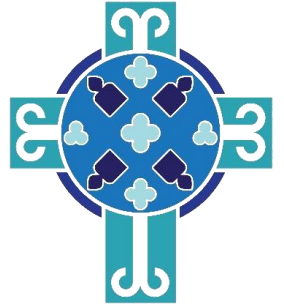




*The Magazine of Inverurie West
Parish Church*

SEPTEMBER 2026



Photograph – The River Don

Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

This poem by Malcolm Guite reflects on Psalm 1. It speaks of the merits of patience, of simplicity and of being 'deep rooted', like the trees, so that we can *'let the chaff of life just blow away'*.

Malcolm Guite is a poet often quoted by Rhona. The beautiful language in this poem merits being spoken out loud!

Beatus vir

Come to the place, where every breath is praise,
And God is breathing through each passing breeze.
Be planted by the waterside and raise

Your arms with Christ beneath these rooted trees,
Who lift their breathing leaves up to the skies.
Be rooted too, as still and strong as these,

Open alike to sun and rain. Arise
From meditation by these waters. Bear
The fruits of that deep rootedness. Be wise

In the trees' long wisdom. Learn to share
The secret of their patience. Pass the day
In their green fastness and their quiet air.

Slowly discern a life, a truth, a way,
Where simple being flowers in delight.
Then let the chaff of life just blow away.

From: *David's Crown: Sounding the Psalms*

Author: Malcolm Guite

Publisher: Canterbury Press, 2021. Used with kind permission.

From the West Manse

Schools are back and by the time this issue is out, we will be having our first 'regular' Sunday back at the West.



In the meantime, I am in what I think of as transition week, as my brain and body adapt to the change from summer to autumn - physically and mentally.

For me it is definitely true, to some extent, that 'a change is as good as a rest'. My brain finds it refreshing to try out new patterns, contexts, or environments every once in a while. It's one of the reasons I appreciate a bit of a summer break from 'the usual' - even if *'the usual'* is good and productive. My body, however, especially as I get older, isn't quite so accommodating. It takes longer to adapt to different water, food, climate, housing, timetables and so forth. And jet lag hits harder every year!

So while I enjoy the change, it's also always nice to get back to 'normal'. We humans are creatures of habit and it is natural to seek comfort in the familiar. But what feels natural or comfortable isn't always best for us in the long run. We live in a society in which we are constantly trying to make life easier for ourselves. We sit more and walk less. We create foods that are easy to prepare and eat. We have hundreds of labour-saving devices and more and more of our day to day interactions are computerised or automated. Even our thinking is increasingly being outsourced to AI systems.

Of course I am a big fan of labour-saving devices and goodness knows we don't want to go back to a society in which most people had to work incredibly hard just to stay fed and clean and sheltered. It's far too easy to romanticise the past and the way things were.

I was struck by this as I wandered around the streets of Montreal last week - leaning into nostalgia for my university days, enjoying the old architecture, the bilingualism, the cultural variety, the food, the

mountain, the parks, and the trees - while also noting what had changed. I found myself idly imagining what life might have been like if I had chosen to stay there after graduation, and how I might have changed - for better or worse.

Don't panic. I love Scotland and have no desire to live anywhere else.

And even as I indulged in nostalgia, I did so with no regrets. I'm not much of a '*what if*' person. Life changes us whether we like it or not, and we are who we are in part because of everything that has led us to that point. Each decision, each change, contributes to who we are and who we are in the process of becoming. I believe strongly that God doesn't lay out a fixed plan for each of us that we must inevitably follow. There really is such a thing as free will. At the same time I also believe that God knows intimately who we are - our potential, our strengths and weaknesses, our circumstances. If we listen, and learn to pay attention to the spirit, God will lead us towards who we are meant to be, working within and through our decisions and our contexts.

I believe this is true of congregations and communities, as well as individuals. And that's why after nine years at the West the combination of familiarity and new potential feels encouraging (if occasionally daunting) to come back to after a summer break. What might God have planned for us this year? And maybe the spirit is giving you a nudge to get involved in a new or different way. If so, autumn is a great time for new starts. Come and talk to me about your ideas and we will see what we can make happen! Don't worry about getting it 'wrong'. Instead, remember Jeremiah's promise:

“For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Every blessing
Rhona



The Guild's new session begins on Monday **14 September** at 2 pm when we will explore "Beyond the Walls" with Rhona. Members, friends and visitors are welcome to join us for this or any of our meetings.

Please note that all meetings are at 2 pm and that members' subs will be due at the November meeting.

Dates for your diary taking us up to the end of the year are:

Monday
**14
September**

Rhona Cathcart
'Beyond the Walls'

Monday
12 October

Beyond the Walls
at the Heritage Centre

**Sunday
11 October**

West Fest /
Harvest Bakes

Monday
9 November

Morag Mitchell
'Jersey Royals'

Monday
**14
December**

Christmas Celebration
with Chris and Alan

NB: Please forgive the error in the summer edition of Encounter which stated that our first meeting was to be Monday 7 September.

Ann-Marie Coleman

CrossReach Christmas cards and calendars will be on sale at the end of September for 3 weeks so look out for the new catalogue at the Acorn reception. You can place an order and pay for it when your order arrives.



CrossReach is a social care providing arm of the Church of Scotland. It is a charity that supports older people, children and families, mental health, homelessness and people with a learning disability.

Thank you, Jane

CALLING ALL MAKERS AND BAKERS



The **Yarn Group** is organising a fundraising Christmas Fair in the Chapel on the morning of Saturday **14th November**. If you would like to donate handcrafted items, baking, preserves or plants, all donations to help fill our stalls will be gratefully received. For further information please speak to Linda McCreath.

WEST CHURCH TREASURE HUNT

Larry and Liz Young put together clue sheets for a treasure hunt which could be completed by taking a stroll around Inverurie over the summer. This raised a total of **£235** for church funds.

WEST CHURCH QUIZ

*Tickets are selling fast for our next quiz hosted by Larry and Liz Young at 7 pm on **Friday 11 September**. Nibbles/snacks will be provided, BYOB and there will be a raffle too. Teams of up to 4 and tickets at £5 each are available from the Acorn Centre. Joyce Petrie*



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 Carer's Cuppa

Thursday 17th September 2026

Thursday 22nd October 2026

Thursday 19th November 2026

Thursday 17th December 2026

Drop in anytime between 2 - 4 pm

Tel 07905 580371 for more information



Scottish Charity SC016907



Summer buzz

In Rhona's opening letter this month she spoke about change.

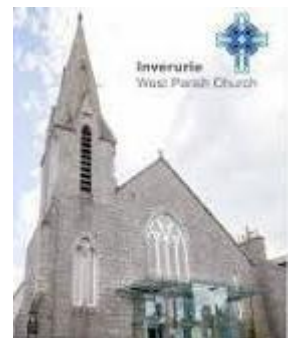
July here in the West was all about changing things up a bit as we tried out some different styles of summer services. We had an 'outside-in' service in which at least half of the joint congregation took the option to go out into the garden for part of the service in order to look for things that were 'bright and beautiful' and otherwise enjoy God's creation. Then we had a sing-along service in which we celebrated favourite hymns, poems and art work. In the third week we held 'cafe church' downstairs with lots of great table discussions and fine pieces. And finally, we tried out 'hands-on' church in which we played about with coloured paper and pritt-stick to make watery scenes as we thought about Jesus calming the storm.

So how did it go?

Well, the services were very well attended and the buzz was considerable. While I did receive some constructive feedback - particularly from folks who found it hard to hear or concentrate in particular weeks with so much going on - the overwhelming majority of responses were extremely positive. 'What fun' was probably the most common response!

Other examples included:

On the first week (Outside in)



From someone looking at everyone moving around to the tables and in and out: 'This here, this is community'.

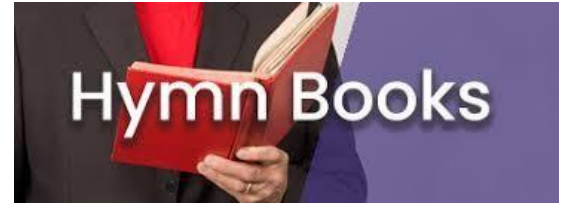
From the parents of a young family attending for the first time, 'It was great how naturally the children were included in everything'.

On the second week (Sing-along)

"I loved that!"

"I loved how art and poetry were included"

And various versions of 'That was my favourite hymn' or "I remember we used to sing that when..."



On the third week (Cafe church)

"We had a fantastic discussion at our table"

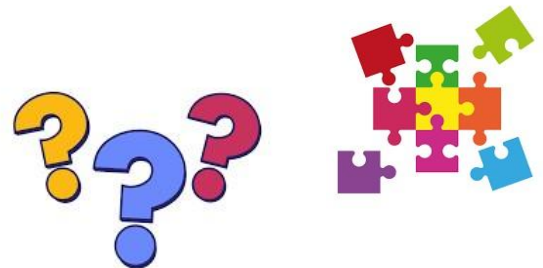
"It was really good to actually talk to people about something other than 'pass the sugar, please'"

"You know, I confess I wasn't looking forward to this week, but I actually really enjoyed it!"



On the fourth week (Hands on)

From a visiting family, "We couldn't wait to get up and start doing the crafts"



"These services have been great. So refreshing!"

Of course there are things to learn for if/when we do some of these again. And of course, along with the buzz of doing something new, there is the comfort of getting back to the familiar. We have good reasons for our usual liturgies, rhythms and practices. But I am encouraged by folks' general willingness to give it a go, even when a particular week's style didn't suit them as well. It is good and healthy for us to recognise that there is no one 'right' way to worship (even for presbyterians), and the spirit can and does speak to people in different ways.

Finally, as a 'church at the heart of the community with the community at its heart', we owe it to that community to keep reaching and growing and finding new ways to share the love of Jesus and the grace of God. Thanks to you all for being such great partners in this!

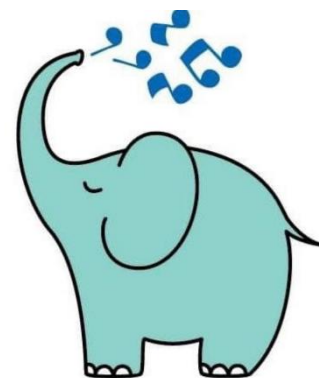
Some other comments ...

- *Appreciated seeing the garden; the fruits, vegetables; also the sitting area and the mural. A practical and helpful way to connect with our local community.*
- *Stimulating, thought provoking and truly creative. We were able to interact with so many others - and learn so much!*
- *Outside in church:- was well thought out, with the option of staying in the church for those unable to go round the garden. There were plenty interesting things provided to do inside the church.*

- *Sing along church:- great idea to ask for contributions from the congregation of favourite songs, poetry/readings and art. It was lovely to sing, hear and see people's choices.*
- *Cafe church :- This was a nice way to hold an alternative to holding the service in the upstairs part of the church. Having refreshments available throughout the worship gave it a nice relaxed atmosphere.*
- *Hands on church:- This was the one I enjoyed the most. There was something available for everyone if they wished to be hands on! It was great to be able to take something home to reflect on 😊*
- *The service time of 11 am was a good decision, as a lot of people find it difficult to attend at 10 am.*
- *Would be nice for the occasional themed alternative service throughout the year.*

MAINLY MUSIC

Mainly music is about to start another year of fun music sessions together in a shared, loving family environment. We have a few spaces so please get in touch if you are interested in joining us. We meet every Tuesday, in the church, from 10-11:30 am.



Jane Fraser 0779266207

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH QUIZ NIGHT AND RAFFLE

Friday, **18th September**. 7 pm (Doors open 6.30 pm). Tickets £5 per person. Maximum teams of 4. Bring your own drinks and glasses – nibbles are provided. For tickets contact: Church Office (01467 628740), Yvonne Clark (07453324050) or Rosie Milne (07714233092)



Organ Fund Garden Party - Report

Despite it being a drizzly day, around 35 attended this year's organists' garden party, mostly squeezing into the house although a few braved the gazebo. Thankfully it wasn't cold. Sharon, Alison, Marie and I repeated our last year's entertainment slot by singing a few songs, a capella. And we're delighted to say that, with gift aid added, we raised almost **£800** for the organ maintenance fund. Thank you to everyone for their generosity. Isla (See photographs in online version of Encounter).





UBUNTU



Fairness is not a given. But when we listen to farmers and producers, and put pressure in the right places, we have the power to change that. Around the world, the people who grow, pick, stitch and make the things we buy are facing the same challenges: unfair pay, unsafe working conditions, and a climate crisis threatening their livelihoods. Fairtrade exists to change this, and to push for the rules that make fairness the norm, not the exception, and this is why the focus for Fairtrade Fortnight 2026 is the same as last year: **Do it Fair - for People, for Planet and for Fair Pay.**

Fair to People

No one should work in fear. Behind the products we use every day are people, farmers and workers who deserve safe conditions, equal opportunities, and dignity at work. Children belong in school, not at work. That is why Fairtrade is campaigning for governments to demand better from business, so people's rights are protected everywhere, not just where companies choose to act.



Fair on the Planet

Everyday staples like coffee, cocoa, and bananas are under threat from unpredictable weather, rising costs, and failing harvests. Farmers and producers in the global south shoulder the heavy burden of a climate crisis they did not

primarily create and too many businesses are ignoring these people, thereby profiting from deforestation, exploitation, and climate damage.

Fair Pay

Many **farmers** are still paid less than it costs to produce their crops. Fairtrade tackles this with minimum prices and the Fairtrade premium, giving farmers protection when markets drop and helping build stronger communities. Fair pay means making sure the people who grow and make the things we buy earn a decent, steady income. Our choices matter also. Every Fairtrade product chosen supports farmers pushing for better wages and safer conditions. Fair pay starts with producers - but it's powered by people choosing to **Do it Fair**.



Ways to **Do it Fair** this Fairtrade Fortnight and beyond:

- **Brew It Fair** (Fairtrade tea and coffee)
- **Swap It Fair** (Try a new Fairtrade item)
- **Cook It Fair** (Try a recipe using Fairtrade ingredients)
- **Pick It Fair** (Fairtrade bananas)
- **Snack It Fair** (Fairtrade snacks)
- **Sip It Fair** (Fairtrade wine)
- **Gift It Fair** (Fairtrade gifts)
- **Make It Fair** (Sign the Fairtrade petition)
<https://action.fairtrade.org.uk/page/186243/petition/1?ea.tracking.id=2026-fair-on-the-planet-web-sub>
- **Keep it Fair** (Keep the movement going)



**Save the date: Ubuntu Christmas preview evening –
Monday, 9 November 2026**

Church Calendar/Ways of connecting September 2026

Sunday services are at the usual time of 11 am. If you are worshipping from home, you can connect as usual via the West church website and youtube channels .

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Sunday 6 Sep | 11 am Morning Worship
Hospitality time after the service |
| | 3 pm - 4.30 pm Play Church
Interactive storytelling and drama for the whole family |
| Friday 11 Sep | 7.00 pm West Church Quiz night
tickets from Acorn Centre |
| Sunday 13 Sep | 11 am morning worship (Junior Church starts this week)
Hospitality time after the service |
| Monday 14 Sep | 2 pm Guild opening. All welcome |
| Wednesdays
From 16 Sep | 7.30 pm Zoom Bible study
All welcome. Contact Rhona for the link |
| Thursday 17 Sep | 2.00 pm Carers' cuppa
Drop-in and chat for informal/family carers |
| Thursday 17 Sep | 7.30 pm Kirk session |
| Friday 18 Sep | 7.00 pm St Andrew's Quiz Night
tickets from St Andrew's Church |
| Sunday 20 Sep | 11 am Morning Worship |

Hospitality time after the service

Sunday 27 Sep 11 am Morning Worship
followed by informal communion

4 pm IDCT Harvest Supper at Kintore Church
Tickets available at the Acorn Centre

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter
email encounter@inveruriwestchurch.org by
Wed 16 September

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

Play Church is back!



A new session of our monthly storytelling and drama sessions for families begins on Sunday 6 September at 3 pm. The sessions are hosted at Inverurie West Parish Church but open to all.

Each session takes a biblical story and uses it as the basis for lots of creative fun and games. This year we are using some of the stories Jesus told as our jumping off point.

There's no upper or lower limit on age, but children should have an accompanying adult with them.

The 2026/27 sessions will run from 3.00 pm to 4.30 pm on **the first Sunday afternoon of the month from September to December**, and then **the second Sunday of the month between January and June**. This is to try to avoid clashing with school holidays and long weekends. A full timetable is listed below so you can avoid accidentally missing any!

For more information or to register an interest/get on the mailing list, contact Rhona on r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org It's also okay just to drop in at any point and try it out.

2026 (first Sunday of the month)

6 Sep 2026	Lost and found	- the story of the lost sheep
4 Oct 2026	Seeds and weeds	- the story of the sower
1 Nov 2026	Neighbours	- the story of the Good Samaritan
6 Dec 2026	Building blocks	- the story of the wise and foolish builders

2027 (second Sunday of the month, excludes April)

10 Jan 2027	New Year	- stories of new and old things
14 Feb 2027	Fool's Gold	- stories of money
14 Mar 2027	Family matters	- story of the lost son
9 May 2027	Act like a boss	- stories of masters and servants
13 Jun 2027	Peekaboo	- stories of hidden treasure and light

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
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	Valerie Napier and 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	07905 580371
Committed Giving Envelopes	Cindy Farquhar Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com	
Gift Aid	Mark Paterson giftaid@inveruriewestchurch.org	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	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Admission by Resolution of Session:

Mrs Audrey Bell (District 3) on 23rd June 2026

Deaths:

Mrs Nanella (Nan) Dunbar (District 35) on 16th June 2026

Mr Robert Lawie (Postal District) on 18th June 2026

Mrs Aileen Macaskill (District 24) on 1st August 2026

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

FLOWER CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER

Convener – Eleanor Mitchell 620872

Sep 6 Irene Jamieson and Linda Mathers

Sep 13 Linda Duncan

Sep 20 Susan Rucklidge

Sep 27 Morag Mitchell

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.

We strive in Encounter to respect intellectual property rights. If you read or see anything which you feel infringes your copyright, please contact encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org, and the material will be removed immediately from the electronic version of the magazine.

A reminder to all gardeners – if you have surplus produce or plants as we go through the summer months could you please consider donating these to the Acorn Centre which is always pleased to accept donations of fresh fruit and vegetables.