

CHURCH NEWS — OCTOBER 2021

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Member of the Anglican Communion

ELIE:

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC0 05954

Vestry Contact: Mrs Jan Stacey

Tel: 01333 329 804



PITTENWEEM:

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC0 10982

Vestry Contact: Mrs Janis Irvine

Tel: 01333 311 868



PRIEST-IN-CHARGE: THE REVD STEPHEN BUTLER

Tel: 01333 633091

sb.eastneukepiscopal@gmail.com

COMBINED CHURCH WEBSITE: www.eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk

SUNDAY SERVICES – HOLY COMMUNION

ST MICHAEL'S - 9.45AM.

ST JOHN'S - 11.30AM

Sunday Worship is also currently live-streamed from St John's -

For details please contact St. John's Secretary or visit

www.eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk

SEC EUCHARIST is available each Sunday at 11am

www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship

Paying it forward by Revd Steve Butler

I recently had occasion to read a letter written by Benjamin Franklin. He was, it seems, a remarkable man. As well as being a Founding Father of the United States of America, Franklin was, in alphabetical order, an activist, author, businessman, diplomat, humourist, inventor, musician, politician, printer and scientist. He was also, judging by the letter written to Benjamin Webb in 1784, an early proponent of a concept in which debtors are encouraged to repay a loan not to the original lender, but rather to others of a similar need along with similar instructions for repayment, thus creating a chain of goodwill that spreads through society.

“I received yours of the 15th instant. The account it gives of your situation grieves me. I send you herewith a bill for ten Louis D’ors. I do not pretend to give such a sum; I only lend it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business, that will in time enable you to pay all your debts. In that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with another opportunity. I hope it may thus go thro’ many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford much in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning and make the most of a little.”

This is, apparently, a practice known as “paying it forward”. Perhaps you have personal experience of it. It occurs to me that apart from its obvious application in the realm of personal encounter, it might be a useful concept as we try to nurture motivation for environmental change on the organisational (like a church), national and international level. In essence, I mean that thinking of costly investment in terms of the common good, and with a long-term view – far outweighs the satisfaction of our own needs and preferences.

Inevitably this seems to me a wholly ‘gospel’ perspective. Jesus never held back in his depictions of the perpetual call to sacrificial service – nor of the costliness of following in his ‘way’. You might have heard Radio 4’s recent series of programmes entitled ‘The Kindness Test’ - looking at the place of kindness in today’s world, asking what it really means, what happens in our brains when we act kindly and whether there can ever be a role for it in the cut-throat worlds of business and politics. It’s tempting to regard this as just another unveiling of ‘the blindingly obvious’. And yet, it remains true that we are all susceptible to failing the kindness test, and need to encourage one another to be constant in our generosity of spirit. I’m often struck by how, in the canon of the epistles to the early church communities, amid all of the lofty Christological debate, the advice constantly returns to the realm of personal conduct, and of outdoing one another in loving kindness. T’was ever thus, it seems, and of no less importance now if we would hope to be Christ’s people.

With grace and peace to you, as ever

Steve

Some thoughts from Max Taylor

Dearly beloved brethren, the scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness;

As a frequent listener to Choral Evensong broadcast by Radio 3, I (and of course all the listeners) often hear the Priest begin the service with the above words from the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed, sometimes I feel quite cross if the service doesn’t include that preface. To me it properly sets the scene for the General Confession that follows, but I suspect for many of us it also touches on an almost visceral sense of the continuity of traditions of the Anglican Church grounded in the Bible, expressed through the words of Thomas Cranmer. Personally, it also evokes some pleasant nostalgic echoes of the past – particularly years of attending Choral Evensong (and associated choir practices) when all our children at different times sang in the Cathedral choir.

It also, of course, by drawing attention to the significance of Scripture, expresses in Cranmer's beautiful English one core element of Anglican belief. We can see this in a more formal sense in Article VI of the 39 Articles. '*HOLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church*'. It isn't perhaps a very fashionable thing to draw attention to the 39 Articles, but we (ie. Anglicans) still take them as authoritative. In referring to the 39 Articles, Packer and Beckwith note '*...It is a prime obligation for Anglicans to take full account of the expository formulations to which our Church has bound itself; and to ignore them, as if we were certain that the Spirit of God had no hand in them, is no more warrantable than to treat them as divinely inspired and infallible*'¹.

But do we as Anglicans necessarily 'believe' all that we read in Scripture, do we really feel the need to follow every Biblical injunction? After all in Article VII it says '*no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral*', although Article VII conveniently absolves us from following some onerous injunctions which I take to be Jewish ritual laws '*Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men..*'

I hasten to add that this is not meant to be a theological account of the role of scripture in contemporary life, nor an exhortation to reform, change or indeed do anything different! But it is interesting to reflect on how we accommodate to what sometimes are arguably quite strict injunctions. As I understand it, the 39 Articles are not necessarily universally regarded in the contemporary Anglican community as the source of authority. We generally now tend to find 'authority' in a sense of consensus and developing that notion Crouse ² suggests '*the authority of the Church is a derivative authority, it is not absolute in itself, but always relative to its source, and reformable in relation to that source...*' Perhaps that means we pick and choose what suits us; or maybe more accurately it means we adjust ideas written 2,000 years ago to work in our scientific world where conceptual complexity characterises our understanding of the physical world. Not all Christian communities are so relaxed about authority, of course, nor are non-Christian communities. But in the end we muddle through, trying to make sense of things.

I've had to think a little bit about this recently in an academic journal issue I edited on 'Terrorism and Ethics', and particularly in a podcast interview I did with one of the authors in the issue, who wrote about the policy of 'Targeted Killings'. There is a clear injunction in the Bible that 'Thou shall not kill'; it is of course one of the 10 commandments in the Torah, and similar injunctions can be found in the Quran. Yet we seem to be good at ignoring or attenuating that injunction as expediency requires, particularly in the context of war. There is, and has been of course, an enormous debate about this, which extends into philosophy, theology, criminology, social policy..... and I'm not going to even try to summarise it here. What has caught my attention, however, is we have now invented a new kind of killing euphemistically referred to as collateral damage – people damaged (and sometimes killed), as part of a deliberate targeted attack, who are incidental and not necessarily involved. They may be bystanders, people who live in a house that a target lives in, or just a mistake, but the quality they all share is that they are not in any accepted sense combatants. For example, the US is estimated to have launched some 13,000 targeted air strikes (drones, missiles, and aircraft) in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2020; non-combatant deaths as a result of these strikes are thought to be around 150

¹ J.I. Packer and R. T. Beckwith, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today* (Oxford: Latimer House, 1984), pp. 51-52.

² R. Crouse *Anglican Spirituality and the Book of Common Prayer* Atlantic Theological Conference 2021, St Peter Publications, Charlottetown, Canada

children, and some 7-800 adults (numbers are notoriously difficult to accurately assess, and these may well be underestimates). These attacks are thought to have killed in all between 8-10,000 people.

This is not a new phenomenon. When combatants and just ordinary people have weapons (swords, guns or drones) they use them for good or ill, and violence is rarely constrained. As the medieval song reminds us, beware the armed man (L'homme, L'homme, l'homme armée, L'homme armée, L'homme armée doibt on doubter, doibt en doubter....). It's all a bit depressing!! Do we see this as part of our nature? The scriptures don't reassure us on that, but they do offer a way forward. Maybe that's what we hang onto – and in the words of the final prayer at Evensong '*Lighten our darkness we beseech thee O Lord...*'

Reflections of a Derbyshire Vicar

by Revd Peter Davey

It has been a funny old time since Morven and I moved here, arriving as we did just in time for the Covid restrictions to kick in. But we are delighted to have come, we love the East Neuk and we already feel very settled here.

"Do something for the magazine", I was asked. "What I replied?" "Why not write about what it's like to be a vicar in Derbyshire?". That took me back to the sort of essay title that you used to get in school that started "*Compare and Contrast...*".

I imagine that being a Vicar in Derbyshire is like being a rector in Scotland in that it depends more than anything on the place where you find yourself. So "comparing" the East Neuk with Cotmanhay, lots of things are the same – certainly in headline terms. I took services, buried the dead, married the willing, baptised the uncomplaining (though half of the baptisms I took were not of babes in arms, and sometimes parents were baptised at the same time as their children). I visited the sick – I was chaplain at the local community hospital for 10 years – worked with the schools and took assemblies, chatted to the MP and councillors, listened to people's problems, offering prayer, advice and practical support where possible. I encouraged the lunch club, mother and toddler group, worked with Scouting and Guiding, blessed houses. I encouraged, supported and was, in turn, encouraged and supported by members of the church community because, at heart, being the church is a participative undertaking where everyone has a role to play. Oh, and I ran the youth group, which was one of the highlights of my week, chatting to young people about God and life, many of whom had a very patchy understanding of what the Christian faith was all about. I count it as a success that we kept many of the children we did have till they left for work or university.

By way of "contrast", the background against which all this took place was very different to here. When people think of Derbyshire, they often think of the majestic Peaks and the beautiful Dales, of Chatsworth House and Hardwick Hall. Where I ministered was not like that. The Parish of Cotmanhay was about 15,000 people in a conurbation of about 40,000 and was very mixed – the parish spanned the very poorest and some of the not so poor parts of the county. As an indication of the social breadth, when I arrived there was a 14-year difference in life expectancy between the older housing to the east and the newer, more affluent, housing to the west of the parish. The core of the parish was an old mining community and not in the least picturesque although there was a country park on the edge of the parish which was a welcome addition. In the poorer areas you had the feeling that people were really trying to do their best but didn't always know how to begin; there was a lack of hope and a significant amount of third generation unemployment with the problems that brings. On the other hand, there was a sense of community that you don't often find in urban settings.

The church building was new – the old one having fallen down a mine shaft (more technically, "succumbed to mining subsidence") in the 1980s, and it was good to have a modern flexible worship space. We tried to vary the services to make them more meaningful to those who weren't regular and more engaging to those who were – 'alternative worship', communion in the round, more informal liturgy. And every so often we'd clear the floor space so that mother and toddler group could have a party in church, finishing with a short act of worship.

The challenges that churches face are similar, especially aging congregations, looking after the buildings, keeping on top of changing regulations, and engaging with younger people, so one takes the opportunities one can. With

all that is going on it is sometime hard to see the wood for the trees and it is easy to lose sight that it is really about the relationship between God and the people he created. So I tried to take to heart the oath that you take when you become a priest which reminds us that the church holds to “...the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation”. God gives us a message of hope in Jesus that needed proclaiming afresh to the people of Cotmanhay and, I am certain, needs proclaiming to the people of the East Neuk too. May we take the opportunities that God gives us.

Grace and Peace

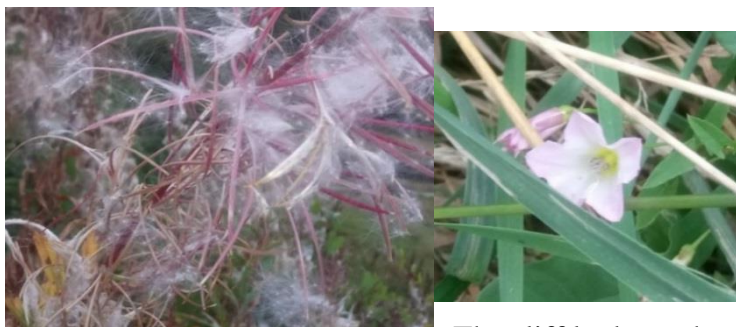
Peter

The season of mellow fruitfulness by Richard Ely

The season of mellow fruitfulness is a little variable this season. Apple trees seem to be carrying only a few fruits albeit that they are a little larger than normal. The hips on the rose hedge to West Braes look like rubies collected by pirates and thrown up in the air to land in clusters. The late evening light making them shine. Autumn crocuses seem more strongly coloured and more plentiful than normal. – their fresh new blooms in contrast to most plants at this time of year.



A few of the common plants are trying for a second show juxtaposing the beautiful seed heads. Rosebay willow herb has grown very tall this year and the soft, down like seed coverings mean that Titmice may make their nests a bit more luxurious



if the winter gales spare any. Like a well-designed planting scheme the pink and white striped field bindweed (to the right) creeps about at the base of the willow herb.

The cliff looks as though a moth-eaten green curtain is allowing chinks of light through. Large bindweed puts on an impressive display. Occasionally there is a single Alexander’s blooming interspersed with sculptural seed heads. The teasels - so formal as they stand to attention contrast well with this. Although most probably a garden escape, rather than a blackberry that is definitely a raspberry.



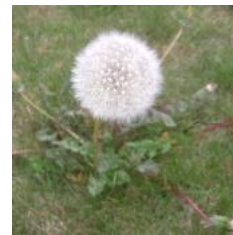
Mayweed (below left) adorns the shore and enjoys the spotlight. A few weeks back the corn chamomile provided a wonderful perfume on the road just outside Upper Largo.



Common scurvy grass (below) is proudly blooming with sow thistle stragglers.



Ending on a cheesy note - the clock is ticking!



Diocesan Pilgrimage – 10th September 2021 by Elizabeth Riches

A keen group of folk gathered near the Folk Museum in Ceres. It was obvious who we all were by our walking boots and the occasional scallop shell tied on the back of rucksacks. This made it easy to join together and chat with complete strangers. Or, as Bishop Ian said, we were not strangers but pilgrims together.

Lots of careful organisation had taken place which reassured us as we set off over hills, along farm tracks and on some sections of fairly quiet roads from Ceres to St Andrews on part of the Fife Pilgrim Way! After a thoughtful prayer we set off.

Passing newly harvested fields it was easy to think of how blessed we are in this area – we were surrounded by a calm and peace and quiet. The woods we walked through were just starting to gain their autumnal colours – especially the silver birches with golden leaves falling already. Prayers about God's creation were particularly apt.



(photo: Bishop Ian greeting the pilgrims)

After we had climbed up to Kinninmonth Hill we were asked to imagine how the country around would have looked four to five hundred years ago. We had to think what damage has been done to creation with developments in farming and what species may have disappeared as a result. Our current carbon footprint made a sobering contrast to what it might have been so many years ago.

The lunch stop under Drumcarrow Hill was welcome and it gave a chance to think of the murder of Archbishop Sharp at Magus Muir in 1679. Archbishop Sharp was regarded as the single most important man in Scotland at this time. But he was hated by the Covenanters (who shot and stabbed him to death) as he was seen as an agent for English Episcopacy that was imposing 'the hated bishops'. Plenty of contrasts for us to think about here!

As we came out of the woods near the Duke's Golf Course we were able to imagine the reactions of earlier pilgrims who would have seen the immense size of the cathedral for the first time. We were joined by others at Craigton Park and at Hallow Hill bringing our numbers up to 50 or more. The last stretch into St Andrews along the Lade Braes was an easy conclusion to the pilgrimage that took us first to St Andrews Church, where we were joined by a few more pilgrims.



After a brief service we all walked on to All Saints Church where we were welcomed with delicious cakes, teas and coffees in the church hall. This gave us a chance to relax and chat before Bishop Ian led us into the church for sung Evensong which was a real treat.

The pilgrimage ended with us being bussed back to our cars in Ceres, having made friends with fellow pilgrims from St Andrews, Stirling, Forfar, Glenrothes, Lochgelly, Leven, Tayport and Newport, carrying our token pilgrim badge of the Fife Pilgrim Way. We were asked to imagine what might the badge that represented our own pilgrim journey look like. That will take some time to be certain.



Photos by Elizabeth Riches and Pernille Smout

Harvest Supper.

Members of both St John's and St Michael's are warmly invited to a Harvest Supper at the lower Dreel Hall in Anstruther at 5.30 for 6pm on Monday 4th October. The evening will consist of a fish supper, with dessert, followed by some informal entertainment. The cost is once again set at £7.50 and the likely finish is about 8pm.

Please let Janet Bulloch know as soon as possible if you would like to come along by emailing her at janet.bulloch@btinternet.com or by phoning 01333 310872. Money will be collected on (or by) 3rd October for ordering the number of fish suppers required.

We are pleased to welcome Tony Lodge as a new editor for the November issue. Any contributions, long or short, should be sent to him at ra.lodge@btinternet.com by 15th of the month to be included.