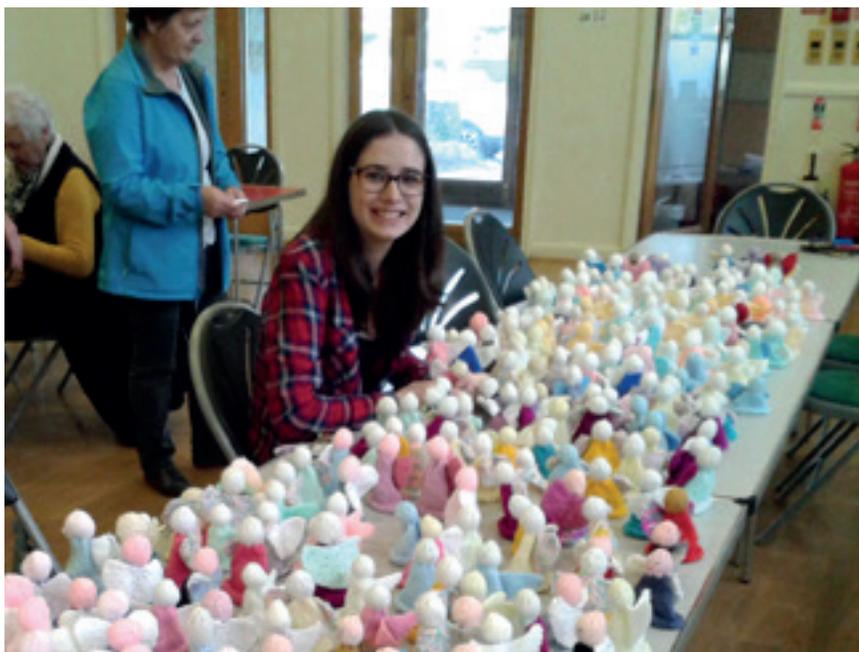


the **EDGE**

People, Places, Theology
Spring issue 2016

The quarterly magazine of the Diocese of Edinburgh in the Scottish Episcopal Church



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A CHAPEL CONGREGATION
JOHN ARMES:
Serving God in Small Things



The Edge

Vol 20: 3

Editor: Gillian McKinnon

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PRAYERS FOR REFUGEES AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM

Almighty God,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to serve the marginalised and vulnerable within our society.

Give us your gift of Grace that we might share in the plight of all asylum seekers and refugees and open our hearts to them, that your love may be known:

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We hold before you children throughout our world who are separated from their parents because of asylum issues.

We pray for children who find themselves in places where no-one understands their language or who are effectively imprisoned in a detention centre.

We pray that they will be able to reclaim their childhood rights and be enabled to grow in love for you as they grow in years.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

We remember all those who work with asylum seekers.

We pray that they will be helped to respect the humanity of each person they meet; that they will find ways to ensure that people are helped to express themselves and to be clear about their needs - physical, psychological and spiritual; that they will recognise the risen Christ in each person they meet.

In his name.

Amen.

From Faith in Action,

Produced by the Church in Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland and the Church & Society Committee of the United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland

See <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/faith-in-action/> for further prayer resources

SERVING GOD IN SMALL THINGS

Rt Rev John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh

You may know the rhyme about the loss of a kingdom 'all for the want of a horseshoe nail.' Small causes can have huge consequences - rather like that staple of Chaos Theory that suggests the beating of a butterfly's wings in the rainforest can cause a Storm Henry in the North Atlantic. So, if we want to contribute to the sum of human goodness, perhaps it makes sense to start with the little things we can influence rather than agonizing about the big things we cannot. *Peace will come, let it begin with me.*

For who knows what small, random acts of kindness might produce? The decision to smile at the car driver who pushes in ahead of us or to hold a door open for a harassed parent with a pushchair may seem trivial, but what if that person, because we were kind, passes that kindness on to others? We can probably all think of some experience that made our day because someone, some random person, said something nice to us.

Equally, we are aware that the butterfly wings of our resentments and fears also have a subtle way of contributing to the storms that blow across human experience. The hasty word, the cruel look, the whispered aside, the easy deception. We know how family dynamics and social dysfunctions can perpetuate themselves through the generations.

God, it is sometimes said, is God of the small things, who understands that it is in the apparently unnoticed and uncelebrated corners of life that human beings both discover and reveal themselves. Jesus, after all, spoke of the Kingdom of God growing from a tiny mustard seed, he emphasised how our deepest thoughts can corrupt our actions. He died in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, and yet what happened in Jerusalem back then changed everything. Sometimes small things can have cosmic repercussions.

This is why Lent encourages us to pay attention to small things - those little indulgences that distract us from God; those opportunities to give, to study, to spend time with people. Lent has always been an invitation to reflect on our baptism promises; to wonder what it means, in really practical ways, to serve Christ in all people or to work for justice and peace and honour God in Creation. This year, for example, we are being encouraged to fast for the planet's sake. Why not have a day without electric light (and a candlelit dinner with friends), or spend a day without social media (and talk to people instead), or make a point of putting the smart phone away whenever someone else is present?

Some people understand all this instinctively. I think of Hattie who has cooked at the lunch club for years; of Gordon who spends an evening each week working at the foodbank; of Beatrice who sings in the choir; of George who writes to prisoners of conscience and countless people like them.* People whose faithfulness in small things is infectious, who have never sought to change the world but whose willingness to serve has changed the world nevertheless.

This is why I have introduced a new award in the diocese, the St Cuthbert Award, to recognize people who by serving God in small things have made a big difference to the life of the church. The first awards will shortly be made and you will be able to read about them in future editions of The Edge.

The Christian faith does not offer status or importance - it invites us to find God in the ordinary. Sometimes, true, God leads us into the extraordinary, and we can all identify heroes and heroines of faith who have served in extraordinary ways. Sometimes the problems the world faces demand that we, collectively, stand up to be counted - faith is never a private matter. But our crucified and risen God meets us in the everyday and calls us not to heroism but to service, and to the discovery that by serving God in small things we become part of something that is much, much bigger.



* Names changed to avoid embarrassment!

+John



THE HOUSE OF GRACE

by Kate Reynolds

The wonderful quote, 'Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words' is often attributed to St Francis of Assisi. Their origin may be disputed, but they are nonetheless wise words which we could all be better at following.

I have been living in Tiberias, Israel since November, working as a Mission Partner for the Church of Scotland, and in the midst of the cultural, political, religious and social diversity, I am finding that in daily life, in a ministry of presence, the fewer words used, the better.

The Church of Scotland, like many churches, has partners throughout Israel and Palestine and, in the early months of my work here, I have been travelling around, learning more about them, those whom they serve, and their roles in their local contexts. Many of them could have as their mission statement the quote above. But none more so than House of Grace, a prisoner rehabilitation centre in Haifa.

House of Grace began in 1982, in the early days of the marriage of Kamil and Agnes Shehade, when they opened their home to recently released prisoners, offering shelter, stability, respect and dignity. As the

need grew, so did the House. The family was given permission to use the Greek Melkite Church of Our Lady which had lain derelict for about forty years, and the church now serves a congregation and hosts cultural events, in addition to providing a home for about a dozen ex-offenders. It sits in the heart of Haifa's corporate district, and office blocks and bank buildings tower over it, hiding it from view from the main road. One gets the feeling the city thinks its existence and work should be concealed.

Its presence is anything but a secret though. It seems everyone in Haifa knows and loves the Shehade family. Volunteers at the House find themselves offered free taxi rides by local supporters; bags of clothing and food are left at the gates regularly; visitors drop in for cups of coffee or a generous lunch.

Kamil sadly died of cancer in 2000, but he remains present in every conversation I've had with Agnes and their son Jamal, and his vision is still very much alive. The work is based on the Christian faith, Jamal tells me, but not in the sense of missionary work, or with the goal of converting people. The House is guided by the teachings of Jesus,

and tries to set an example of how human beings should relate to one another: to be present without being judgemental or discriminatory, to offer trust and respect, and above all, to love one another.

The groups of people with whom the family work have changed over the years as the services provided by the municipality have evolved. Just now the House focuses on three main projects.

It continues to work with released prisoners from the Arab community (it is the only halfway house in Israel for Arabs, and it accepts men from all religious backgrounds), and each prisoner spends nine months living on site. During that time, they have professional, social and practical support and gradually reintegrate into society. They might receive financial or debt counselling, or be offered cultural opportunities, or vocational training. The main goal, Jamal says, is to 'give them a sense of being normal again and to empower their personality'.

After nine months, they go back into the community, and for the following year, they receive continued contact and counselling from the House, including regular drug and alcohol

tests. Reports on their progress are then sent to the rehabilitation authority, with whom the House works closely.

The second group the House provides support to is families in need. Unlike the men in the halfway house, the families are from all sectors of society – Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Druze, Palestinian, Israeli, etc. The families are offered modest financial help, but the main goal is to give them tools and advice on how to access state support, how to face issues within the family, how to navigate difficult social problems, and how to regain independence.

And the third aspect of the House's work is the youth centre for children 7-17 years old. Again this is only for Arabs. The kids are often from difficult families, are struggling in school, or are at risk of crime. So the programme gives them help with their studies, counselling for family problems, and activities to redirect their anger and hurt. Much of the work is preventative, trying to keep the children off drugs, off the streets, and in school.

I asked Jamal and Agnes what gives them hope when they spend so much time hearing stories of marginalisation, abuse and discrimination, and when they're working within a labyrinthine political system.

Jamal replied that they now have two staff members who are

graduates of the programme.

Agnes said that recently when they distributed food to some of their families, one of the ex-offenders helped. When he came back, he confessed, 'You know, that was the first time in my life I went up foreign stairs to give, not to steal.' 'The change is very beautiful to see,' Agnes said with a smile.

I admire Agnes hugely. 'How was it in the early days?' I asked her. 'Raising children here?'

'I was scared in the beginning,' she admitted. 'But Kamil always told me that God is good and loves us. If he wants us to do this job, he will take care. So little by little I saw that nothing happened. I saw that the men were not bad people, but they did something bad because of their suffering. When you give them a chance, they are different. Two things are important in this house: trust and respect. And the love, of course.'

Like many other NGOs, the House faces funding difficulties. They receive little help from the state, and most of their funding comes from overseas. Applications are increasingly more complicated because of the need for five-year plans, the detailed accounting, the long reports. Additionally, there is always a need to explain the context to those who may not understand or who may try to impose their own theories and thinking upon

an organisation in a land which is endlessly complex because of its layers of diversity. The House employs a fundraiser, but that, of course, is an added financial strain.

'What would you like to say to churches back in Scotland?' I ask towards the end of our time together.

'First of all,' Agnes replied, 'thank you for being interested when you have your own issues and problems. But also, I'd like to tell them that they think carefully about what they hear on the news, about everything, everyone. Don't judge just because of what you hear. Try to get the real picture.'

Jamal nodded. 'My request is always to build partnerships. Know who you're working with. Listen to those people speak from their own experiences, know their traditions. Try not to impose your own thinking.'

'And get to know more about Christians in the Holy Land. Our faith has kept this place holy, through the Roman empire, through the Ottoman empire, when churches were being destroyed. It's time for the West to remember that we are part of Christ's body too.'

'We don't want to be looked at as beggars, or looked down on from above. Know where your money is going. Is it going to a good cause or not? Is it raising the tension or not? We want to be partners, members of the same body of Christ. This is what we need, to have this connection, these bridges with people from abroad who care about the place and us enough to understand us and our lives.'

As is always the case when I visit the House of Grace, I walked away even more convinced that the true holiness of this land is not in the sites, but in people like Jamal and Agnes Shahade who preach the gospel always, and rarely have to use words.

Kate Reynolds was ordained in the Scottish Episcopal Church and now works for the Church of Scotland in Tiberias. You can follow her blog at revisedontology.com. You can learn more about the work of House of Grace at house-grace.org.



ARNOLD OF ANTARCTICA

by Peter Mackay



Arnold Spenser Smith died in Antarctica on 9 March 1916 while a member of the Ross Sea party serving on Shackleton's unsuccessful Trans Antarctic expedition. The expedition is not well known, but it stands comparison with any of the feats of endurance synonymous with the so-called heroic age of Antarctic exploration. It carves out a special niche in Antarctic history for the Scottish Episcopal Church, and more particularly for St Michael and All Saints', or just, All Saints', as it was then.

An All Saints' curate, Arnold Spenser Smith was ordained as a priest there on 13 September 1914 in the week before he left for the Antarctic. He had served as an honorary curate at Christ Church Morningside and then at All Saints', while still at Merchiston Castle School where had taught for eight years.

The Rector, Canon Holmes, whose memorial hangs in the church, said: "God willing, he goes this week ... to exercise his priesthood under circumstances that are unique in the history of the Anglican ministry. For he is going to spend his first two years as priest not with boys of his school, not in the quiet countryside or noisy city slums, not with the members of All Saints congregation, not with the gallant forces of the King, but among a little band of brave men who are about to try once more to explore and reveal the laws by which God works in nature in the inhospitable regions which surround the South Pole."

Arnold was deeply moved by the service. Exactly a year later, out

on the ice after a year of extreme suffering and tribulation, he wrote in his diary: "Thoughts full all day of last year - thankful for it all - God Bless all the good folk in Edinburgh."

Five days after his ordination Arnold set sail for the Antarctic with the Ross Sea party. Their task was to go to Captain Scott's old base on the far side of the Antarctic. From there, they were to lay supply depots across 400 miles of the Ross Ice shelf to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier, supplies to be ready for Shackleton and his party from The Endurance.

Of course, we all know now that Shackleton never even reached the Antarctic land mass as his ship was crushed by the ice in November 1916.

We do not know why Shackleton chose Arnold, who had little experience other than taking boys camping on the Pentlands. Others in the group were equally inexperienced. Although The Endurance had two doctors, the Ross Sea party had none. But it did have Arnold, designated as Chaplain and photographer. The ship they went into the ice with - The Aurora - was a 40-year old Dundee sealer bought in Australia unseen by Shackleton. She was in desperate need of refitting before she sailed south but only the most basic repairs were carried out. There was not enough equipment on board for an expedition which might have to last three years.

On on Christmas Day 1914, Arnold celebrated Communion and they

set sail from Tasmania. They arrived at Scott's hut on 16 January 1915. Expecting that Shackleton was already on his way, Arnold and his companions started laying supply depots at once.

Three months later, they had ground themselves almost to a standstill. Of the original 26 dogs, only six had survived and they had covered only about a third of the distance to their furthest depot site. All had suffered with frostbite, snow blindness, inadequate diet or just sheer exhaustion.

The Ross Party settled in for the Antarctic winter, living mainly on board the Aurora as she lay moored to the ice. Arnold and a few others slept ashore in Scott's hut. He regularly celebrated Communion in the little chapel he created there, with a silver cross and communion vessels he had brought from Edinburgh.

But, one night, disaster struck. The Aurora's cables snapped in a gale and she was driven out to sea - and did not return. Arnold's diary that night recorded, with massive understatement, "we were all a little gloomy at dinner".

They debated what should be done and decided that Shackleton's need was greater than theirs. They would not just sit tight and hope for rescue but would lay the depots as originally planned. Of course they did not know that Shackleton and his men had abandoned any hope of reaching, let alone crossing, the continent.



The location of Scott's hut in Antarctica today



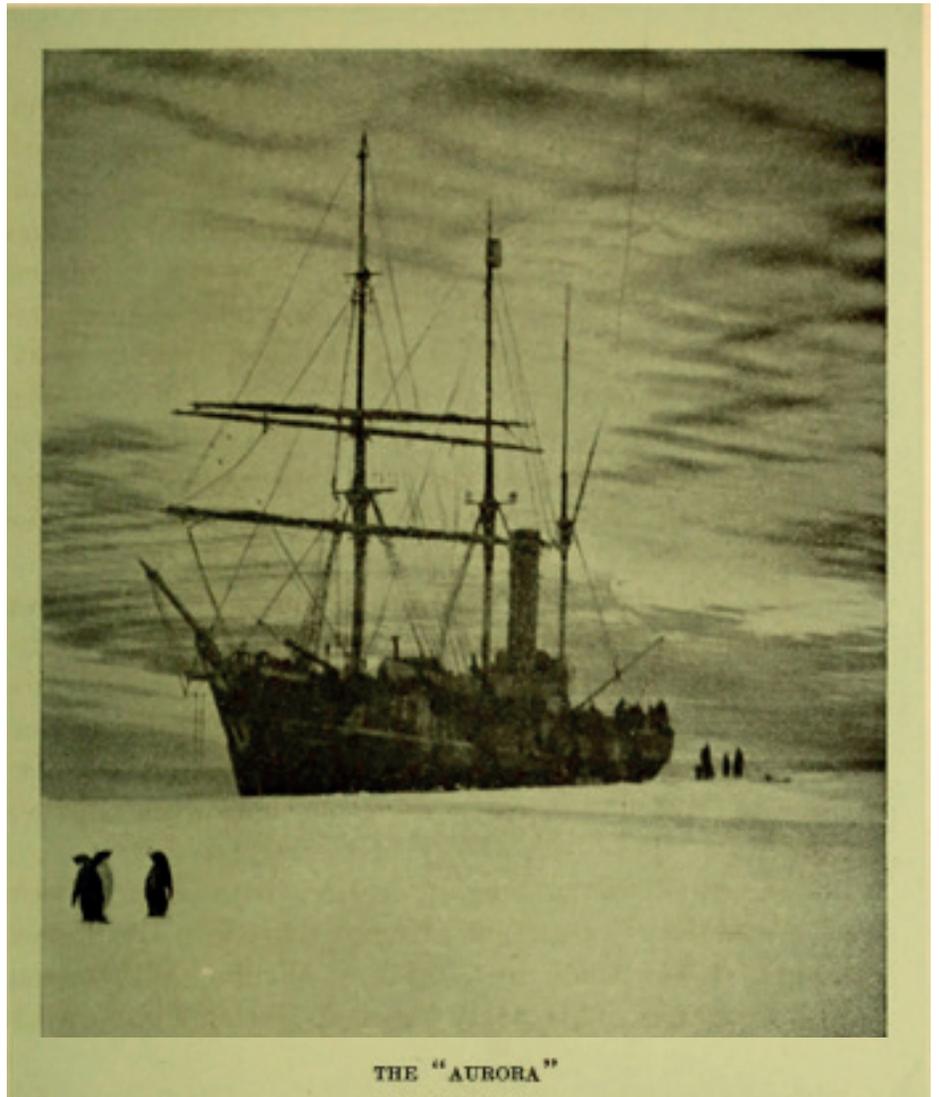
Rev Arnold Spenser Smith during Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition

Arnold remained cheerful and greatly respected. The expedition leader, Mackintosh, recorded that: "Spenser Smith is the mainstay of the party. His influence on other members has had a great effect on how the winter has been passed."

Arnold had no illusions about the task ahead and, in a letter left for his parents, he said: "We are setting out for the season's sledging under rather precarious conditions... there seems an unusual element of risk, so I say au revoir in case I do not come back. We have had a pretty stiff time but I can't feel any regret about it all ... and if anything does happen to me I will face it as cheerfully as I can - with a hope that is really 'sure and certain' of seeing you all again with everything unworthy in myself done away with. I have tried to be good and to do good without preaching."

Arnold's fears were amply justified. They struggled south for 400 miles over the next few months in appalling conditions, hauling heavy loads across the ice shelf. By mid January, Arnold was almost spent with fever and aching knees - a sign of scurvy. He recorded in his diary: "I dreamt of Christmas at All Saints last night. Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Hundreds of candles, incense etc, the organ crashing out the first few bars of *Adeste Fideles*..." But his dream was shattered by the barking of "the wretched Oscar" - one of their four remaining dogs.

By late February 1916, returning north, all the men were dangerously weak. On 7 March, only 40 miles from safety Arnold wrote in his diary to wish many happy returns of the day to his sister (a deaconess of the church) and explain the plans for the final few miles. He said that it



THE "AURORA"

was "A glorious day". But early in the morning of 9 March, he died. He was buried on the ice by his distraught companions.

So near, but so far. His companions reached the safety of a hut two days later and the remaining men were rescued in early 1917. News of Arnold's fate reached Edinburgh from New Zealand in February. But in a world almost punch drunk by war casualties, it is not surprising that the news of his death was swamped by those of thousands of others. There is no memorial to him in St Michael and All Saints' or, until last year, at Merchiston.

Shackleton wrote of Arnold Spenser Smith that "suffering, but not complaining, he was an example to all men". But Arnold was much more than a stoic sufferer for the last six weeks of his life. Until he succumbed to scurvy, he was a mainstay of the party: trusted and depended on by his leader, and admired and liked by his companions. He was a tower of physical and moral strength.

Early in the expedition, the captain of The Aurora described him as "simply, the finest man I know".

Arnold Spenser Smith has his place in religious history too. He was the first ordained minister of religion to land on the Antarctic continent and take services and administer the Sacrament, and he was the first, and perhaps still the only one, to die there. A century after his death, the congregation of St Michael and All Saints' can be proud to claim him as one of their own. Perhaps Canon Holmes should have the last word. He said, when news of Arnold's death came to Edinburgh: "to know him was to love him".

I wish I had known him.

This is an abridged version of the Memorial Address given by Peter Mackay at a special service at St Michael and All Saints on Sunday 6 March 2016. It was a High Mass celebrated by Bishop John Armes and led by Fr Martin Robson.

MEET...

by David Warnes

Our series of articles that highlight the work, paid and unpaid, and the skills, talents and creativity of people across our diocese. This issue we look at people involved in sport.

At a time when allegations about corruption in the governance of international football and doping and bribery in athletics have brought to mind Proverbs 26:19 in the King James Version ("So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?"), it has been refreshing to talk to a number of people in the Diocese of Edinburgh for whom sport is an enthusiasm to be enjoyed, shared and taught and also a way of raising money for charity and of drawing attention to injustice. Though some made their careers in sports education, they are all amateurs in the best sense of that word. They love what they do.

For several of them, the enthusiasm set in early. **Matt Bruce-Kingsmill** (St Ninian's, Comely Bank and Depute Guardian of the Edinburgh Servers' Fellowship) first picked up the oval ball at the age of nine, and later played rugby for Loughborough University in the second row. **Susan Lindsay** (St Margaret's, Easter Road, Edinburgh) was inspired to take up long-distance running at the age of fourteen by her mother, a fitness instructor who continues to help with her training. **Kimberley Moore Ede** (Old St Paul's, Edinburgh, where she is Vestry Clerk) took up curling as a fifteen year-old girl guide in Montreal. On moving to Edinburgh she joined the historic Duddingston Curling Club. She is secretary to the Club's committee and a regular in its fixtures at Murrayfield Curling Rink and elsewhere.

Others, including **Sally-Jayne Murray**, took up sport, in her case distance running, at the time when their children were leaving home. Sally-Jayne (Holy Trinity, Melrose, where she is People's Warden) claims that she is "not a sporty

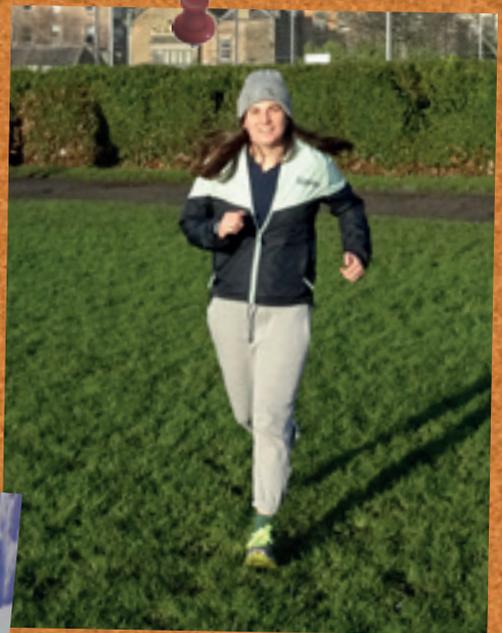
person" yet she is looking forward to travelling to Rome just after Easter to take part in her 26th Marathon. She modestly describes herself as "a plodder" and tackles long distance events with a mixture of running and power walking. In contrast, **Kay and Peter Bates** (St Fillan's, Buckstone, where both are actively involved and Peter is Treasurer) were drawn into the world of skiing through the interest of their two sons. When they moved to Fairmilehead, the boys were attracted to the nearby Hillend dry ski slope, and they took them there for lessons and learned to ski themselves. The boys began to ski competitively, and through that Peter and Kay were drawn into judging. Kay is now Chair of the British Selection Panel for Freestyle Skiing and Peter is Secretary to the committee. Kay stresses that to be a judge requires a mature understanding of skiing, though it is not necessary to have competed. Training involves watching and assessing hours of video, and every autumn they both attend a training course for international judges.

Teachers can play a vital part in nurturing sporting talent. Kay and Peter were both in the profession, and started a ski club at Firrhill

School, where Kay was teaching Biology. **Sue and Mike Fitchett** (Rosslyn Chapel, where Mike is a member of Vestry) are both retired Physical Education teachers. Sue worked in secondary schools in Edinburgh, rising to be a deputy head, and Mike was Director of Sport and Exercise at Heriot-Watt University. Sue describes them as "a very sporty family" - both their daughters were involved in the Scottish Team Gym Display Squad. As sports educators, Sue says, "you have to be generalists". She enjoys hockey and gymnastics and also taught Dance. Under Mike's leadership, Heriot-Watt became a centre of excellence for a wide range of sports and he was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2012 in recognition of his vision, leadership and outstanding contribution, over the course of many years, to the advancement of sport at the university and for services to sport in Scotland. He is an international squash referee and also enjoys football and tennis.

Injury can put an end to a player's active involvement, and for Matt Bruce-Kingsmill it was an ankle problem which led him first into coaching and then into changing,





L - R: Sally-Jayne Murray, Sue and Mike Fitchett, Kimberley Moore Ede, Matt Bruce-Kingmill, Peter and Kay Bates and Susan Lindsay.

as he puts it, "from poacher to gamekeeper" by qualifying as a referee. "As a player I was certainly familiar with the dark arts of the scrum" he remembers, "but I found that I enjoyed refereeing." He moved to Edinburgh in 2007 to work for the NHS and got involved in refereeing university games and also youth matches at Boroughmuir RFC. He joined the Edinburgh Referees Society, served on their committee and enjoys helping younger referees as a mentor and an on-field assessor.

As well as making physical demands, sports can both stimulate the mind and free it of everyday concerns. Kimberley Moore Ede says that curling is "a thinking game" and "a cross between physical skills and strategy". Handling and directing the stones requires strength and concentration. While there can be moments of tension when your fellow team members are dependent on your judgement and precision in pushing the next stone, the rink and the club are also places to relax and enjoy the company of a wide variety of people.

On the other hand, Sally-Jayne Murray remembers the 100 kilometre Ultra Marathon which she ran in June 2015 as a lonely

experience. Much of the course, which was from London to Bletchley Park, followed the Union Canal towpath, lit at night by fluorescent lights and glowsticks. "It was very different from the New York Marathon, during which Gospel choirs and brass bands provided encouragement" she explains. "At night on the towpath prayer kept me going." She was also motivated, as are many sports enthusiasts, by the wish to raise money for charity, in her case for Calum's Cabin, set up in memory of Calum Speirs, who died of cancer aged twelve. The charity runs a holiday home on the Isle of Bute which offers families of children with cancer the chance to have a holiday together.

Susan Lindsay also runs marathons with a purpose. She is a member of the Iona Community and moved to Edinburgh from the island just over a year ago. "Training on Iona meant going round and round in circles," she says. That will have been good preparation for the Bethlehem Half Marathon, in which she will compete just after Easter to raise money for the Amos Trust, a human rights charity. Their Palestine project works with Palestinian and Israeli peace activists to promote justice

and equality and the Bethlehem Marathon and Half Marathon are intended to illustrate the lack of freedom in that area, as the course has to double back to avoid Israeli border checks. Weather conditions will be quite hot, and local customs regarding modesty require that runners should wear more clothes than they might in another context, but, despite all this, Susan is very excited about the event.

The 19th century advocates of 'Muscular Christianity' believed that sport was character building, both in the sense of developing the virtues they valued and sublimating the urges they deplored. In the 20th century many Christians distanced themselves from sport as it became commercialised, corrupted and infected by celebrity culture.

Sport is both character building and character revealing, and the modesty, humour, enthusiasm and willingness to share their talents shown by the men and women who feature in this article are a timely reminder that it can be a force for the good.

Internet links:
www.calumscabin.com
www.amostrust.org



LIVINGSTON UNITED PARISH IS 50

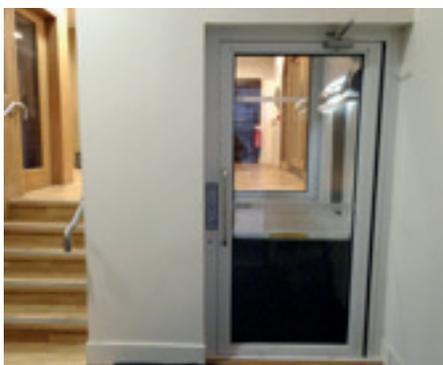
On 6 January 2016, Livingston United Parish reached a significant milestone on its journey when it celebrated its 50th anniversary. The parish held a special gathering on the anniversary date and a service of celebration and thanksgiving on the subsequent Sunday. The service was attended by former ministers, plus representatives of the four founding denominations and local community leaders (see photo above). Rev Canon Brian Hardy, one of the ministers inducted to the new charge on 6 January 1966, preached at the anniversary service.

Livingston was designated as Scotland's fourth new town development in 1962, and the Livingston Ecumenical Experiment was introduced in 1966, a partnership between the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Congregational Union of Scotland, followed later by the Methodist Church. In 2012, the parish agreed to come together as one worshipping congregation – Livingston United Parish Church. The ministry benefits from a Parish Youth and Children's worker, and the recent appointment of a Community Development Worker will develop closer links with the strands of community life in what is now a large and diverse town.

ACCESS ALL AREAS AT ST MARTIN'S

Bishop John visited St Martin of Tours, Gorgie-Dalry on Sunday 7 February to ask God's blessing on the transformation of the building into a community resource centre open to all. It was November 2011 when St Martin's congregation handed over the responsibility of running the church building to St Martin's Community Resource Centre, and work has continued since then to improve accessibility.

Susan Warnes, a member of the congregation who is a wheelchair user, cut a ribbon to mark the opening of the new accessible entrance and lift, and the Bishop was welcomed into the church by the Rector, Rev John Conway. The lift gives access to both levels of the building and after the service, which included Confirmation, everyone enjoyed lunch in the lower hall.



ANGELIC ART

by Jane Ramsay

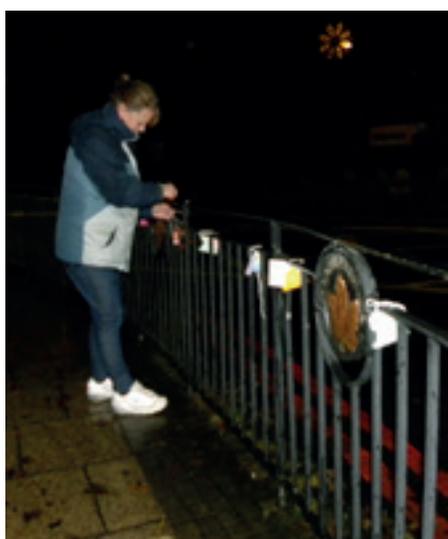
Advent – a time of waiting, a time of anticipation, the promise of another Christmas, another loving invitation to remember the God-given gift to this world of ours. The message of a baby's birth announced to fragile mankind by the glorious vision of angels in the star-studded skies.

So it was for the congregation of St Peter's Church Linlithgow, when we too were surrounded by the beating wings of heavenly bodies, soaring, dipping, weaving and watching in all their gentle splendour. As we began our way towards Christmas and that tiny baby lying in his bed of straw, we were led there not only by our Rector Christine but also by the mysteries which were created by local artist Ann McLaughlin. Ann chose to hold her premier exhibition in our church. As a glittering star led shepherds and kings to the stable and baby, so did the news of the angels to be found within the stout walls of St Peter's lead the curious there. Our red doors opened wide many, many times as locals and visitors took the opportunity to step away from busy Christmas preparations and stay for a time in a quieter space.

That time of anticipation, hope and excitement has not yet left the congregation of St Peter's. We now look to the future and the possibility of an extension to our little church that will allow our congregation to spread welcoming arms even wider around the local community; its heart heard beating, like the wings of those angels, by all who would venture through our bright red doors.



ANGELS EVERYWHERE!



Thanks to passionate knitters and hardy souls who went out in the worst weather December could bring, there were angels displayed all over the diocese for Advent. From Pilton to Penicuik; Portobello to Peebles; Dalmahoy to Haddington; Comely Bank, Corstorphine, Dalry, Rosslyn ... literally too many places to mention! People received Advent greetings from our churches via the angels. There were comments put on Twitter and Facebook, and the angels made it into the local press. Rev Lynsay Downs whose initiative it was, also maintained a special blog throughout Advent.

NEW DUNBAR PARTNERSHIP

Sunday 29 November saw a historic service at St Anne's Church in Dunbar. The Advent Sunday service was a 'service of ecumenical welcome and commitment' by which members of Dunbar Methodist Church began a new joint future with the Episcopal congregation of St Anne's. The service, led by the Bishop of Edinburgh and Rev Andrew Letby, Superintendent of the Edinburgh and Forth Methodist Circuit, is a further stage in the co-operation of the two congregations. Following shared monthly services over recent years, all Sunday morning worship will now take place at St Anne's at 10am. The 'Harbour Lights' youth project will continue to be held in the Methodist Church building in Victoria Street.

Rev Andrew Bain, Rector of St Anne's and Deacon Sue Langdale from the Methodist Church are both looking forward to the new possibilities of shared worship, fellowship and service to the community. The Methodist Church in Dunbar was founded in 1764 by John Wesley himself, who visited and preached there many times on his journeys around Scotland. Andrew Bain said: "The Episcopal Church has very strong historic links with Methodism, so we're delighted to be sharing in this new venture as part of the Christian community in Dunbar".

AWARD PHOTO



Many thanks to Sarah Grotrian for passing on this photo from the Radcliffe Tercentenary Awards as covered in the last issue of The Edge. Congratulations again! L-R: The Provost's representative Colin Dickson, Sarah Grotrian, and Lord and Lady Balfour of Burleigh.



NEW MOVE FOR ST MARY'S?

The Royal High School Preservation Trust submitted a detailed planning application to the City of Edinburgh Council in February. The Trust hopes to move St Mary's Music School into the historic Thomas Hamilton building on Calton Hill with a fully funded development proposal. They have worked in close collaboration with Richard Murphy Architects and St Mary's Music School to design expanded performance and rehearsal space. The Music School thinks its vision for the 19th century building remains true to the Enlightenment spirit in which the structure was built.

The proposal has had high profile backing from heritage organisations. Edinburgh Council will make a decision later in the spring.

Actor, singer and television presenter Alexander Armstrong recently gave his support to the proposed move. In Edinburgh in February, he met some of the current choiristers (photo above) and said "My love of singing started when I was a child. I was a chorister at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh from the age of 11; that is when it took hold and went up a gear. When you are singing five days a week, that's a big commitment.

"There are plans for St Mary's Music School to move to the former Royal High School building in Edinburgh. This will offer the school a high profile location to expand and continue being a musical centre of excellence. The ties with St Mary's Cathedral will remain strong. As a former pupil, I send my best wishes and support for a positive step forward for the arts in Scotland's capital."

NON STIPENDIARY CLERGY DAY

Report by Bob Gould

The second annual meeting for non-stipendiary clergy was held on 21 November at St Barnabas' Church, Moredun. The day was led by Bishop John and Ken Webb, the whole programme being set within a Eucharist, emphasising the communal nature of all that was done.

The guiding seminar of the day was a talk by Dr Geoffrey Stevenson, "Proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom through Films". The thesis was summed up in a quotation from Timothy Cargal, "Teaching that attempts to engage the hearers by exegeting both scriptural text and modern culture must be able to dialogue with film". The strikingly good portrayal of the gospel message in such varied films as *The Railway Man*, *Doubt*, *Schindler's List*, and *An Inconvenient Truth* was mentioned, and encouragement given to do some research in congregations as to what films they were watching. In discussion, one interesting point that showed up was the division of the group into those who watched films and those who read books as primary sources.

The disadvantages of relying on films were also mentioned, and what probably made the most lasting impression were clips from an American film encouraging people to come to church by a sequence of scenes in a large church showing first a baby starting to cry. Then, as disapproving glances turned their way, mother and baby were catapulted into outer space! After a similar outcome for two men holding hands, a group of broadly smiling faces appeared to ensure viewers that this would never happen in their church! Sadly, it seems some Americans do not know the meaning of the words "own goal". Some of us thought that such a magic catapult could be useful, and the best location would be the pulpit.

After lunch, Bishop John spoke of some of the problems facing the Church today, including the increasing difficulty of getting people to accept ministry outwith the centre of Edinburgh. And everyone gave an account of their own activities. While most accounts were definitely positive; no one felt bored or unable to find anything useful to do, but some felt that their activities could be better structured. Concern was expressed at the decreasing size and increasing age of the group, while the development of the concept of "whole ministry" in congregations was welcomed.

One item of strong agreement was that St Barnabas' is an excellent and underused facility for such meetings, and thanks were expressed to all who had helped to organise this one.





A CHAPEL CONGREGATION

by Jacqui Roulston

There's no question that Rosslyn Chapel means different things to different people, as it continues to attract visitors in large numbers; in 2015, just over 160,000. Perhaps that's not surprising, as the church has two identities – Rosslyn Chapel, an historic and mystical building to visitors, and St Matthew's to its growing congregation.

Founded as the Collegiate Church of St Matthew, in 1446 by Sir William St Clair, the congregation has access for services and the Chapel's fabric and public opening are managed by Rosslyn Chapel Trust.

The fact that this is a 'working church' is perhaps most apparent on a Sunday morning, but the congregation also ensure that it carries on its religious traditions. Sir William St Clair built Rosslyn and endowed a College of Canons to pray for his soul and those of his family and ancestors.

This prayer tradition continues, and three days each week at 12noon, visitors are asked to participate in, or

observe, a short prayer service led by members of the congregation who say prayers for the world, which includes reading out prayer requests left in the Chapel prayer book by people from all around the globe. Visitors are welcome at all services throughout the year and many do join the congregation on a Sunday and on Feast Days.

Easter is a special time for many visitors to join services, and participate in the Good Friday three-hour prayer vigil, when other local clergy join the congregation to lead the service, making it very much a global community service.

A jointly-organised service now takes place each April to mark the rededication of the Chapel in 1862, when it became part of the Scottish Episcopal Church (this year 17th April). There is also a celebration of readings and carols, 'Christmas by Candlelight', which has become a firm favourite in the local community as well as for the congregation.

This past Christmas, a retiring

collection raised over £400 for Midlothian Foodbank and, when matched by the Vestry on behalf of the congregation and also by the Priest-in-Charge's collection, a healthy cheque for over £1200 will be presented to this excellent local cause.

From Advent Sunday, the Trust arranged for the exterior lights to be changed and the Chapel was lit in purple, the traditional colour for Advent, thereby making another statement that this is an active part of the Diocese.

Working together more closely does seem to be a recipe for success and so whether it's for a service or to see the amazing carved stonework, the congregation and Rosslyn Chapel Trust look forward to welcoming thousands more through the door this year.

*St Matthews-Rosslyn Chapel
Chapel Loan, Roslin, Midlothian*

www.stmatthews-rosslynchapel.org.uk

REVIEWS

'STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS'

by Malcolm Round



Let's start with full disclosure. I am a geek and great fan of the original 1977 Star Wars. It was one of those rare films that totally changed my viewing world. So I awaited the latest film with both great anticipation and huge fear that it was going to be yet another let down like the three prequels. I really shouldn't have been worried: it was awesomely good.

I came out of the cinema so happy and relieved that it was a great story that kept me captivated and entranced. I think it was only later that I realised the real reason I loved it so much: it wasn't just the brilliant direction of JJ Abraham or

the fantastic acting by the new actors (especially Daisy Ridley), wonderful battle scenes, sweeping vistas of strange planets and improbable aliens ... No, it's because it was THE SAME story as the 1977 Star Wars! Plucky orphan living on a desert planet finds a lost droid containing a secret that could change the empire - check; Han Solo, Chewbacca, Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker - check; Cantina scene - check; Darth Vader-type character - check; Death Star - check. No wonder I loved it, it wasn't just nostalgia for the original Star Wars, it WAS the original Star Wars! And I don't mind at all.

But what do I make of it as a Christian and not just as a light sabre-owning fan boy? Certainly it will give me some great video clips to use as sermon illustrations when the film comes out on DVD. In today's 'mosaic world' there aren't many cultural references that everyone understands, but Star Wars can certainly act as a reference point for most of the congregation. However, I would urge anybody using Star Wars to be very careful and not to make the same mistakes preachers did in the 70's who looked for Christian parallels. Its spiritual roots have a very different source.

The concept of 'The Force' consisting of both light and dark sides comes in part from the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism in which the ying and yang contain both opposing and balancing forces. It also contains something of the dualism of Zoroastrianism. The Force is reminiscent of the god Brahman in Hinduism. At one point in this movie a character spells out the pantheistic nature of The Force saying that it "moves through and surrounds every living thing." Just like a character in the first film said the Force "is what gives a Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together" Add to that a good dose of paranormal and the occult: levitation, telepathy, telekinesis, mind control and you have a typical post modern mishmash of 'do it yourself' spirituality.

It doesn't spoil the film for me: it just reminds me I have to be careful when using it as an illustration. It's not a Christian parable. The Force is nothing like the God of the Bible. If anything, you might use it as a counter-point to teach about the living, personal, relational Father God.

But there was one image that did resonate for me as a Christian (spoiler alert). When looking for the final location for the meeting between Rey and the now reclusive Luke Skywalker, the best place they could find to recreate such a momentous encounter was an ancient 6th century Christian monastery on Skellig Michael Island off the coast of Ireland with its distinctive 'hive' monks' cells. I thought it was wonderfully symbolic that Star Wars ended up where dedicated Christians have prayed and lived for centuries!

'All The Light We Cannot See', Anthony Doerr

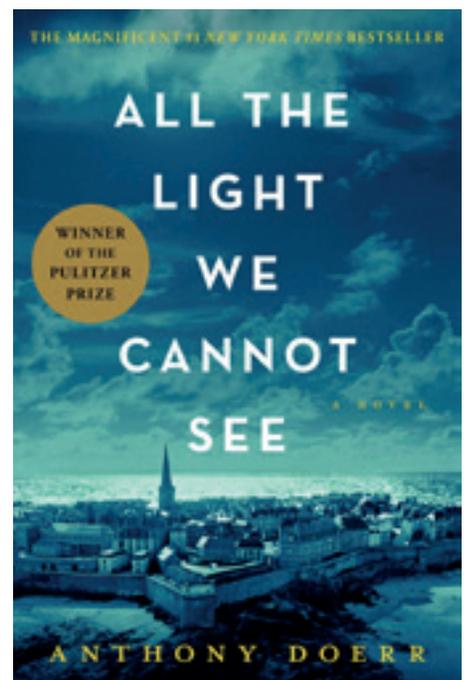
Fourth Estate. 2015

by Darren McKinnon

Doerr's novel follows the fortunes of two children in the run up to, and during, the Second World War. Marie-Laure is a blind French girl living with her father, a museum curator in Paris. Werner is an orphan who is chosen for training in an elite German army school due to his prowess with technology. The novel starts with both characters trapped in St Malo as the city is bombed by the Allies in 1945, before going back in time to tell their stories episodically.

The format works very well: you are keen to know what has happened in the past to bring these characters to the city, and you are desperate to see how or if they will survive to the end of the book. Doerr uses several narrators to give different perspectives on the story, and even the worst characters are given some measure of sympathy in the telling. Through all these characters Doerr explores issues of family, friendship, duty and destiny.

It's not often you find yourself describing a war story as "beautiful" but that is what Doerr manages here. The novel deservedly won the Pulitzer Prize for 2015 and is an engaging and rewarding read.



CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNER



Congratulations to St Matthew's Rosslyn who won the Bishop's Christmas Card competition with this fantastic photo. Thanks to everyone who entered - there was a really high standard, and all entries were featured on the diocesan Facebook Page.



MEET THE ... Do you work in health care? Pippa Cochran (left), a member of St Martin's Dalry, is a pharmacist and has worked in an Edinburgh hospital for ten years. The next article in the 'Meet the...' series features Pippa and others in the diocese who work or have worked in hospitals, hospices, dental practices, GP surgeries, clinics or nursing homes. Contact David Warnes on warnesdavid@googlemail.com if you are a health worker yourself, whether paid or a volunteer, or if you know anyone in your congregation who is.

MEN'S RITES OF PASSAGE

A Life Changing Programme for Men: Perthshire

20-24 July 2016



Over five thousand men across the world have participated in this programme which is based on the work of Richard Rohr. We provide men with opportunities to do their 'inner work' in the company of other men. It is not about religion, but about spirituality. It's about age-old traditions that guide men into manhood, and about coming to trust that there is something much greater at work in your life than you could ever imagine. It may take you out of your comfort zones, but more deeply back into your own life.

We invite applications for this annual event, offered by The Male Journey (a registered UK charity), which will take place from 20-24 July 2016, at The Bield at Blackruthven, Perthshire. For more information and an application form please visit www.mrop.org.uk We are also offering a Rites of Passage programme for young men aged between 18 and 28. See www.ymrop.org.uk for further details.

GAZETTE

Appointments

Rev Elizabeth (Libby) Talbot, Associate Rector St Paul's and St George's, Edinburgh.

Rev Canon David Paton-Williams to be instituted as Rector of Edinburgh, St Columba's-by-the-Castle in April 2016

Easter at the Cathedral

GOOD FRIDAY 25 March

7.30 am Morning Prayer and Litany (Lady Chapel)

1.00 pm The Liturgy of Good Friday

Palestrina Missa Brevis

Victoria St John Passion

Finzi Lo, the full final sacrifice

EASTER DAY 27 March

6.00 am Vigil Eucharist (with Palmerston Place Church)

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Festal Eucharist

Kodaly Missa Brevis

Hadley My beloved spake

3.30 pm Festal Evensong

Howells St Paul's Service

Vaughan Williams Easter from Five Mystical Songs

St Mary's Cathedral, 23 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AW

Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Edinburgh
Linked charges of
St Peter, Galashiels and St John the Evangelist, Selkirk
The Vestries of these two neighbouring
Collaborative Ministry Churches
in the Scottish Borders,
wish to appoint a half-time

Area Rector

to work collaboratively with the Leadership Team in each church in facilitating the mission and ministry of the congregation, and to share the bishop's oversight.

Housing will be provided in St Peter's Rectory Galashiels.

The Ministry Leadership Team at St John's Selkirk, which is now in its second 5-year iteration, is well-established and enthusiastically supported by the congregation. The Shared Leadership Team at St Peter's Galashiels is more recently established, but equally well-supported by the congregation. Each team is answerable to its Vestry.

Further information about the two charges can be found at www.stpetersgala.co.uk and www.stjohnselkirk.org.uk

Church profiles, detailed job- and person-specifications, and an application form can be obtained from:

Mrs Felicity Burrows,
The Haven, 9 Hillview Crescent, Selkirk, TD7 4AY
email: felicity.burrows@btinternet.com



SOLAS FESTIVAL 2016

EARLY BIRD TICKETS ON SALE NOW The first 125 tickets are just £85 for a weekend ticket.

The Solas Festival takes place at The Bield at Blackruthven, Perthshire from the 17th-19th of June 2016.

The festival creates a generous, hospitable space in Scotland where the arts can be performed and enjoyed by all. The programme also makes space for challenging debate with activists, writers and thinkers from across the political, cultural and religious spectrum. Solas Festival offers a creative and entertaining programme for festival-goers of all ages - there truly is something for everyone!

There are also opportunities to volunteer at the Festival. Full details on their website.

www.solasfestival.co.uk

BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL 2016



"Lent is a time when we pay attention to our own spiritual well-being and the things that lead to fullness of life. This year I offer you two good causes that seek the fullness of life for others.

"Faith in Older People (FiOP) was founded by a priest in this diocese, the late Malcolm Goldsmith. FiOP helps us to understand that those living with profound dementia have spiritual needs and shows us ways to meet those needs. This is close to home for many of us, and we can all share examples of how dementia affects people we love in our families, our neighbourhoods and our churches.

"The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) sends volunteers into one of the most troubled places in the world to encourage respect for people and their rights. By supporting this Christian initiative we help Palestinians and Israelis to take steps towards a secure peace in the Holy Land, a peace built on justice and international law.

"Two charities doing vital yet often uncelebrated work; work no one else is doing. Please, if you are able, support them generously."

Donations should be made payable to your local church. If you are eligible, please complete a gift-aid form to help maximise your contribution. For further information please contact the Diocesan Office on 0131 538 7044 or email: bpsec@dioceseofedinburgh.org

REFLECTIVE WORKSHOPS



SIX DAYS

Saturday Reflective Workshops
10am til 4pm at Christ Church Hall, Edinburgh.

30 April Mindfulness and Mysticism workshop led by Carmel Byrne rscj.

4 June Thomas Merton: Many Paths to Wholeness with Rev John McLuckie

£25 Organised by the Epiphany Group. Flier and booking sixdaysedinburgh@yahoo.co.uk

CORNERSTONE BOOKSHOP



During the church re-development project at St John's, the Cornerstone Bookshop has a temporary home in a custom-built Portakabin on the Upper Terrace at St. John's on the Lothian Road side - easily visible from the street. The shop building was donated by Portakabin UK and is big enough to fit all the stock and is warm and welcoming.

Opening hours:

Mon - Sat 10am - 5pm

www.cornerstonebooks.org.uk



www.earthhour.org

Many thanks to all who have contributed words or pictures to this edition of The Edge.

If you have an item of news for our Diocesan News pages or for this agenda page, please send it to editor@edinburghdiocese.org.uk

The deadline for the next issue is 20 April 2016.