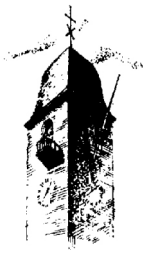


St Columba's

April/May 2022



ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



Minister: Rev. Angus MacLeod, MA BD
Pont Street, London SW1X 0BD
Telephone: 020-7584 2321 **Fax:** 020-7584 5446
e-mail: office@stcolumbas.org.uk minister@stcolumbas.org.uk
website: www.stcolumbas.org.uk

Sundays

Please join us for worship at 11 am. Sunday School (from age 4) and Youth Group meet during the morning service but **not every week: please check the website or contact the office** for dates and news of special activities. Children are always welcome to our services: a quiet corner at the rear of the church equipped with soft toys and books is available for children accompanied by an adult. After the service, everyone is welcome at the congregational lunch, served **on the first, third and fifth Sundays** of the month in the lower hall. The two course lunch costs £3.50 and there is no need to book. Tea and coffee are also available.



Contents

Regulars

Vestry letter	3
Sermon	8/9
Baptisms, marriages, deaths	14
Church diary	15
Prayers	16

Features

Summer celebrations	4
John McIndoe remembered	5
Lunch with Ian Aitchison	6
A diamond wedding	7
Desert Island Discs	10
Easter in Argyll	11
Women hymn writers	12/13

Copy for future editions should be sent to us at the Church Office, preferably by e-mail

Dear Readers,

This Spring edition of the magazine is full of long links with St Columba's.

Catch up (if you can) with Ian Aitchison, who chats with David Stewart and reveals that he has been coming to St Columba's since 1958. Ian Bradley, who comes to preach and give a talk on 12th June, reflects that this will mark 73 years since the marriage of his parents in the bombed out church and 37 since his own St Columba's wedding. Following the death of the Very Rev Dr John McIndoe, Robin Forrest offers an appreciation of his 12 years of ministry at St Columba's.

Looking back with gratitude, William McLaren remembers childhood Easters in Argyll. Dr James and Mrs Neva Buchanan can look back to their marriage in Scotland and have just celebrated their Diamond anniversary, with a card from the Queen to prove it.

Which brings us very much to looking forward, to the Platinum Jubilee of the Queen and plans for celebrations both for this and for St Columba's Day over the first two weekends of June (page 4). There's bound to be some music: in the meantime we welcome back Andrea and Neil Price for another selection of Desert Island Discs, and, with a song in our hearts, explore and celebrate the contribution to our worship made by women hymn writers. Why should the Devil have all the best tunes.

With best wishes,

The Editorial Team

Cover photo: *Jim Blackwood: Wood Anemones in spring*

ASSOCIATE MINISTER: Rev. William McLaren
ORGANIST and DIRECTOR of MUSIC: Ben Lewis-Smith
ASSISTANT ORGANIST: Catherine Olver
CHURCH OFFICE: Lucy Llewellyn
CARETAKER: Michael Dempsey
SESSION CLERK: Charlotte Bradford
BEADLES: Naomi Donaldson, Jennifer Gordon, Ronald Prince,
Andrew Smith, David Stewart, Gary Wallis

VESTRY LETTER



April/May 2022

Dear Friends,

This issue of the magazine is published shortly before Palm Sunday and the sombre drama of Christianity's Holy (holiest) Week. As you open its pages it is likely a little premature to wish each other Happy Easter. (Admittedly, the back page prayer anticipates things with words of the mighty resurrection anthem: *Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son* – often requested at funeral or memorial services.) But for the profound and poignant days that take us towards Easter, I commend a prayer-meditation from the late Revd David Ogston, broadcaster and former minister of the Kirk of St John the Baptist, Perth. May it encourage and inspire our Easter journeying.

Angus McLeod

Dry-Shod above a Sea of Doubts

Lord Jesus, we watch you now
As time is running out for you.
As Judas smiles and hides
from you his lostness.
As Jerusalem goes about its business, unaware
That it is washed with tears.
As faithful men make plans to do a
faithless thing to you.
Lord Jesus, you walk towards the cross
as you alone could walk, dry-shod
Above a sea of doubts and rolling tides of fear,
Sure-footed among everything that threatens to
unbalance you, a dancer,
knowing every step by heart.

For it is your heart you listen to,
the beating heart of love,
the tender heart of mercy,
the surrendered heart of obedience.

Lord, as we watch with you
we gain from you.
Our dreams of ease and painless struggle fade
away.
Our dreams of straight, uncomplicated roads
dissolve and vanish.
Our dreams of living at no great cost to ourselves
creep out of sight
and out of mind.
Lord, in your mercy,
Save us from longing for these dreams again.

Let us watch with You, Watch-man of God,
As we see you walk towards the cross,
let us walk with you.
As you face the suffering that lies before you,
so let us face our moments,
our hours,
our days
of ultimate demand
in the light of your eternity,
your serenity,
your clarity.

St Columba's connections

Introducing a guest preacher

Ian Bradley, who will be coming to St Columba's over the weekend of 11/12 June to preach about St Columba and to talk about the spiritual landscape of Argyll, has a long connection with our church.

His late mother, Mary Campbell Tyre, became a member of St Columba's in 1927 when she left her native Argyll, where she had been dux at Dunoon Grammar School, to start work in the civil service in London. For several years she lived in the hostel that the church then ran in Bina Gardens for young girls coming down from Scotland to London. On 11 June 1949 she was married to William Ewart Bradley, a fellow civil servant, in the bombed out ruin of St Columba's by Dr Robert Scott. She insisted on taking her wedding vows in St Columba's before moving to a nearby Anglican church for the rest of the service. Thirty-six years later, on 20 July 1985, their son Ian was married to Lucy Blackburn in St Columba's by the Very Revd Dr Fraser McLuskey. The following year Ian and Lucy headed north for St Andrews where they have lived ever since.

After training for the Church of Scotland ministry at St Andrews (his previous degrees, including his

doctorate, were from Oxford) and doing his assistantship there, Ian was appointed Head of Religious Broadcasting at BBC Scotland. He subsequently taught church history and practical theology at Aberdeen University and then at St Andrews University where he also served as honorary Church of Scotland chaplain for twenty years. He retired at the end of 2017 as Principal of St Mary's College and is now Emeritus Professor of Cultural and Spiritual History at St Andrews University. He continues to be active as a minister and regularly preaches and takes services.

Ian will be preaching about Columba, whose feast day falls on 9 June, the day of his death, and the 1500th anniversary of whose birth occurred last year. He attributes the origins of his interest in Columba, whom he believes should be the patron saint of Scotland, to a coloured etching which hung in the front hall of his childhood home in Tonbridge, Kent. It was bought for his mother by his father shortly before their marriage at St Columba's in 1949 and is on the cover of Ian's biography of Columba, first published by Wild Goose Publications, the publishing

arm of the Iona Community in 1997, to mark the 1400th anniversary of Columba's death in 597, and updated, expanded and substantially revised for a new edition, entitled *Columba: Politician, Penitent and Pilgrim*, published last year. He will be preaching on St Columba's life and legacy at the morning service on June 12.

Ian Bradley is the author of over 40 books, including *Argyll: The Making of a Spiritual Landscape*, which will form the subject of his illustrated talk on the Sunday afternoon. He regards Argyll as having a very distinctive spiritual make-up, combining evangelical simplicity and liberal mysticism, which comes from the legacy of Columba and other Celtic saints, the region's position as the border land between Highlanders and Lowlanders, Gaelic and English speakers, Catholics and Protestants and from the particular influence of both MacDonalDs and Campbells.

Ian reflects that he is coming to St Columba's 73 years to the day since his parents' marriage there and he and Lucy are delighted to be returning 37 years after their own wedding.

2 Summer weekends

On Sunday **5th June** we mark and celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. Morning service will resound with regal music and a Jubilee congregational lunch follows – stand by for bunting in the Lower Hall. The day concludes with a Songs of Praise Evening Service – a feast of favourite hymns, requested by you!

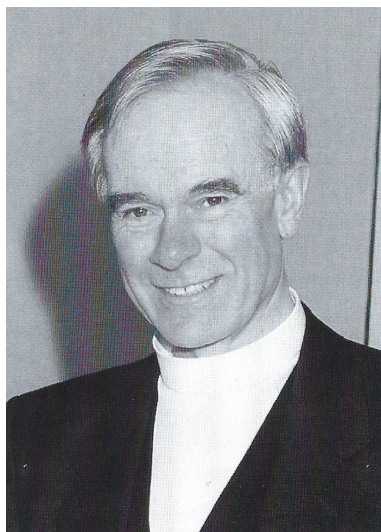
On **Sunday 12th June** we mark and celebrate St Columba's Day. Rev Professor Ian Bradley, Emeritus Professor of Cultural and Spiritual History at the University of St Andrews, is our guest preacher at the morning service of Holy Communion. Congregational lunch follows and Ian then gives an afternoon talk on the spiritual landscape of Argyll (St Columba and more.) See *article above*. The Friends of St Columba's also gather for their AGM.

300 years of the Kirk in Newcastle

From **April to October**, starting with a visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on Easter morning, our linked charge, St Andrew's, Newcastle celebrates 300 years of Church of Scotland worship and presence in that city. A series of 300-related activities are planned to mark a magnificent milestone.

The Very Reverend Dr John H. McIndoe [1934 – 2022]

An appreciation by Robin Forrest



Ministers of Word and Sacrament are commissioned to be "stewards of the mysteries of God". For more than sixty years John McIndoe faithfully exercised such stewardship and leaves enduring memories in a host of minds. In all that he did he was a channel of the grace of our Lord and for twelve fruitful and happy years St Columba's and St Andrew's Newcastle were blessed by his ministry.

Of John's many gifts that of a teacher was pre-eminent. He took seriously his call to teach the gospel and found it an endlessly challenging and fascinating task. His teaching was not confined to the pulpit but extended to occasional Sunday afternoon seminars, to the weekly Bible studies and to the numerous probationer and other assistants to whom he acted as mentor and example. As with every good teacher he was kind, patient and forbearing; always measured and judicious in thought and speech, never condescending or patronising but clear in his certainties and honest with his doubts. His faith in the practice of

prayer and his unshakeable trust in the wisdom of Providence ran like a watermark through his preaching, teaching and conversation. Clarity of thought went hand in hand with felicity of expression. His meticulous choice of words was designed not to create effect but to convey depth of meaning.

From boyhood days John had a particular liking for evening services. He valued their different and distinctive atmosphere; more reflectiveness, less distraction. Unsurprising therefore that the weekly evening service at St Columba's, with occasional sermon series and often followed by a period of open discussion in the Library, was a distinctive feature of his ministry.

John's quiet dignity which came partly from his reserved nature, and his ability to listen made him an effective and valued pastor. He was always diffident about offering unsolicited advice and was rarely judgmental (though occasionally there might be the merest hint of a raised eyebrow) but had a tactful knack of somehow making it clear what he thought was right. He was good to share things with, good to be with, gentle in his comments and any criticisms and unfailingly courteous in his every interaction. John McIndoe would have been the first to acknowledge that his ministry was enhanced by the contribution of others. How greatly he prized the dependable loyalty and cheerful companionship of the Associate Minister, Sandy Cairns and the exemplary efficiency and good counsel of his two Session Clerks, Hugh Neilson and Christopher Strang. John's integrity and decency provided leadership to the Kirk Session and enabled him to weld together an effective team of Associate,

Assistants, organists, choir, office staff, beadles, caretakers and cleaners so that all might be directed to the glory of God. One person above all was a constant source of encouragement and support and that was his wife, Eve. With keen intelligence, wit and charm and an unfailing memory for names and faces she exercised her own gracious ministry among us. What a handsome couple they made as the photographic record, particularly of his moderatorial year, bears witness. Eve's death in 2006 was a devastating blow but John was sustained by those qualities of courage, endurance and Christian hope which characterised his life. It is of comfort to know that he is now re-united with Eve in the joys of heaven, in resurrection promise fulfilled.

A lively sense of thankfulness was a constant mark of John's long life and in retirement he was grateful to continue a regime, with great support from his cherished family, of regular exercise, intelligent and avid reading, membership of Probus and the fellowship of St John's, Renfield. He looked forward to the week of the General Assembly in Edinburgh when he could see old friends and colleagues and he especially valued the gathering, over a shared meal, of present and former St Columba's worthies. On those occasions before saying grace he would offer a few pithy words by way of welcome and introduction.

Love and prayer should be the twin foundations of an individual's and a congregation's life. St Columba's and St Andrew's were never absent from John's prayers and we in turn will continue to hold his dearly loved and most loving family in ours.

Lunch with Ian Aitchison

David Stewart captures 98 years of memories



"I am from the Castle Douglas area. My father had four shops around there and Dalbeattie – fish, fruit and flowers (the three fs). We had three retail vans, and would deliver as far as Gatehouse of Fleet, 18 miles away. At the outbreak of the Second World War, my eldest brother Tommy joined the RAF. Dad was declared to be in a reserved occupation. After some quarrelling between us, I went to Dumfries in 1942, aged 18, to sign up. My other brother was in the Home Guard. Dad said, 'Silly lad, you'll probably get called up now' – six weeks later I was off to Saighton (pronounced Satan) camp in Chester. Dad even phoned Glasgow to try and get me out of it.

"I left Castle Douglas station with an empty suitcase – today's generation don't realise that was for putting your civvy clothing into, when issued with a uniform. We started with six weeks of square bashing. That was accepted as part of being a soldier. We were taught how to fire a .303 rifle; also the Sten machine gun. There were also agility tests. I

was in the middle of three bunk beds. The farewell parade was quite impressive, with a marching band.

"I was proud to be a member of the Normandy Veterans Association. We landed at Arromanches, Gold Beach, on D-Day +7. The Allies had a foothold by then; we knew we were staying. I was young, but the noise in the distance – shelling from 5 miles away – seemed exciting. We had sailed from Gosport in rough seas; most people were sick, myself included. There was a sign: 'When you land, do not stop. Keep going until you are off the beach.' I was a driver / mechanic attached to the 53rd Heavy Regiment, Artillery – we were responsible for the biggest guns the British Army had in Normandy.

"I came across Montgomery in Belgium, after the Germans were kicked out of France. He arrived in his own jeep, stood on the back, and called us in to say: 'There will be no turning back now, we have got them on the run. We are going to push them out of Belgium and Holland. You have the skill.' The men looked up to him – he was small, but impressive. I later served in Holland; Nijmegen in the winter of 1944 was the coldest I have ever been. "I stayed in until 1947. At one stage I was based in Dortmund. By now I was with the 8th Kings Royal Irish Hussars. The two years after the war were the best of my life – lots of dancing with the frauleins, they were good looking girls. We were issued with cigarettes; I have never smoked in my life, but I made good use of them!

"After coming out of the army, I returned to the Solway Firth and my father's business. Rabbit was popular at this time. We would

supply them to the Co-operatives in Newcastle and Wallsend – crates of 40 put on the overnight train. You got two shillings for a rabbit that was skinned and ready for the pot. Unfortunately, the business model of the time required us to pay cash upfront to the farmers, to set the traps. When myxomatosis came along, it was a disaster – not one rabbit left in Kirkcudbrightshire. Then the old story: the banks wouldn't help, so the business folded.

"My other brother, Arthur, was already in London as a chauffeur. His employer was a multimillionaire called Jack Morrison, from a Glasgow family – connected with Isaac Wolfson. They had a flat in Grosvenor Square, and Arthur would drive the Bentley and the Rolls-Royce. Discretion was important, because the boss was having an affair with an actress. This lady would have to be driven to the country retreat in Bray: 'Never mention this to anybody' was the instruction!

"So, I came south to join him. My first job was in the toy department of Selfridge's – 5.5 days a week including Saturday mornings, for £14 take home. I had a double room in Holland Park. One evening, walking home, I noticed Alliance Car Hire at Lancaster Gate. I enjoyed driving, so made enquiry. It started with an evening job – washing and polishing cars from 7 to 11!

"In time, I gave up selling toys and joined my brother in the world of chauffeuring. It was glamorous at times. I drove Diana Dors. She was nice. On dropping her near Windsor one day, she gave me a £5 note saying, 'Get yourself something to eat before taking me back to London.' On another occasion: 'You are a very good

Lunch with Ian Aitchison

Continued

driver, put 10% on the bill for yourself.'

"It was fun, but they were long hours, and not very well paid so I decided to try the buses. I had a driving test initially in a small van at Chiswick where London Transport had a skid pan, then six weeks training on double-deckers. I started for real in the Camberwell Green area. I drove the 3, 12, 35, 40, 45 and 176. Over 16 years I had no problems with passengers. A good conductor made a lot of difference.

"At 65, I was out the door with my pension. I felt I had to go on working, so joined the Corps of Commissionaires. Smart uniforms, white hats and so on. We would do the doors at the posh shops on Bond Street. I enjoyed it, but it was a bit boring after the driving. One afternoon I was working at a jewellery shop, when a lady came to have some gold trinkets valued for insurance purposes. The boss said: 'Mr

Aitchison, this lady has a lot of money – please escort her across the road to the bank.' The lady enquired whether I was allowed to take gratuities, and offered me a £10 note. On returning to the shop, I told the manager I didn't know who she was. He responded: 'That is Winston Churchill's former secretary!'

"After that, it was the open top tourist buses. On making enquiry, I was asked: 'When can you start?' I replied, 'Tomorrow'. That took care of the next 14 years, until I was 79. A good guide, with a good sense of humour, was great – especially if they were bilingual, say French or German; then you were well away. Sometimes we would split £30 in tips. I had the same double-decker for two years – ULT242 – and it became known as 'Ian's bus'.

"I first came to St Columba's in 1958. I just liked the church. All the ministers have been good (Dr McLuskey baptised my daughter).

They have a difficult job. We have always had a good choir; I love the singing. My favourite memory of my time here was meeting Prince Philip in December 2016. Because I was wearing my medals, he stopped for a brief chat.

"I am fond of St James's Park, and will travel from my flat at the Elephant and Castle to walk there. One time I came across a petite lady there, who would walk in small steps. It turned out to be Lady Lucan. Eventually we would meet at Hyde Park Corner, and walk together to St James. It was sad – she suffered from depression.

"Not everything in my own life has gone smoothly, but there have been many more ups than downs. I've always enjoyed people, chatting, dancing, walking. St Columba's has been a big part of that."

60 years on

Many congratulations to Dr James and Mrs Neva (nee Leid) Buchanan who recently celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary. They were married on 4th November 1961 at New Kilpatrick Parish Church, Bearsden by Rev Ian Pitt-Watson, who had taken over from Very Rev Dr Fraser McLuskey on his move to St Columba's. Neva was married from the manse at Blanefield Church and was given away by her brother-in-law Rev George Lugton, Interim Moderator of St Columba's following the retirement in 2000 of Very Rev Dr John McIndoe.



Sermon

Sermon preached at St Columba's Pont Street by Rev Angus McLeod on Sunday 27th February 2022, Transfiguration Sunday

On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." Luke 9:37-40

Transfiguration Sunday is a vantage point, a look-out – to survey the road travelled and the road to come. In our Church calendar, it is the culmination of the season of Epiphany – season of showing(s) forth; hints and glimpses of the holy in Jesus's early life and initial ministry. Star gazers from the East, bearing gifts for a King; Spirit-dove descending from the heavens at baptism; water becoming wine at marriage feast; fishing nets teeming with their silvery, miraculous catch. Then today – a crescendo – after hints and glimpses: *unveiled glory. Mountaintop and peaky blinder!*

The scriptures are big on mountains: Moses at Mount Sinai (receiving the Commandments); Elijah huddled in a mountain cave, outside the raging storm; Jerusalem, the holy city, set upon a hill. "Come," entreats the prophet Micah, "*let us go to the mountain of the Lord...that he may teach us his ways....*" Micah 4:2 So, when Jesus takes the inner cabal, John, James and Peter up on the mountain to pray, we are well to be attentive.

Taking the high road, clues and symbols abound – *mountain*, dazzling light, glowing countenance – reminiscent of Moses and Mt Sinai. The presence and commendation of Moses and Elijah – venerable dignitaries, representing the Law and the Prophets. Lest we be in any doubt: *A cloud descending* – very presence of God; the Voice: "*This is my Son, the Chosen. Listen to him!*"

Luke's Transfiguration conveys both the importance of all that has come before and all that lies ahead. Like a lighthouse beam, rolling rhythmically round, 360 degrees. Behind and before. Before and behind. Luke's account

really starts: "*Now about eight days after these sayings...*" Which sayings? "*Who do you say that I am?*" asks Jesus. "The Christ" trumpets Peter. But to Crown, Jesus responds, Cross. "*The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, be rejected...be killed and on the third day be raised.*" "*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*"

Eight days later the great witnesses, Moses and Elijah, talk with Jesus; "*speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*" Our translation is departure; but the word Luke uses is *exodus* – a wondrous, explosive word, for those shaped by Israel's long walk to freedom, out of Egypt's chains. Luke uses *exodus* both in the sense of journey and more profoundly, death. The Transfiguration is an assurance, *before* the end, *about* the end. A glimpse, a confidence, a provision for the way, – something to feed on when the going gets tough.

Perhaps it is Jesus who most needs to hear the confirmation. Given the journey ahead, he needs all the confirmation he can get. As Jesus himself wrestles with the very human task to understand what it means to be himself, how to be the chosen one – the transfiguration is affirmation from God, recognition and commendation of his true self – chosen and beloved of the Father. And for disciples, something in time, that will defy the apparent meaninglessness of Jesus' vicious, filthy, tortured end. His *exodus*, not a dead end but gateway to a Promised Land.

Peter, of course, makes the mistake of wanting to *tabernacle the moment*, harness the holy, perpetuate for posterity. I learnt this week of Claus Helberg – Norwegian, considered a hero of WWII; later, he became a respected mountain guide. Early one morning, Helberg led a group of hikers from Finsehytta, a famed Norwegian mountain cabin. The summer light was returning, winter had released its hold, and new colours were emerging everywhere. The conditions were

Sermon

continued

fantastic. Instead of commenting on it, Helberg began the hike by handing out slips of paper to each of the participants. On the papers he had written: **“Yes, it is totally amazing.”** The mountain guide’s aim was to avoid his group being distracted by chatter about how “amazing” everything was – rather, to concentrate on its *being amazing*. (From *Silence in the Age of Noise*, Erling Kagge) For Peter too – less talk, more presence in the moment. (God is not in the business of permanent real estate on mountaintops.)

But after the Big Reveal – *“What happened next?”* Jesus meets a lost community, a flock without a shepherd, the religious leaders, the crowd, and his own followers, all equally stumped and helpless. And with the kind of authority that no-one else possesses Jesus, in a scene reminiscent of the descent of Moses from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, calls upon the community, the people, the whole nation to recognise where they have been. *“You faithless and perverse generation how much longer must I be with you and bear with you?” “Bring your son here.”* Jesus takes command and sets the boy free from his troubles. Healed, he hands him back to his father. Here too, glory revealed; not on the rarefied mountain, but on the dusty plain, amid life’s crisis and confusion. *“And all were astounded at the greatness of God.”*

Notice that Transfiguration doesn’t grant Jesus’ disciples the faith or the strength to heal the suffering boy, or comfort his heartbroken father. What they experience during their spiritual high doesn’t magically translate into vibrant, transformative faith down below. *The discipline of the valley happens in the valley.*

*Can we hold that tension? Peak and valley?
Denying neither, embracing both?*

That feels eloquent on a Sunday when we are only too aware of world events, over which we

appear to have so little control – aware of so much suffering, which we feel inadequate or fearful to respond to. I know it is a Sunday to pray for Ukraine and its people – to pray for our enemies too. But there is also a sense of impotence and not knowing what all this might mean. Others will have much more to say. I simply offer two fragments – and they really are just fragments:

From the prayers of St Martin-in-the-Fields (radio broadcast this morning): *“Save us from the panic that makes this all about us, rather let our prayers be all about them.”* And from Ukrainian Bible Society: *“Churches are begging for Scriptures to give to those overwhelmed by fear – soldiers and their families, people living on the frontlines and displaced communities.”* The General Secretary says, *“God’s Word can help bring comfort, peace, and reconciliation to our nation.”*

Transfiguration Sunday ends one liturgical season. The brightness of Epiphany gives way to the holy darkness of Lent. (Yet, *both light and darkness are as one to God.*) We don’t know what mountains and valleys lie before us; cannot predict how God will speak, or in what guise Jesus will appear. But as pilgrim people, children of resurrection, we are asked to *trust* – trust in the amazing moments and in the *unanswered* prayer, in the days of dismay and days of deliverance.

As we approach a new Ash Wednesday let us hear, and hold close, the oft-spoken words of Christ: *“Be not afraid.”* Enter the valley: looking and listening for, seeking and sharing the sacred things, because Christ goes ahead of us and bids us companionship and unity with him, sustained by his strong, suffering, beautiful and precious love.

Amen

Desert Island Discs

And this month's castaways are Andrea and Neil Price

It's a great privilege to be asked to do this. We have tried to take a few "joint" items in addition to some individual ones. As he's a lot older, first go to Neil:

My earliest memory of music in our house, before the luxury of a stereo radiogram, was our old wind-up '78' record player. The fun as a kid was doing the winding up, and then my parents would carry on the fun by putting on '**The Laughing Policeman**'. We would all roll about, crying with laughter and then do it all over again, preceded by another wind up, of course! I still have the '78'.

Now for Andrea's early memory:

My mother would have sung many children's ditties and carols with me. In German of course, but never "Oh Tannenbaum" as this was Hitler's favourite. Instead, as we entered the sitting room with the real candles lit on the Christmas tree, we would sing '**Ihr Kinderlein kommet**'. It's a tradition I've continued with our family to this day.

Later, as a teenager, Andrea was allowed to join the Bach choir in her home town of Dinslaken, which regularly sang the Passions. A favourite, and a real singing challenge, was **J S Bach's 'Sind Blitze, sind Donner in Wolken Verschwunden'** from the *St Matthew Passion*. Subsequently, we both sang the whole Passion with our own choir in St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney and St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh, even attempting some of the solos – quite unforgettable experiences.

Our love of singing brought us together and we've been doing it ever since. Our wedding service was full of music (it took 1 hour

51 minutes!) but the hymn we had to have, which means so much to us, was '**All my hope on God is founded**', made even better by Herbert Howells' uplifting tune 'Michael', written following the death of his 9-year-old son, after whom it is named. What an act of faith! We have had this hymn at every major family event since then.

Bringing up three children has been the highlight and ultimate privilege of our lives – and jolly hard work! Orkney has many festivals and for children the highlight of the Science Festival was for many years a visit from the group The Singing Kettle. One of the songs from their album *The Big Green Planet* was called '**Weather Changes**', an early reflection on climate science, and the verse repeating: *If the weather got wetter what would you do* was one of many which ear-wormed often around our heads. Little did we realise at the time how relevant it would become and how much it influenced the children for the better – the power of music.

The first 27 years of our married life was spent in Orkney. Because we wanted to do the sort of things we like doing, we started our own choir The Mayfield Singers, very much based on the choir in which we met at St Andrews, The Renaissance Group. For 21 years, Neil conducted it with Andrea acting as shop steward for

the rest of the choir and keeping him in his place – he needed it! One of our first concerts was particularly memorable. With a fit of enthusiasm and a rush of blood to the head, we sang one of the hardest pieces for unaccompanied choir, Francis Poulenc's **Four Motets for a Time of Penitence**. It wasn't perfect, but it gave us the confidence to have a go at anything. The music left a deep impression which has stayed with us ever since. We went on to take the choir abroad on five tours and ultimately to sing the Bach Passions, having some great times with friends and family along the way.

All our children are musical but Julia, being the middle one (the rebell!) has decided to express her considerable talents in other ways. However, Catriona and Marcus have both continued with their music, Catriona making it her profession. There were so many highlights when they were playing in youth orchestras but we would have to pick the one time when they played together in the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland. The final concert of the tour was in the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and Andrea's family were able to be there. The encore was **Malcolm Arnold's Scottish Dances** with Marcus shifting some serious air on his bass trombone, determined to drown out his accomplished sister on the violin!



Desert Island Discs

Continued

We really admire the way that Catriona has decided to further her career on an unconventional path, determined to break down musical barriers and go her own way. This is ideally shown with her duo partner Esther Swift on the harp (together they are Twelfth Day) in their track 'Great Green' from their album *Cracks in the Room*. They write all their own music and lyrics and are not afraid to express their political views, as on this track about environmental issues. Its genre is undefinable, a mixture of everything.

We're being cast off together, which

is very nice, but it means we have to agree on the last three questions – it's all about compromise!

We'll enjoy the Bible (of course!) and the Complete Works of Shakespeare (good for our continuing education), but a book we have both been gripped by is *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco. It can take repeated readings, being written on so many levels, from a treatise on medieval philosophy to a 'Thing from the Crypt' horror story and whodunit.

As for a luxury (assuming a lifetime subscription to Spotify is not

allowable!) how about our pillows? These are not ordinary pillows, but very posh and expensive pillows bought by Andrea in Jenners – so there!

And if we could only save one choice of music from the waves, it would have to be the **Bach**. For 30 years, we have had breakfast every Sunday to his cantata for that day. All music leads in to and out of Bach. He is an essential part of our lives.

Thanks for having us – good to be back, even if not in person! Hope to see you all soon.

Easter in Argyll

William McLaren looks back

Spring is such a special time of year, especially in the countryside. The appearance of snowdrops, primroses and bluebells, and newborn lambs playing in the fields all speak of new life in the days leading up to Easter and were part of the tapestry of life growing up in Kintyre.

My earliest memories of Easter are of rolling eggs with my parents when I was 4 years old, eggs boiled and painted the previous evening and we found a gentle slope in Campbell's Glen in the shadow of Skipness Castle, where we were each able to roll our eggs downhill. Later in the day of course there were chocolate Easter eggs.

Interestingly while the church at Skipness was dedicated to St. Brendan, our linked charge of Clachan and Whitehouse was Kilcalmonell, said by some to be named in honour of the nephew of St. Columba.

When I was a little older our Good Friday Service was always held in Whitehouse Village Hall. Easter Sunday was celebrated with Holy Communion at St. Brendans. This was quite an innovation in a highland congregation with a tradition of a communion season twice a year in May and November with a preparatory service on Friday evening and a thanksgiving service on Sunday afternoon.

However, our Easter communion was always a very special occasion and helped us appreciate the meaning of Easter and the meaning of the sacrament in a new way. Our little Argyllshire church had the most beautiful pair of Georgian silver communion chalices, gifted by Ann Campbell, Lady of Skipness in 1765.

As we look forward to Easter each of us will have our own memories of earlier celebrations and those we shared them with and we may sing;

*The world itself keeps Easter Day,
And Easter larks are singing;
And Easter flowers are blooming
gay,
And Easter buds are springing:
Alleluia, Alleluia.*



St. Brendan's Church, Skipness,
(Photo copyright John Ferguson
(creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0))

Happy Hour's introduction to women hymn writers

Louise Malkin reports on a recent meeting

A well-attended meeting of the Happy Hour group took place in November round the library table at St Columba's. Robin Forrest was speaking on the role and influence of women as authors of hymns. His extensive research covered the work of over a hundred authors and translators from all English-speaking nations. This article attempts to do justice to his findings.



The earliest Christian hymn of praise may be The Magnificat which Luke (1:46) attributes to Mary and indeed is included in the Ancient Hymns and Canticles section of the early editions of the Church Hymnary (OUP1898 and 1927). The earliest woman hymn writer published in English seems to have been Anne Steele (1717-1778) who like many other Christian writers gave expression to their faithful discipleship in praise.

Katharina von Schlegel (b.1697) was an 18th century German hymn writer. It was not until the 19th century that her 'Stille Mein Wille' was translated into English by Jane Laurie Borthwick as 'Be still my soul'. Sung to the great Finlandia by Sibelius it is the earliest hymn by a women writer to be included in all editions of the Church Hymnary.

Victorian women writers on the whole found it difficult to be published in a patriarchal society. Anne and Emily Brontë used male pseudonyms as authors of novels but were also hymn writers, and their sister Charlotte was told by the

poet laureate Robert Southey in a letter dated 12th March 1837 that, 'Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life and it ought not to be.' Despite this a significant number of women hymn writers found their voice in the Victorian era. Over 50 were published in the Church Hymnary, with several hymns from their respective repertoires. Hymn writing was considered a respectable and ladylike pastime, along with teaching in the Sunday School or Bible Class. Anna Bartlett Warner wrote 'Jesus loves me! This I know' for little children and others wrote well-loved Christmas hymns: Christina Rossetti ('In the bleak midwinter'), Mary Macdonald ('Child in a manger'), Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander ('Once in royal David's city') – using words like 'little' and 'lowly' throughout. All of the Victorian hymns were expressions of personal faith but also reflect women's role in society as nurturers and healers, their submissive role expressed in Anne Montague's hymn, 'They also serve who patiently but fold their arms and wait.'

Others used more vigorous terms to express active roles of discipleship. Frances Havergal, daughter of Canon Havergal, who composed the tunes for many of her hymns, wrote, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King? / Who will be his helpers other lives to bring?'. Julia Ward Howe wrote the words of 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' sung to the tune John Brown's Body (CH2, CH3, CH4). Priscilla Jane Owens wrote 'Will your anchor hold in the storms of life', adopted by the Boys' Brigade. Mrs Cecil Alexander (again) wrote, 'Jesus calls us! O'er

the tumult /of our life's wild restless sea', as one who would do anything in the service of Jesus – 'Serve and love you best of all'.

While Mrs Alexander's hymns often involve little children, white angels, and child-like wonder at flowers and birds, that is because she was convinced from an early age that Christ's love is the key to human happiness. She published her Hymns for little children in 1848. When she died on 12th October 1895 following a stroke, her funeral was a display of much public love, respect and affection. The woman who wrote, 'There is a green hill far away/without a city wall' lies in a grave marked by a white cross on a green hill outside the city wall of Derry.

Mrs Alexander, the doyenne of Victorian hymn writers, lived a life far removed from that of the humble Mary Macdonald, the daughter of a crofter and Baptist cleric, who never learnt English. Her 'Child in the manger' was composed in Gaelic, singing at her spinning wheel. This popular hymn has stood the test of time and the Gaelic as well as the English text is printed in CH4.

Mary Macdonald's hymn may have been translated by a man (Lachlan Macbean) but the role was reversed by several women translators of hymns written by men. One of the most notable Victorians was Catherine Winkworth, who went to Dresden in 1845 to perfect her spoken German. She was able to translate many of Luther's hymns as well as those of Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), Martin Rinkart (1586-1649), Johann Olearius (1611-1684)

Women hymn writers

Continued

and Joachim Neander (1809-1894). Catherine and her sister Suzanne interested themselves in the promotion of higher education for women. It may well have been the growth of state education in the Victorian era that led to the publication of hymns which could be sung in daily school assemblies.

Before leaving the Victorian writers, though, there is one whose output was phenomenal, undeterred by physical disability or patriarchal restrictions. This is Frances Jane Crosby, born in New York in 1820 and known as Fanny Crosby. She became blind as an infant and attended the New York Institute for the Blind as a girl and later taught there. She showed an early talent for composing rhyming verses of hymns with rousing refrains, which she dictated to the composer and publisher Howard Doane and later her husband Alexander van Alstyne whom she met at the Blind Institute where he was a musician and organist (11 years her junior).

Apparently she composed thousands of hymns, dictating them under some 216 pseudonyms as well as her maiden name and later her married name, Frances Jane van Alstyne, like her counterpart Cecil Frances Alexander in England. She was so well known that 'Crosby' had to be added in brackets in CH3, and in the index of authors in CH4 she is listed under both 'Alstyne' and 'Crosby'. The most durable of her hymns is 'To God be the glory! Great things he has done!' which is as much an Evangelical detector as 'I'll sing a song to Mary' denotes a Roman Catholic congregation. Another rousing hymn liberally endowed with exclamation marks is 'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!' with the

refrain 'This is my story, this is my song'.

The second edition of the Church Hymnary was used by St Columba's for nearly 50 years. The third edition was first published in 1973 and, while there were more women hymn writers included in CH3, some 14 of them can be found only in CH3, their hymns mostly concerning children (like the baptismal hymn 'O Father, in thy father-heart' by Ella Sophia Armitage), or being only one or two verses long, or seeming unbearably banal while trying to be modern. Old favourites from CH2 such as 'Jesus bids us shine' by Victorian Susan Warner and hymns by 46 other Victorian writers such as the translator Frances Elizabeth Cox are included in CH3 but are not included in CH4 which was published in 2007 by the Canterbury Press, Norwich.

The first task of the committee preparing the new millennium's hymnary was to draw up a list of items in CH3 which were to be excluded from CH4. The next task was to review developments in hymnody and consider the diversity of congregations who preferred certain hymns but could be offered choice in word and music. There were more women hymn writers, with 37 appearing for the first time in CH4 as well as 28 Victorian stalwarts such as Mrs Alexander, Catherine Winkworth and Fanny Crosby. In a more socially aware and diverse world 20th century women hymn writers such as Edith Sinclair Downing and Ruth C. Duck adopted a less subservient role in life but still wrote of subjects dear to their hearts: Christian mission, following the Gospel story, healing and personal faith. There is 'Morning has broken' by Eleanor Farjeon

(1881-1965), memorably sung by Cat Stevens; there is a Malawian hymn translated by Helen M. Taylor (1902-1993) from Charles Chinula; and a Guatemalan traditional hymn where Christine Carson was one of the translators.

The doyenne of the last Church Hymnary is surely Shirley Murray (1931-2020) with 22 hymns to her name covering the life of Christ from Epiphany to Resurrection. She was a New Zealander raised in a Methodist family who married a Presbyterian minister John Murray (later a Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand). At first she wrote occasional hymns to accompany her husband's sermons but then she was inspired to write hymns specifically for New Zealanders, escaping from the Northern Hemisphere's traditions and the incongruity of singing 'In the bleak midwinter' when it was high summer at Christmas in New Zealand. She was also very aware that New Zealand was officially a bicultural society but there was nothing for the Maori culture. Her most well-known hymn and perhaps one with which we are most familiar is 'For everyone born, a place at the table'. She aimed to write hymns that reflected everyday experience, locally, nationally and globally.



In the future we may be singing words and music displayed on big screens and producing a better sound rather than huddling over the pages of a hymn book.

Baptisms • Marriages • Deaths

BAPTISMS

“Suffer the little children to come unto me”

- 6th February** **Alexander Louis Holgate, London W2**
James Bernard Hastings, London W6
- 6th March** **Otis Thomas Bryden Niccoli, London W4**
Arty Wilder Rankin Holmes, London S10

DEATHS

“Blessed are they that die in the Lord”

- 9th March** **Avril Lunn, London W2**



Family and friends of Otis Niccoli

TAKE OUT A MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

For information,
please contact the Church Office

St Columba's Church Office, Pont Street, London SW1X 0BD

Church Diary:

3rd April to 4th June 2022

We continue to livestream our services via our website:

www.stcolumbas.org.uk/livestream.

Please keep in touch with the Church Office or website to check if services can be attended in person.

3 rd April	11.00am	Morning Service & Baptisms Revd Angus MacLeod
	5.00pm	Evening Service Revd William McLaren
10 th April	11.00am	Palm Sunday & Reading of the Passion Revd Angus MacLeod
14 th April	8.00pm	Maundy Thursday Communion Service Revd William McLaren
15 th April	11.00am	Good Friday Service Revd Angus MacLeod
17 th April	11.00am	Easter Day Communion Service Revd William McLaren
24 th April	11.00am	Morning Service Revd Angus MacLeod
1 st May	11.00am	Morning Service & Baptisms Revd William McLaren
	5.00pm	Evening Service Revd Angus MacLeod
8 th May	11.00am	Morning Service Revd Angus MacLeod
15 th May	11.00am	Morning Service Revd William McLaren
22 nd May	11.00am	Morning Service Revd Duncan MacPherson, Chaplain to the Forces
29 th May	11.00am	Morning Service Revd Angus MacLeod
4 th June	11.00am	Morning Service for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Revd William McLaren
	5.00pm	Evening Service Songs of Praise Revd Angus MacLeod

Prayer

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes, where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

Edmond Budry (1854–1932)

translated Richard Birch Hoyle (1875–1939)

If undelivered please return to sender:
St Columba's Church of Scotland
Pont Street
London SW1X 0BD