

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Member of the Anglican Communion

ELIE:

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC005954

Vestry Contact: Fiona Thomson

sec.stm@eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk



PITTENWEEM:

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC010982

Vestry Contact: David Andrews

Tel: 01333 311136

sec.stj@eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk



For enquiries or pastoral care please contact
admin@eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk

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

SUNDAY SERVICES – HOLY COMMUNION

ST MICHAEL'S - 9.45AM.

ST JOHN'S - 11.30AM

Revd Elaine Ryder, Interim Pastor for the East Neuk Scottish Episcopal Churches

introduces herself . . .



First, I must admit to being English! Brought up in Nottinghamshire, studied at Liverpool and Hull, moved to Sheffield, then lived in Northumberland for 38 years – no Scottish connections (apart from our daughter who studied at Edinburgh and stayed). In my working life I was first a teacher, then an administrator. I loved best my time as Institute Manager for a research institute in Northumbria University. In our church life, Peter and I have an eclectic history, worshipping at a Church of England church in Sheffield, then a Baptist Church, and an independent fellowship, before returning to our Church of England Parish Church. It was only after taking early retirement that I was called into ministry – it's called a 'late vocation'! When I was ordained, we moved to Otterburn where I was Curate for North Tyne and Redesdale, and latterly for Hexham Abbey. However, Peter was unwell during the latter part of this period, so I was not able to commit to another post in the Diocese of Newcastle. Meanwhile, our daughter and son-in-law had moved out of Edinburgh to Dunfermline and our grandson was born.

So we chose retirement, and a home in Burntisland, to be near to them. Having settled quickly into St Serf's church in Burntisland, and Peter's health being stable, I followed up taking Permission to Officiate in the Scottish Episcopal Church. And that is how I came to be offered the role of Interim Pastor for the East Neuk. Travelling over from Burntisland for 2/3 Sundays per month, and some midweek meetings, my role is to be the 'anchor' person, allowing the two churches to progress and serve their communities whilst there is no long term priest.

Thank you to the two congregations for welcoming me – it is a privilege to be able to worship with you, and I look forward hugely to our Christmas celebrations!

I am available via e-mail at revelaine212@gmail.com or by text on 07977101742.

MUSIC AS A HIGHWAY TO PEACE - Janis Irvine

Many will know of the West Eastern Divan Orchestra which was formed in 1999 jointly by Daniel Barenboim and the Palestinian literary scholar, Edward W. Said. Their aim was to create a workshop for young musicians to promote coexistence and intercultural dialogue. The orchestra was named after Goethe's collection of poems 'West-Eastern Divan', which was a central work for the development of the concept of world culture. An equal number of Israeli and Arab musicians form the base of the ensemble, together with members from Turkey, Iran and Spain. The Orchestra's motto is "Equal in Music".

However, what many may not know is that Barenboim and Said also founded the Barenboim-Said Center for Music (BSCFM) in Ramallah, Palestine in 2003. The founders believed that music enhances human life and, through the creation of the BSCFM, they aimed to make classical music education accessible to Palestinian children and young adults, irrespective of their social or economic background, and today offers the highest level of education. The foundation has an eight-year curriculum that enables students to continue classical music studies at a higher level.

My son, Robin, is a musician. He was a chorister at Hexham Abbey from the age of nine to nineteen, leading to his being a Bishop's Chorister and an entrant for Choirboy of the Year. He went on to study music at Edinburgh University, during which time he sang with the choir of St. Mary's Cathedral, and thereafter did a Masters in Music at Trinity College of Music in Greenwich. During his time in London, he was a member of several choirs and sang with choirs in a number of places across the world, notably in a number of venues in Palestine (Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin and Ramallah). At the end of that particular 3-week tour, the choir members were asked if any wished to remain for an extra week and work in one of the refugee camps. He accepted.

After a year back in London, Robin returned to Palestine to work for Al Kamandjati Music Institution which was started by a Refugee Camp student who studied in France where he gained backing to form the Al

Kamandjati after he had completed his studies. Having worked there from 2011 to 2015, and with additional work in Hebron and Bethlehem with the Amwaj Choir, in December, 2015 Robin became Music Theory and Choir teacher at the Barenboim-Said Center for Music in Ramallah.

Said and Barenboim had been invited by the Regional Government of Andalucia to Sevilla in 2002 to conduct a musical workshop. Two years later the Fundacion Barenboim-Said was established in Andalucia, the foundation being finalized a few months after the death of Said in 2003. Its purpose was to fund the music education programmes envisioned and instituted by Barenboim and Said. The Regional Government of Andalucia continues to support and fund the BSCFM music education programmes in Palestine.

The Foundation partnered with the National Conservatory (NC) in Ramallah from 2003-5 later establishing its own Center with the resources from the NC being shifted to the BSCFM. It contributed in the reconstruction of the Qattan Music School in Gaza after it was heavily destroyed by an Israeli assault in 2008-9

Coming forward to the happenings of these last few tragic weeks in Israel and Palestine, a statement, dated 10th October, has been issued by Daniel Barenboim as follows:

I have followed the events of the weekend with horror and the utmost worry as I see the situation in Israel/Palestine worsening to unimaginable depths. Hamas' attack on the Israeli civilian population is an outrageous crime which I condemn fiercely. The death of so many in southern Israel and Gaza is a tragedy that will loom for a long time to come. The extent of this human tragedy is not only in lives lost but also hostages taken, homes destroyed and communities devastated. An Israeli siege on Gaza constitutes a policy of collective punishment, which is a violation of human rights.

Edward Said and I always believed that the only path to peace between Israel and Palestine is a path based on humanism, justice, equality and an end to the occupation rather than military action, and I find myself today grounded in this belief more strongly than ever. In these trying times and with these words I stand in solidarity with all victims and their families.

We can but hope and pray that music will continue to rise above the current tragedy unfolding in this tortured area and that it will continue to help, in the words of Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, 'to promote coexistence and intercultural dialogue' as well as bring comfort and peace to its troubled occupants.

Acknowledgement: Some content in this article has been garnered from the official web site of the Barenboim-Said Centre for Music and from the West-Eastern Divan web site.

Postscript — the Israel and Palestine situation can be quite difficult to understand, perhaps particularly about Palestine. Is it a country? Where is it? Where does it fit in in the context of Israel? For a better understanding you may wish to read the book detailed below. A work of non-fiction and first published seventeen years ago in 2006, it nevertheless tells a current story and leads the reader through the happenings of four decades as experienced by two people, an Israeli and an Arab, and tracks their friendship against a background of ongoing conflict. It is an easily-digested book I would recommend.

‘THE LEMON TREE’ by Sandy Tolan

Published by Random House, ISBN 978-0-552-15514-4, £9.99

ANDREW FORMAN (c. 1465—1521) - David Ditchburn



When entering St John's, look up to your left and you will see, displayed in stone, the arms of Andrew Forman. Modern signage below the impressive carving explains that, in the words of the nineteenth-century historian Andrew Lang, Forman was 'the Wolsey of Scotland'—suggesting similarities with the leading churchman in Henry VIII's England. The plaque lists some of Forman's appointments: Archbishop of St Andrews and Commendator of Pittenweem (1514–22), and Archbishop of Bourges in France and Bishop of Moray (1501–14). The dating is not quite accurate – and the list constitutes no more than the edited highlights of an impressive clerical career. Moreover, the panel negates to mention that Andrew Forman was the most accomplished Scottish diplomat of his age.

Forman's father was a minor Berwickshire landlord. His mother was Janet Blackadder, a sister of Robert, bishop, and then the first archbishop, of Glasgow. After completing study at St Andrews in 1483, Andrew's earliest known patron was Archibald Douglas, fifth earl of Angus, whose principal base was at Tantallon in East Lothian. Both Blackadder and Douglas had supported the putsch which brought James IV (1488—1513) to the throne and it was probably these connections which paved the way to Forman's favour at court. There he indulged the king's gambling habits, playing cards (and also tennis) with James. By 1490 Forman was acting as the king's representative in Rome, where he won considerable papal favour. In 1491 he became a papal prothonotary and then a count and knight of the Lateran palace (the pope's episcopal seat), with power to create notaries, and to legitimise bastards of incest or fornication so that they may inherit parental property, enter ecclesiastical orders or obtain benefices—privileges rarely within the remit of Scotland's bishops, but now granted to a still very young man. Forman, it would seem, had friends in high papal places. Chief among them was probably the French cardinal Jean Balue (c. 1421–91), whose accumulation of ecclesiastical offices and diplomatic acumen on behalf of the French kings Louis XI and Charles VIII suggests that he was something of a role model for the young Andrew.

Several big diplomatic tasks followed. Forman looked after Perkin Warbeck, the pretender to the English throne, who arrived in Scotland to seek support in 1495. But James's Anglophobia was gradually giving way to cautious engagement with Henry VII. In 1502 Forman, together with his Uncle Robert, negotiated the Treaty of Perpetual Peace, by which it was agreed that James would marry Henry's daughter, Margaret Tudor. This was a major triumph – numerous previous attempts to conclude an Anglo-Scottish matrimonial alliance had failed - and success now firmly linked Forman with the still widely unpopular policy of *rapprochement* with England. When Cardinal Wolsey visited Scotland in 1508 he reported that the only anglophile voices to be heard belonged to Margaret Tudor and Andrew Forman.

In 1510 Forman began a series of protracted visits to European courts, ostensibly promoting a new crusade to be led by James, but in reality seeking to reconcile the pope and the French king, whose quarrels had left the Scots uneasy: despite the treaty of 1502 they still looked for diplomatic protection against England to the continent. Despite almost three years abroad, Forman's efforts failed. It was, however, fitting, and quite normal, for medieval churchmen to act as peacebrokers. And it was far from unusual that such service brought reward. Henry VII's gratitude was evident in 1501 when Forman acquired the parish of Cottingham, near Hull; and it was on Louis XII's recommendation that Forman was appointed archbishop of Bourges in 1513. Forman was by then already bishop of Moray, a post he was allowed to keep despite his French elevation. In 1515 he was translated to St Andrews—though not without difficulty as four other Scottish candidates and the pope's nephew also had their eyes on the post. The price of Scottish promotion was resignation of the French archbishopric to his papal rival.

Forman's accumulation of church positions did not end there. He held a string of abbeys *in commendam* – meaning that he was head of the monastery but not a professed monk. His tally of abbeys included Dryburgh and Dunfermline, and more briefly Culross and Arbroath; he also had his eyes on Kelso. Kelso, Dunfermline

and Arbroath were the three richest monasteries in early sixteenth-century Scotland. Pittenweem too joined Forman's monastic portfolio, acquired around 1495 and held until transferred to his brother in 1516. It is generally assumed that Andrew held Pittenweem too *in commendam*, but a papal petition of 1500 stated that he was 'expressly professed of the [Augustinian] order' – the only explicit indication that Forman was, or perhaps became, a canon regular. But he certainly wasn't encloistered. His illegitimate daughter was not hidden away and married locally.

Andrew Forman was a worldly, politically engaged careerist, and normally absent from his many posts. To the poet Gavin Douglas, he was 'evil minded'. Another contemporary claimed that Forman was 'not a good scholar and had not good Latin'—and that he couldn't even say grace correctly. He was even accused of necromancy. Much criticism came from jealous political and ecclesiastical rivals—and Forman's association with a policy of *rapprochement* with England did him little good (either with contemporaries or with modern historians) in the aftermath of the disastrous battle of Flodden (1513), at which James and most of his leading noblemen were slaughtered.

Yet, despite his blatant personal nepotism, pluralism and worldliness, there are signs that Forman sought to combat similar abuse in others when he became archbishop of St Andrews. His association with Pittenweem priory brought wealth and nepotistic opportunities but he also helped to revive regular life in an almost moribund priory. Forman's personal failings were not unique; indeed, they were widely tolerated by late medieval society. So, while Reformation was just around the corner, it would be a mistake to assume that it was the career and reputation of men like Andrew Forman that brought it about.

A CHAT WITH AI - Ethel Quayle

In March 2023 OpenAI (a technology company based in the US) released an AI system that quickly sparked speculation about Artificial Intelligence (AI) being a 'threat to humanity' due to the development of systems with abilities exceeding human capacity. The AI in question is similar to a much grander version of the 'predictive text' that many of us have on our telephones. It is trained on trillions of words (text) in order to be able to predict the next word in a sequence of words and the more it is 'trained' the better it becomes to be able to answer questions and provide potential solutions to complex problems. Over the last two years AI's capabilities have evolved significantly, driven by advances in machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics. However, while AI systems can offer amazing medical and social opportunities, they can also perpetuate biases present in the data used to train them, leading to discriminatory outcomes which can exacerbate societal inequalities and perpetuate discrimination. Isaac Asimov's science fiction, particularly his exploration of robotics and artificial intelligence, remains highly relevant and influential in the context of new advances in AI. Asimov is famous for his development of the "Three Laws of Robotics," which he introduced in his short story "Runaround" (1942). The Three Laws are as follows:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics have had a significant impact on both popular culture and discussions surrounding the ethical development and deployment of AI. While these laws were fictional creations designed to explore potential consequences of advanced AI, they have sparked serious conversations about the necessity of implementing ethical guidelines for AI in real-world applications. Asimov's work still has relevance today but the panicky call for legislation to control the use of AI would suggest that the horse has already bolted: we should have been thinking about this before the development of OpenAI, not after it. This set me thinking about what AI might come up with if asked about the challenges posed by AI to religions and

Christianity in particular. The following represents a summary of my ongoing exchange with AI about this topic. I think it becomes apparent that many of these challenges are not explicitly theological, although questions around ethics and moral agency are clearly relevant. Christians might debate whether AI can be held morally responsible for its actions, or whether ultimate responsibility still lies with human creators. This connects with the larger theological discussion of free will and determinism. In addition, as AI becomes more integrated into society, some Christians may advocate for the ethical treatment of AI systems and the moral duty to treat AI with respect and dignity, even if they lack consciousness and emotions. Reading the novel 'Klara and the Sun' captures in fiction what this might mean and whether it is always appropriate to privilege the rights of humans over non-sentient entities.

Inevitably my exchange or 'conversation' with AI reflects ongoing debate and this is seen in the way it determines that Christians will need to address issues such as the potential misuse of AI, privacy concerns, job displacement, and autonomous decision-making which raise questions about human dignity, responsibility, and justice. There may also be theological implications such as the notion of human uniqueness and the *imago Dei* (the belief that humans are created in the image of God). What does this mean when we are confronted with the development of AI that can mimic human intelligence and behaviour? With the rise of AI-powered virtual assistants and social robots, individuals may develop emotional connections with non-human entities. For example, there is evidence of positive outcomes on well-being of socially assistive robots in older adults with dementia. We need to consider how these technological developments influence our understanding of human-to-human relationships, compassion, and the importance of genuine connection. As AI advances, questions may arise about how AI should be integrated into the interpretation of religious texts. For example, should AI be used to analyse and interpret scripture, and if so, what role does human understanding and discernment play? If AI becomes highly advanced and autonomous, Christians may need to consider how this relates to their understanding of God's authority, human limitations, and the role of technology in God's plan.

I will give the final say to AI, "It is important to note that these challenges are not insurmountable, and Christians have the opportunity to engage with AI in ways that align with their beliefs and values. Exploring these challenges can lead to a deeper understanding of both the potential benefits and the ethical and theological considerations associated with AI".

FANATICS, ENTHUSIASTS AND RELIGION - Max Taylor

*He is a perfon of a more exercifed faith than underftanding; one governed
by Infstinct, not Intellect... Counfel by words without knowledge.*

(The Character of a Fanatic, *By A Perfon of Quality*. Printed in London, 1675).

We live in a world of extremes. Extremes of climate, for example, are very much in the news – wild fires in Rhodes and Canada, extreme temperatures in southern Europe and the US. Climate change is no doubt the cause of these extreme situations, and we can describe physical causes that lie behind this. But other forms of extreme also appear to characterise our world that don't have such a convincing physical cause – in particular, extreme violence in human behaviour. These are in some circumstances related, of course – 'Just Stop Oil', for example, is a modest form of extreme behaviour, prompted by the climate emergency. But other forms of extremely violent behaviour have their origins in social and, particularly, in religious conviction.

We often refer to troubling extreme behaviour as 'fanatical', and the quotation above by 'A *Perfon of Quality*' nicely expresses some of the qualities we associate with the fanatic. From our perspective the author's emphasis on 'faith' rather than 'understanding' seems to locate the concept potentially within a religious framework.

Where does the term *fanatic* come from? The *Oxford English Dictionary* records its first attestation in English in 1647. The book from which the quotation is drawn is dated 1675, and, presumably, the term was in use then at least amongst educated society. It has been suggested that the term *fanatic* (and the related term *enthusiast*) entered the English language during the Enlightenment period in the 17th and 18th century, which

is around the time this '*Perfon of Quality*' published his work. It has been noted that, in that same period, *enthusiasm* (in Greek = 'possession by a god', 'supernatural inspiration') was often contrasted positively with *fanaticism* (a term of negative connotations), though both reflected closely related concepts related to the Enlightenment sense of reason and passion. The distinction in our own use of these words (*enthusiast* and *fanatic*) is important, because it illustrates how our perception of extreme behaviour is personal rather than objective.

The etymology of the word *fanatic* seems to be much more ancient than the mid-17th century however, and appears to lie in the Latin *fanum*, 'a temple or holy place'; there is reference to the priests and those attached to temples as *fanatici*. From that starting-point, the terms *fanatic* and *fanaticism* (and the core concepts underlying the term) have gone through what has been described as three distinct modes – (i) an ancient understanding of cultic practice, (ii) early-modern Christian usage as 'mistaken religious belief', and what we might refer to now as 'social and political fanaticism' emerging during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and extending to modern times.

Both religious enthusiasts and fanatics are individuals who are deeply passionate about their religious beliefs and practices. In expressing religious devotion, the committed religious persons can take their beliefs to extreme levels, leading to problematic or harmful behaviours, and at this point we may well feel it appropriate to apply the label of 'fanatic'. They may display intolerance towards other faiths, reject alternative viewpoints, and attempt to impose their beliefs on others. Fanaticism can manifest in various ways, such as religious extremism, acts of violence, or the rejection of scientific evidence in favour of religious doctrine. In the modern world we can see this very clearly in some of the excesses of Islamic terrorism, and in the religiously determined societal practices of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

As noted earlier, in a religious context whilst the terms *enthusiast* and *fanatic* may have different connotations, they both describe individuals who exhibit intense devotion and commitment to their religious faith. For many of us, the critical issue seems to be one of divergence from moderation (a very Anglican concept!) which is expressed through behaviour affecting others. However, we must stress that religious enthusiasts or those who are deeply committed to their faith are not necessarily fanatics. Many people find great solace, meaning, and purpose in their religious beliefs and engage in practices that are personally meaningful to them without imposing their views on others or engaging in extreme behaviours – the critical quality attributable to the fanatic.

There is no formal or widely accepted Christian theological justification for religious fanaticism. Fanaticism, which involves extreme and intolerant zeal in one's religious beliefs, is not a part of the core teachings of Christianity which like many other religions, emphasizes values such as love, compassion, forgiveness, and humility. The teachings of Christ focus on loving one's neighbour, showing kindness to others, and promoting peace and understanding. It is essential to differentiate between the actions of a few individuals or groups and the teachings of the Christian faith as a whole. Fanaticism often arises from misinterpretation, selective reading, or distortion of religious texts, and it is not condoned or supported by mainstream Christian theology. But whilst respecting differences of perspective and interpretation, respect for diversity cannot condone violence or harm to others.

Open church - David Andrews

It's 18 months since we started opening St John's every day and, in that time, over 300 people have had their names in the visitor book. It seems reasonable to assume there have been a lot more – local people especially and returners are less likely to make any comment.

They are from all over the world – the entries include not just Skye but Alaska and Quebec. There have also been prayer requests. We have been rewarded with many appreciative comments, many of the 'how good to see a church building open' and 'what a beautiful, peaceful place' variety. Comments have also marked particular occasions – a bad fire in the town and Queen Elizabeth's death. Apart from having to open and close the building each day (thanks to Jane and Graham Forbes), we can't see any problems and it is an opportunity to offer a quiet space to all who pass by. We don't regularly staff the church, but if one of us is in the building we have often been able to have a conversation with visitors. We did get a grant from the Scottish Episcopal Church for CCTV. Fife Council erected two road signs labelled 'Historic churches' pointing to ourselves and the adjacent kirk.

Perhaps there is more that we can do such as having prayer sheets and a prayer tree for people to use. We would have liked to have candles for people to light, but our insurers say that should only happen when the church is staffed.

We often feel that a small and largely elderly congregation isn't able to do much for its community or for visitors, but this simple step shows that to be false.

Wouldn't it be good to have a network of churches that are able to open every day and perhaps a trail around the area?

Christmas Services

Wednesday 20 December 7.00pm - **Candlelit Carol Service** at **St John's**

Christmas Eve 10.30am – Joint **Holy Communion** at **St John's**

4.30pm – **Crib Service** at **St Michael's**

7.00pm - **First Communion of Christmas** at **St John's**

Christmas Day 9.45am - Joint **Holy Communion** at **St Michael's, Elie**

(Jane Forbes says - if anyone would like to help to decorate St John's for Christmas, they are warmly welcome to come along at 10.30am on Tuesday 19 December.)

And finally – some events to encourage us through the winter -

Two Organ Recitals have been planned in December and January

Sunday 10 December - Callum Macleod and Sunday 14 January - Laura Martin

Both are short recitals at 3pm and will end with tea and cake. All welcome. No charge; donations welcome.

On **Saturday January 6th at 7pm** An Epiphany Evening of Readings and Poetry – see details below

On **Wednesday 17th January** we meet for another popular Curry Night at Eastern Touch

And on **Wednesday 31st January** it's hot chocolate at the Cocoa Tree! To be confirmed in the New Year



St John's Episcopal Church, Marygate, Pittenweem

Please join us for a short recital -
Music at St John's

Sunday December 10th
at 3pm
when we welcome
Callum Macleod

playing St. John's Chamber Organ
featuring
well-loved pieces and seasonal favourites

Enjoy tea, cake and music for the soul in a warm and welcoming space.

Donations Welcome

Callum Macleod is one of the few graduates in Music of the University of St Andrews. He is well-known in the East Neuk and beyond as an organist, pianist, orchestral percussionist and teacher. Many of his pupils have enjoyed success at national level going on to become professional musicians in their specialist fields.



St John's Episcopal Church is a registered Charity No SC010982

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
MARYGATE, PITTENWEEM
SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SCO 10982

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SATURDAY, 6th JANUARY from 7 pm
AN EPIPHANY GATHERING AT ST. JOHN'S
READINGS, POETRY, CAROLS & MUSICAL ITEMS
FOR A WINTER'S EVENING

Come and gather around an imaginary fireplace and listen to some seasonal readings by well-known authors or poets you may recall from times past — writers such as Laurie Lee, Walter de la Mare etc — catch a last chance to sing some favourite carols and partake in a bring and share finger buffet supper in convivial company!

No entrance fee but our hope is to raise funds for Médecins Sans Frontières and the East Neuk Food Bank so your donations would be warmly welcomed. Both organisations are currently working hard to bring much-needed relief locally or overseas.

It would be good to know in advance if you would like to attend (maybe even take part with a suggested item or one of your own?)

Please contact:
Janis Irvine Tel: 01333 311 868
or email at davidirvine190@btinternet.com

We look forward to seeing you there!