fairtrade Foundation is also urging the UK government to take a number of measures to improve the lives of tea farmers and workers. It has recommended the introduction of a UK law on human rights and environmental due diligence. Centred on the needs of overseas farmers and workers, with a focus on supporting living incomes, the law would ensure that the costs and burdens of proof and compliance are not passed onto them, and would address unsustainable purchasing practices, pricing structures and business models.

Ms Vijaya Kumari (Tea Plucker At Matheson Bosanquet, South India)

With 19 years of experience as a tea leaf plucker, Ms Vijaya Kumari has experienced the difference Fairtrade makes on her estate. This includes achieving one of her most important aims: providing a better education for her daughters than the one she received. Vijaya has been able to educate her two daughters using the Fairtrade Premium. Each child received funding for their education from the age of six, an amount that increased all the way up to college. Vijaya has been happy to see one daughter become an engineer, and the other a nurse.



Comparing life as a plucker back then until now, Vijaya has noticed one difference: a changing climate. Increasingly erratic rainfall, and changes to the ecosystem it brings, has made working conditions more challenging. ***‘Because of climate change, ... there is more water flowing where we work, and the path becomes slippery and we might fall. Leeches will bite us... Climate change is difficult for us’.*** In response to the growing challenges, Vijaya and other Pluckers have been provided with leech repellent, and free healthcare, through the Fairtrade Premium: ‘Now when I work, if I slip and fall down... they give us medical money through Fairtrade. They take care of that’.



NEW SCOTS POEM

Here is a poem, created by some of the New Scots during the Scottish Refugee Councils National Refugee Week in Inverurie. It came about when the Syrian families that attend the Language Cafe in the Library were asked to consider the 'blocks' that prevented them from integrating when they first arrived and the 'stepping stones' that helped them integrate.

Their individual words and thoughts were then used to create this poem.

From Blocks to Stepping Stones

We came with silence on our tongues,
Words foreign, signs unread—
Buses hummed past our questions,
We watched, unsure where they led.
The cold air of a strange land
Met the warmth of a homesick heart,
Halal food hard to find,
Family scattered, torn apart.
News from Syria like a shadow,
Falling long across each day—
Wondering who was safe,
And who was still too far away.
Yet stones beneath our feet
Began to shift, to guide—
A brother's voice in Inverurie,
A sister by our side.
Sky opened like a postcard,
With skies too wide to grieve,
And Ewan's words in English class
Taught us what it means to "believe."
Bus trips turned into bridges,
Across this northern land,



Where volunteers brought flowers
And held out steady hands.
A wedding dress for Meriem,
Crafting dreams in thread and light,
Cups shared in the Language Café,
Laughter softening the night.
Garioch kitchens warmed us
With more than just the food—
They fed a quiet courage,
They changed the mood.
We are still building futures—
Stone by careful stone.
What would help us carry on?
Not to walk these paths alone.
Let one-to-one words find us
Right where we live and try,
Let language open doorways,
Let no voice pass us by.



Of course, if anyone is interested in helping out (2 hours a week, **10 – 12 noon on a Wednesday** in Inverurie Library) we would be delighted to hear from them. Contact: (biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk or leave a message at Reception at the Acorn Centre.) It's a great way to make a difference and we have such fun!

Best wishes
Biff Barrow



GARDEN PARTY UPDATE – Isla Maitland

The organists' garden party in July went really well and we want to thank everyone who came along and also those who couldn't come but made a donation!

Despite the unpredictable weather I think we had around 40 attending, including 7 children. The organists even managed a wee bit of entertaining!! 🎵 🎶

When the gift aid is added I think we raised about **£700** which will keep our organ fund in a healthy position.



(More pictures are included in the online version of Encounter)



DUNCAN'S JOHN O'GROATS TO GRETNA CHALLENGE



Duncan and I want to say a huge thank you to all who donated to this year's challenge. It was a huge success, and the roof of the campervan was surprisingly comfortable to sleep on!!!

We saw parts of the country we'd never seen before and the weather was really kind to us. This is RSABI's final update. The outstanding fundraising efforts of north-east farm worker, Duncan Maclellan, have been recognised by The Wiseman

Family Charitable Fund, which has doubled the total raised to **£20,000!**

Duncan, who is also president of Inverurie Young Farmers' Club, recently completed the third of three challenges - **a 370-mile** challenge travelling from John O'Groats to Gretna Green on foot to raise funds for RSABI and shine a light on mental health in the farming community.

He is over the moon with the news....and so are we! Our thanks to Duncan (and all those who have donated and helped him with his three challenges) and special thanks to Alan Wiseman and the Wiseman Family Charitable Fund.

(More pictures are included in the online version of Encounter)





CHRISTIAN AID RECOGNITION POWER OF HOPE AWARDS - *THE STANDING TOGETHER AWARD*

Val Reid Chair of the Inverurie and District Christian Aid Committee

On 12 June, Ian Waldram, the previous chair of the committee, and I were invited to a Service of Thanksgiving in



Westminster Abbey for the 80th anniversary of Christian Aid. Many of you may know that Christian Aid came into being at the end of World War 2 and its main purpose was to try to alleviate the suffering of the many refugees in war torn Europe. One of the founding fathers of Christian Aid was Rev. Douglas Lister, at that time an Army Chaplain in Luneberg, who could see at first hand the poverty, food shortages and homelessness suffered by civilian refugees in defeated and occupied Germany. With some great difficulty he persuaded church leaders in Scotland and the wider UK that helping the defeated enemy was the correct and Christian thing to do. There was eventually a great humane response from parishes and congregations around the country and so Christian Aid was born. Douglas Lister later became minister at St Andrew's Church in Inverurie, and so we in the area have always had close ties with Christian Aid.

The work of Christian Aid has expanded greatly over the past 80 years and is now part of wider Disaster Emergency Response across war torn areas like Ukraine. It responds to areas suffering natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes. It campaigns for Climate Justice. It supports farmers in areas threatened by the extremes of drought and flooding. And sadly, it still needs to work to try to mitigate a refugee and asylum seeker crisis that grows by the day. Christian Aid aims to educate and works to combat prejudice and ignorance. It works with and trains partners on the ground in communities worldwide, offering practical help and support. Christian Aid has been a key partner and charity within the Garioch Area since the days of Douglas Lister, and I am part of

an enthusiastic group of Christians and Church members from West Church, St Andrew's Church and St Mary's Episcopal Church, all Inverurie, Kintore Church, now part of the wider Bennachie Parish, Meldrum and Bourtie Church and Daviot Church.

Ian and I were very honoured and excited to be invited to the service in Westminster Abbey, even though it meant a 4am start and a long day flying back and forth to Heathrow in the one day. The service was absolutely wonderful. The Abbey was packed full, the speakers excellent, the music and prayers inspiring, and the singing in such a packed house amazing. As we left the Abbey, they rang the bells for us. We felt like royalty!



But the other exciting event of the day was that we had later heard that the Garioch Christian Aid group had been nominated for and won a special recognition award, **the Standing Together Power of Hope Award**, for raising over **£740,000** for Christian Aid. Much of this has come from our Annual Book Sale, but there have been lots of innovative fundraisers over the years like 'smartie tubes', Soup and Sweet lunches, Thrift shops, as well as house to house and church collections and birthday donations. ***This year Ian walked 80K in May and raised a great sum to mark the 80th anniversary.*** There was also a special service in St Andrew's during Christian Aid week to honour the memory of Douglas Lister, and also a fundraising Christian Aid service in Echt Church, part of the Bennachie group.

Ian had unfortunately booked a flight home after the Westminster Abbey service, but I was able to attend the Award Ceremony and afternoon tea in Churches House, near the Abbey. I met the other six winners (we were the only recipient from Scotland) and the Bishop of London. It was a lovely occasion, and all the winners had really inspiring stories to tell. I felt very humble. We now need to find a permanent home for the Award where it can be seen by as many people as possible.



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 Summer 2025

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



- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Thursday 4 Sep | 7.30 pm Kirk Session meeting |
| Sunday 7 Sep | 11 am Morning Worship including baptism
Hospitality time after the service
3.00 - 4.30pm Play Church Interactive
storytelling and drama for the whole family |
| Sunday 14 Sep | 11 am Morning Worship followed by:
12 noon Fundraising Soup & Sweet (tickets
£10) |
| Thursday 18 Sep | 2.00 – 4.00 pm “Carers’ cuppa” drop-in chat
and cuppa’ for anyone in a caring role |
| Sunday 21 Sep | 11 am Morning Worship
Hospitality time after the service |
| Sunday 28 Sep | 11am Morning Worship followed by informal
communion
2.00 pm ‘Volunteers’ thank you afternoon tea. |

Bible study dates to be confirmed

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter
email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by 18th September

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



FLOWER CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER

September Convener: Eleanor Mitchell (620852)

September 7 Irene Jamieson and Linda Mathers

September 14 Linda Duncan

September 21 Ann Milne

September 28 Morag Mitchell



WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriwestchurch.org	620285
Session Clerk	Morag Mitchell sessionclerk@inveruriwestchurch.org	629312
Church and Acorn Centre Administration	Judith Will admin@inveruriwestchurch.org	670850
Church Officer	A team approach will be implemented.	
Rollkeeper	Chris Gardner rollkeeper@inveruriwestchurch.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@inveruriwestchurch.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@inveruriwestchurch.org	620285
Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

KEY PURPOSES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Churches in Scotland maintain a roll for several key reasons: to manage and identify their congregations (members and adherents), to facilitate communication for church activities and pastoral care, and for statistical and administrative purposes. A roll serves as an official list of individuals connected to the church, distinguishing between members who take communion and adherents who are regular worshippers but not full members. It also acts as a historical record, providing valuable data about the congregation and its families over time.

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Weddings:

Aimee MacArthur and Alasdair Morrison from Lewis at Logie House on 4th June 2025

Esther Oyewusi and Feyi Olakotan in West Church on 17th July 2025

Deaths:

Mrs Mary McWilliam District 3 on 14th July 2025

Mr Alexander (Nicky) Littejohn District 20 on 5th August 2025

Funerals:

Mrs Margaret McKenzie District 33 on 27th August 2025

Change of Address:

Mrs Laura and Mr Kenneth Gray from District 37 to District 27

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

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).

