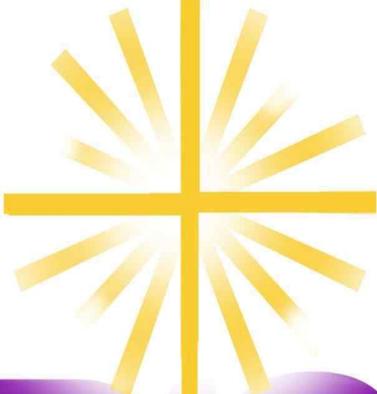




**Chrystal Chronicle  
Newsletter  
April/May 2021**



**He is  
RISEN**

**St Mary's-Greyfriars' Parish Church  
Locum Minister: Rev Douglas Irving**

**Tel 01556 610156**

**[www.stmarysgreyfriars.org.uk](http://www.stmarysgreyfriars.org.uk)**

**Scottish charity no. SC009432**

## From the Locum Minister

If we let Him, God will prepare us for the next stage and for all stages of our life's journey. The question is whether or not we will let God do so. Will we let Jesus write His story into ours, whereby we become truly History?

Through His Easter events and promises shared, Jesus prepares us for victorious life and living - and for our dying and death. In His powerful love, received of His Spirit, He would take away fear and all that terrorises, 1 John 4. 18. "Perfect love casts out fear", even our fear of dying and death. Our sure Hope is "Christ in us, our Hope of Glory!" (Colossians 1.27), Christ who is both with us and within us. St Francis of Assisi's words are to the point (CH4 147) "All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing, alleluia. All who are of tender heart, forgiving others, take your part, all you who long pain and sorrow bear, praise God and cast on him your care. O praise him, alleluia. And you most kind and gentle death, waiting to hush our fading breath, O praise Him, alleluia! You homeward lead the child of God, and Christ our Lord the way has trod, O praise Him, alleluia."

Jesus himself, in His short earthly life here of thirty three years, proved that God so prepares. During Lent, in our journeying with Him in faith, under the deepening shadow of His Cross of Calvary, Jesus lived on death row for us. But God prepared Him, Jesus who was to endure the ignominy of a criminal's death for us all. Jesus was given to see the power of God's working in this life. He saw with His own eyes God's raising from death of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5), the Widow of Nain's son brought from death to life on his funeral bier (Luke 7) and the raising of his friend Lazarus from the tomb (John 11). The last mentioned must have been particularly seminal to Jesus' thinking in the face of His own approaching cruellest death. Jesus is given demonstrative foretaste of God's power to resurrect.

I recall in my own experience an Easter Sunday in Edinburgh in my twenties. My elderly friend and Christian mentor, retired primary school head master James Reside, had died in his nineties, with a directive that his body go to medical research. As his widow was

reluctant to do so, I went to the city hospital mortuary early that Sunday morning to view his body. As I did so, I felt powerfully aware of the conviction that Jimmy's life was ongoing, yes he was dead, but Jimmy was living! This communicated itself, apparently, in a radiance I had acquired that morning, and commented upon by an elder in the congregation, as I sang in with the choir of St Cuthbert's Church at the West End of Edinburgh's Princes Street. Noticing this, the elder later asked me "What has happened to you?" It was my privilege to share with him what I had both heard and seen that morning! It was my proving in a perceptible way of the truth of Christ's Easter promises!

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit of resurrection's indwelling will lead us into all truth about Christ's truth and promises and to experience them. The Holy Spirit brings us to know the reality of God living and all that He touches as living. In this life, God prepares us for what's round the corner. He brings us to embrace His son's Easter promises and will let us share ultimately, when our time comes, in Christ's resurrection life.

In conducting a funeral the other day, I was drawn to poignant words printed on the Order of Service written by the French philosopher, Albert Camus (1913-1960), brought up a Roman Catholic, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, sadly killed at the age of 47 in a car accident in which he was a front seat passenger. The words:  
"In the midst of hate, I found there was, within me, an invincible love.  
In the midst of tears, I found there was within me, an invincible smile  
In the midst of chaos, I found there was within me, an invincible calm  
In the midst of winter, I found there was within me, an invincible summer."

To whatever or whoever Camus attributed the source of invincibility, to me his words speak of God's writing of His life's story within into mine. I see the words speak of God's Holy Spirit-borne invincible love, smile, calm and summer in winter, even in me. I hope you do so too and so live, and so one day die, in the invincible power of God in Christ proven of which we are reminded of each Easter and can live today to prove.

Your Locum Minister and friend, Douglas

## **Church Register**

### **Deaths – “I am the resurrection and the life”**

February 22: Mr R Geddes

Please let me know of any changes of address: **Marion Bennett**, 2 Wolfgill Drive Dumfries DG1 4XY. Tel: 263106

### **Church re-opening**

Following the most recent welcome announcement from the Scottish Government, we are delighted that we can re-open the church for Sunday worship on Easter Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> April. As before, we are allowed up to 50 people at the service, and anyone wishing to attend should phone Isobel Evans on 01387 263630 the previous Wednesday between 10am and 12 noon to book a place.

### **Diamond Wedding Congratulations**

Congratulations to Bill and Jean Jardine of 6 Birchwood Place who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on 22nd February. They were married in St Mary's in 1961.

### **Christian Aid**

Christian Aid Week runs from 10 - 16 May 2021. Once again this year there will no house to house collections. Information on how to donate can be found at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

## From our friends in Debrecen

The Moderator set a challenge to people to take photos of a cross during the first four weeks of Lent - "Hidden in plain sight". Our friends at Arpad Ter took part in the challenge and sent us these photos of some of their entries. They are going to mount an exhibition of their entries in the church hopefully in time for Easter. I had a long FaceTime conversation with Eva very recently. She tells me that her husband János is now Clerk to the Debrecen Presbytery. They think of us all constantly and send every blessing to all at St Mary's Greyfriars for Easter.

Liz Tanner





This was the photo Liz submitted.



## The Locum Minister and stamps

One of my interests is philately. During sometimes frenetic times in the parish ministry, and in retirement too, I have found working with stamps a stress-reliever, a marvellous diversionary activity leading me down previously untravelled roads of social history and geography and much else. Philately is an altogether fascinating activity and dipping into stamps has seen me often work, unaware of the passing of time, well into the wee small hours.

I am a member of both Dumfries Stamp and Postcard Club and Kirkcudbright Philatelic and Postcard Club which were to jointly host at the Dewar Centre in Perth this year's Association of Scottish Philatelic Society's 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress on 16/17 April 2021, cancelled for the second year running on account of the Covid pandemic. But all is not lost! Far from it! Crisis often provides opportunity! On the Association's Website (<https://www.scottishphilately.co.uk/>) there are to be viewable to coincide with the Congress dates, and for several months afterwards into the Summer, philatelic displays from philatelists across Scotland for people to view at their leisure. Members from our own Kirkcudbright Society and Dumfries Club, the latter meeting fortnightly online at the

moment, have submitted nearly 20 displays, my own three displays being (1) the Galloway Train Post Office (T.P.O.) service on the former "Paddy" line, (2) Nineteenth century postal cancellations of Kirkcudbright and (3) William Burn, the Scottish Victorian Architect who designed, among many buildings across Scotland, England and Ireland, the original Crichton Royal Institution Building here in Dumfries and Kirkcudbright Parish Church. It is hoped that this online presentation of philately might enthuse others across Scotland looking in, to produce new philatelists. Who knows, you might become a philatelist as a result of looking at the ASPS site online!

In my own stamp collection, but not being displayed this time round, is an interesting local postal item being a letter dated 12 January 1852 from John Houston, Brownrigg Farm, Dumfries to James Heron, then thought to be at a hotel in Florence, Italy. It was undelivered and returned to sender. A variety of postal marks point towards its journey to and from Italy including (1) handwritten in black in "17" seventeen pence postal rate, scored out twice (2) additional 30 (?) handwritten

postal charge (3) double circle Dumfries postal, cancellation "DUMFRIES JA 12 1852", (4) double circle Firenze (Florence) receiving mark "19 GEN 1852", along with (5) double circle Calais postmark en route "CALAIS JAN...52", still to be identified red circular mark with Crown "1852 13 JJA B" (6) printed hand stamp "Diritto Toscano £" ("Tuscan Law £") with hand-written 1. 8. 4. (7) stamped in red print "SENT BACK TO ENGLAND WITHOUT A REASON" and (8) two lined stamp, printed in red Italian tax mark "TASSA.....second line indecipherable" Enjoy!



## Something to make you smile!

Liz Tanner came across this item from the Chrystal Chronicle of 17 years ago: i.e. April 2004

### The Thoughtful Son (or a tale for Mothering Sunday)

Four brothers left home for college, and they prospered. Some years later they chatted after having dinner together. They discussed the gifts that they were able to give to their elderly mother who lived far away in another city.

The first said: "I had a big house built for Mama."

The second said: "I had a hundred thousand dollar cinema built in the house."

The third said: "I had my Mercedes dealer deliver her an SL600."

The fourth said: "Listen to this. You know how Mama loved reading the Bible and you know she can't read it any more because she can't see very well. I met this priest who told me about a parrot that can recite the whole Bible. It took 20 priests 12 years to teach him. I had to pledge to contribute \$100,000 a year for 20 years to the church but it was worth it. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse and the parrot will recite it"

The brothers were impressed.

After the holidays their mother sent out her Thank you notes. She wrote: "Milton, the house you built is so huge. I live in only one room but I have to clean the whole house. Thanks anyway."

"Michael, you gave me an expensive cinema with Dolby sound. It could hold 50 people but all my friends are dead, I've lost my hearing and I'm nearly blind. I'll never use it. Thank you for the gesture just the same."

"Marvin, I am too old to travel. I stay home, I have my groceries delivered, so I never use the Mercedes. The thought was good. Thanks."

"Dearest Melvin, you were the only son to have the good sense to give a little thought to your gift. The chicken was delicious. Thank you."

## Gardening – Spring 2021

I've been asked to say a few words about gardening – which is quite daunting at first sight at this time. However, when I look out the window and think about what I've been seeing for some time, it gives me a different perspective. My garden has a lot of Spring bulbs in it, planted at different times – so that I can just sit and wait for them to come through. Some have been planted for years, others were put in tubs in October to give me a special effect. So far, I had snowdrops from early January, followed by crocuses, miniature irises and daffodils – being followed now by other crocuses, standard daffodils and tulips.

Shrubs, bushes and fruit trees are now showing buds for leaf or flower. In all of this there are birds, bees and insects.

So, I have a natural Spring garden to look out on and enjoy – regardless of the man-made restrictions of lock down. There is a “feel good” factor in having all this natural beauty on my doorstep. With this comes the realization that there is significant certainty and hope that these natural conditions will progress as normal and we'll have the growing season of summer and the ripening one of autumn.

This is where our restrictions cast their shadow. The gardens will continue to “do their thing” and blossom. Our problem is, “How do we manage it?”. Access to Garden Centres is still some way off. We have to believe that growers and owners have had the faith and vision to prepare seedlings and plants in anticipation of the demand they will encounter from the public. We may find that they have had to limit their scope and exposure. The end result is that our garden this year may be more thought out and managed according to what we can access.

I hope we have a better summer than we are presently fearing. Make the most of what you are able to achieve. Whatever you plan and do, realise that it is not just for yourself. You're doing it for your neighbours and friends and everyone who visits or passes your garden.

Stay safe. God bless,  
Bill Holland

## **For reflection**

**Creator God**

**Humbly we ask you to hear our prayer**

**Receive our thanks to you for your great glory and goodness**

**Inspire us by your holy word**

**Send down your love divine**

**Thank you for all your mercies**

**Impart on us your healing grace**

**Support us in our times of worry and sadness**

**Risen Lord, we ask your forgiveness for our sins**

**Instil in us the desire and knowledge to do your will**

**Spring is here and we thank you for bringing us through the dark days of winter**

**Encourage us to think of others before ourselves as well as to listen to you for your guidance**

**Now and forever - Amen**

## **Next magazine**

The deadline for our June/July issue is **Sunday May 23** for items through the church – and 3pm that day for those sent direct. Many thanks as always.

**Editor:** David Bennett

**Write:** 2 Wolfgill Drive, Dumfries DG1 4XY

**Call:** 263106

**Email:** [magazine@stmarysgreyfriars.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stmarysgreyfriars.org.uk)

## **Useful contacts**

### **Minister**

Rev Douglas Irving: 01556 610156

### **Session Clerk**

Anne Mackie: 266186

### **Treasurer, Gift Aid and freewill offering envelopes**

Rod Williamson: 251876