

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Member of the Anglican Communion

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**Sunday Worship for both churches is currently being held
at 10.30am (via Zoom)**

For details please contact St. John's Secretary.

SEC EUCHARIST is available each Sunday at 11am

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

Days of Lent

During my time on the staff at St John's Dumfries, there was a project to restore the bell-tower – a mighty edifice, which was so ambitious in its design, that it could not be completed when the church was originally built, on the grounds of cost. Although designed for a full 'peal' – only a single bell could be afforded by the Victorian congregation. The mountings for that bell had become unstable through wear and tear to the timbers from which it was suspended. I had a couple of climbs up on ladders into the bell-loft to see the construction of new support work and the structure designed to house a massive 'new' set of 8 bells (not new as such, but a set of bells that had been removed from a church elsewhere, many years previously) – a major undertaking in anyone's book. One remarkable detail I remember was that the stone structure of the church tower itself had to be strengthened to safely allow for the entire building to move, or sway slightly in sympathy with the movement of the enormously heavy bells.

I recently read an account of a homily for the start of Lent, from Russia. It's a story about very big bells. There are bells, it is said, in Russia, that are so large and so celebrated that they have names that are associated with patron saints. They are respected almost as persons. The largest ones are so big that one cannot simply grab hold of the clapper and ring them at will. The sounding of such a bell has to be preceded by a process of steadily enlarging the radius of the sway. It takes considerable time and strenuous, focused effort. It begins with a gentle push by several people, then a gradual coaxing into greater and greater swings; the enormous brass clapper begins to make a larger and larger arc, until it finally makes contact with the bell's side. People who have been near such a bell when the clapper strikes speak of a profound visceral effect, a seismic change of atmosphere, a multisensory event of strange beauty "heard" by the whole person, which often provokes weeping. The message is that Lent can be like that: seven weeks of gentle pushing, quietly, patiently watching and following the swing that somehow involves both our effort and a powerful momentum that now lies outside ourselves. And then comes Easter: the great resonant peal of the resurrection.

Our own humble efforts to be intentional about the season of Lent might not have seismic effects, but there's truth in the idea of entering into a pattern of prayer and thought that might take us beyond our everyday experience of faith. For the time-being it seems as though we must do that at home, but part of our Lenten discipline of prayer can be to reflect on what truly matters to us, as revealed through the experience of being deprived of our habitual worship practice. Whether it's a personal and private season, or one that is shared through our online services or midweek Lent Group, I pray that the Spirit will lead us all to 'find the sacred beneath our feet' in a new way this Lent.

Grace and peace to you
Steve

Some Thoughts

Max Taylor

Two phrases have been reverberating in my thoughts over the past few months –

Lighten our Darkness we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night

and

For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

The first phrase is familiar to us all as the final Collect from Choral Evensong or Compline in the Book of Common Prayer. Written in a time when darkness was in a sense more real (and more uncertain) than it is to us it nevertheless captures something very important, the imagery of course enhanced by Cranmer's words. In origin it is a translation of an 8th Century Latin Prayer and was prayed (and still is) at evening, as darkness falls. Given that, the prayer can be seen as something grounded in the experience of advancing night, and the dangers and fears of darkness. But it has a broader resonance than that, and captures not just physical darkness, but our darkness in all sorts of ways, and our need for comfort and support, when we are faced with uncertainty and trouble. And for many of us, COVID represents such an uncertainty and trouble – a darkness of unending restriction, uncertainty, fear and apprehension. In all sorts of ways, it is difficult to hold onto hope when even the light of Christmas had to be muted this year.

The second phrase is from Proverbs 23:18. It may be somewhat less familiar, but in some ways, it acts as a counterpoint to the first phrase, and offers us a sense of hope. Suddenly, for all of us in March 2020 many of our expectations were cut off – our plans and hopes for the future were at best put-on hold, if not abandoned or changed. Like many of us my family experienced this in a personal way. Our first grandchild was born in mid-April, and what was an exciting time of expectation was suddenly changed. The preparations we had made as impending grandparents had to be brought forward, and we had to make a mad dash to Edinburgh on the first day of lock down to take the clothes and necessary ‘stuff’ we had accumulated. We were even stopped at a Police road check at Leven and asked to explain why we were travelling! A very pleasant police officer let us through, but with the caution to be careful. But I don’t think we thought then we would be approaching his first birthday in the same condition of lock down we currently face (in mid-February). But there is hope that our expectations will not be ‘cut off’. There will be an end to this current state, and as Christians we have indeed all sorts of reasons for hope. Julian of Norwich captures an element of this hope – *all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well*. 600 years on, and these words still speak to our time!

As I write this, another thought comes to mind. When faced with adversity, we retreat to the familiar substance and words of faith, and for many of us that is best captured in the words of Thomas Cranmer, and particularly in the Book of Common Prayer. It is therefore no great surprise that ‘*Lighten our darkness.....*’ in its emotional resonances, simplistic grandeur, idioms, imagery and the sheer beauty of the words, strikes such a powerful chord. Whatever revisions we encounter in modern church life, it is difficult to see how the managerialism and short termness of contemporary liturgy will last the test of centuries in the way that Cranmer’s words have. Margaret Kelleher¹ argues that there is a link between liturgical change and social change, and Cranmer’s work seems to perfectly fit that relationship. Cranmer intended ‘*...to create an English language liturgy that was universally gospelsed throughout all parishes of the Church of England, one whose beauty laid in its simplicity and scriptural truth. Cranmer's steadfast and primary goal in his religious reformation was to insure every person, whether educated or illiterate, could understand God's word*’.² For many people, then and now, he succeeded. It may well be that we are facing a time of profound social change, but we might wonder if that will be reflected in the language of worship we use – will we during future troubles look to contemporary words for comfort? It might be seen as a measure of our failure if that does not happen, or alternatively it might be that Cranmer (and Julian of Norwich) touched the very heart of faith.

¹ Margaret M. Kelleher Liturgy and Social Transformation: Exploring the Relationship *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 6, No. 4, Sources of Social Reform, Part Two (Fall, 1998), pp. 58-70

²Beth von Staats *Thomas Cranmer: In a Nutshell*. MadeGlobal Publishing 2015

World Day of Prayer, Friday, 5th March 2021

— Janis Irvine

The World Day of Prayer is held each year on the first Friday in March but it seems most likely that we will be unable to hold one locally this year due to the continuing pandemic restrictions. This is a great shame as the service is one of the few in the year where we traditionally come together ecumenically.

The World Day of Prayer service is always devised by the women of a 'hosting' nation and this year that is Vanuatu which is an archipelago of 82 islands in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Queensland, Australia. The area is prone to earthquakes and cyclones and climate change means the islands are at high risk of rising sea levels as well as increases in storms, floods and droughts. In 2015 Cyclone Pam struck the islands leading to 96% of the crops being destroyed and around 75,000 people needing emergency shelter. In 2017 and 2018 Manaro volcano erupted on the island of Ambae and the entire population of about 11,000 people had to be evacuated. Category-5 Cyclone Harold struck in 2020 which again devastated the islands and recovery and rebuilding is still in the early stages once again creating an immense challenge to the islanders.

English and French are the adopted official languages of education with the Government subsidising tuition fees for the first 6 years, however secondary education is only available to those who can afford it. A third of

the population are young people aged 12-30 and while most young people have mobile phones and a radio only 16% of those under 30 in urban areas have access to the internet and this falls to 3% in rural areas.

75% of the population live in rural areas, which are very under-resourced in transport, communications, health work and facilities. Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are big concerns. Unprotected wells, springs and surface water are poor water sources.

Most arable land tends to be used for cash crops and cattle rather than for food crops which leads to malnutrition. Yams, bananas, taro, kumara, cassava fruits and nuts may be organically cultivated. Coconut, coffee, sandal-wood, white-wood, cocoa and kava are all cultivated to earn a living. The coconut tree is regarded as the tree of life because all its parts are useful giving fresh water for drinking plus copra for coconut oil used for cooking as well as for body and hair lotions.

The economy is agriculture-based, and economic growth is based on tourism, construction and offshore financial services. Vanuatu is a tax haven that earns income from company registrations, fees and an offshore shipping registry. This has resulted in a huge gap being created between the haves and the have-nots. Islanders flood to the towns hoping for jobs that are non-existent or for which they lack the necessary qualifications.

In both public and private sectors, women make up 40% of the labour force but in the subsistence economy this rises to 49%. However, women have a higher life expectancy of 74 compared with that of men at 70. Women make clothes, traditional woven mats and baskets which they sell in local markets to support their families. Whilst there are provisions in the Constitution for gender equality the political will to implement it is lacking and it is felt that religious institutions are not doing their part to encourage women to use their full potential.

Christianity was brought to Vanuatu by missionaries in the 19th Century and now over 80% of the population is Christian, the largest denomination being Church of Christ Presbyterian followed by Anglican, Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist. Vanuatu became a Republic in 1980 and is founded on traditional values, Christian principles and faith in God. The World Day of Prayer was introduced to the islands by Canadian Presbyterian missionaries in 1946, then in 1981 Anglicans and Catholics joined, followed by Apostolics and Church of Christ. In 2011 an ecumenical working group was formed and later this group began working together to put together a service. The hope now of the women involved is that this ecumenical way of working will continue.

Whilst we may not be able to come together on **Friday, 5th March** we can all play our individual part in holding the women of the Vanuatu archipelago in our thoughts that day, perhaps lighting a candle and offering up a prayer that these tested islanders may be helped and supported in their efforts to re-build their nation. God be with them.

The 3rd instalment by Bobby Dickson of his life as a lawyer.

In the last issue I promised some stories from the numerous Child Welfare hearings I held. Some ended happily, some did not, but I hope they explain how each child was different and no set of happy circumstances were the same. All the facts are accurate but every name has been changed.

One boy of 10 had lived with his dad since he was a toddler and his mum had gone away and taken no part in his upbringing. Dad committed suicide and the paternal grandparents were happy to take over Peter's care. Mum reappeared and argued that as Peter's mother she should have custody. I saw Peter, taking him for a walk in the country with my wife and our dogs. When I took Peter back to his grandparents' council house, a young boy rushed up and asked Peter if he would join a fishing trip which the boy's dad was organising. It was clear to me that Peter was happily settled with his grandparents and had friends locally. I awarded custody to the grandparents. Many years later Peter, now grown up financed a mortgage to allow his Gran and Papa to buy their council house.

Another case involved a couple who divorced, and Mum remarried a Welsh farmer who was very fond of her two sons. Faced with the choice of living with a good Dad in Coatbridge or on a Welsh farm with all its

benefits, the choice seemed a simple one. The boys could live in Wales and visit Dad during the holidays. It was however not that simple. The older boy, Jack, was aged 12 but had a mental age of 5. He went to an excellent Special School in Lanarkshire and was happy and settled. I heard from both his class teacher and the head mistress that despite great efforts to enable Jack to go to a normal school, even with his own teacher present, such a move had failed repeatedly. Jack needed the protection of a Special School environment.

I saw Jack along with Berry, my golden retriever. He was a lovely totally naive boy with a broad West of Scotland accent. He drew a picture for me which I pinned up on my wall beside about 20 others that various children had done. When his dad spotted his picture, Jack was so excited that he jumped up and down repeatedly.

I still thought that a Welsh farm with animals, which Jack loved, and the benefits of a country life would be in Jack's best interests. I asked for a report from the Welsh Education Authority, as to what provisions would be available. There were no Special Schools and instead the proposal was to place him in a large Secondary School with support. I decided that this was not in Jack's best interests and that a combination of his total naivety and very strong accent would result in a total disaster. The Mum cried and I felt desperately sorry for her. However, my job was to put Jack's welfare first. Jack stayed in Coatbridge, went to his Special School but spent most of his holidays with his Mum in Wales.

Some cases were bizarre. Mum went to live with her father-in-law, leaving three very confused daughters, an unhappy Dad and a distressed Gran. Mum was a good mother and wanted to see the girls, but they were refusing to go. After talking to each girl separately, I supported their decision and refused to force contact because of the distress it would cause, particularly visiting what had been their grandparents' house. I did suggest to the oldest one that if there were things which she might want to talk to her Mum about rather than her Dad, she might meet in MacDonald's with no commitments being made. Julie did so but I later heard that contact was never possible.

One very sad outcome arose when Mum refused to accept that Dad had moved to live with a new partner and eventually married her. The story started for me when I was asked to decide whether Alan aged 6 should visit his Dad. Mum said the child did not want to but Dad said otherwise. I spoke to Alan who proudly showed me a Turtle watch which his Dad had given him. He wanted to stay with his Mum but "there are important things I need to speak to Dad about, especially football". I said that Dad should have contact but Mum refused to comply, saying that Alan had changed his mind. I saw Alan again and he repeated what he had told me. I reaffirmed my decision that he should visit his Dad. Mum refused to comply. Three times the case came back to court and although she said that she would reluctantly obey, she did not do so.

I eventually lost patience. It was undoubtedly in Alan's best interests to see his Dad and if a court order could be defied at will then any other parent would feel free to follow suit. Mum had never appealed or legally challenged my order; she just refused to obey. I ordered her to appear in the main Wednesday Court, which was packed with numerous criminals awaiting sentence. I called her case first, told her that I did not have time to devote to her defiant behaviour as others were waiting for their cases to be heard, and I sent her to the cells to consider her position.

When I recalled her after 40 minutes, she realised that she had to allow Alan to go to his Dad's new home and that if she disobeyed, I would lock her up for a lengthy period; the Social Work Department might intervene, and she could find that she was considered by them to be an unsuitable parent to have custody. In a moment of foresight I wrote on the papers that if she persisted in blocking Alan's contact with his Dad then she might alienate her son. Five years later my prediction came true. Dad said Alan wanted to move to live with him, Mum said that was nonsense. Both feared that Alan would be influenced by whichever parent spoke to him first. I adjourned to Court, phoned Alan's school and arranged to see him immediately. I went to the Head teacher's room and asked her to stay while I spoke to Alan. Alan remembered me so it was easier to talk to him.

"My Dad's wife, Susan, is always interested in how I am getting on and never says anything nasty about my Mum. My Mum calls her a witch, a slut and other names I won't repeat, and I can't stand it. I want to go to

Dad and Susan.” Alan told me he was about to move to Secondary School, and that many of his class would go to the same one close to where his Dad lived. I gave Dad residence and tried to get Alan to visit his Mum.

Alan was very reluctant to do so despite his Dad’s encouragement. Mum asked me to get a report from a child psychologist to show how wrong I was. Dr P visited mum first, leaving muttering to herself “the Sheriff has lost the plot”. She then visited Dad who told Alan that he and Susan would go next door to a neighbour so he could tell Dr P anything without he or Susan hearing. Dr P found that I was totally correct, and she tried to effect a minimal reconciliation with the hope of starting contact. Years later Dr P, whom I know, told me that Mum was so bitter that any mention of Susan resulted in outbursts and swearing. She had indeed, due to that bitterness, lost the love of her son.

An Old-Fashioned Love Story for St Valentine’s Day Tina Wilkinson

Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore. (Andre Gide)

I’ve always been a career woman. I suppose one should say ‘person’ nowadays. I ran a large hotel in Bournemouth for over 30 years until I was made redundant with the opening of the Bournemouth International Centre and the end of ‘bucket and spade’ holidays.

Finding myself out of work at 50 years old, I retrained as a Stroke Nurse at Bournemouth Hospital, assisting the Physios, Speech and Language Therapists, and the Occupational Therapists. What hard but rewarding work. Ward 28 was what they called a ‘heavy’ ward, patients that had suffered severe strokes and were unable to mobilise and needed full care. Some patients, however, needed minimal assistance, one of which I had to help a particular morning when I’d been there a year or two. Often, when the hospital was busy and there were no outlying stroke patients to be admitted, our ward would receive patients with other illnesses. At handover, I realised that this particular lady, who was around my age, had an inoperable brain tumour. She had arrived on the ward overnight and was naturally devastated at her diagnosis. She was also very wobbly so I was required to make sure she was safe whilst she washed and dressed. She was a lovely lady, and we had an immediate rapport. She told me that she had always put her job first, had never married, but had met a wonderful man on holiday a year or so ago, and they had moved in together. She was now so happy with chickens and the large vegetable garden she had always craved. And she was going to die. What could I say to her, I could only let her talk and listen. She said she now so much regretted not travelling more and doing things that she had never had time for, owing to pressure of work. She would never do them now.

This really set me thinking. This could have been me, I wanted to travel, to see countries I’d only ever seen Michael Palin describe. I had a real desire to go to India especially, and when I finished my shift I immediately booked a safari holiday to India, to go on my own. When the holiday came round, I was really worried, but it was wonderful, two other single ladies, and a lovely (married) man, and we chummed up, eating together and keeping each other safe. It was so successful, I started flying on my own without a tour for support. I virtually travelled the world, including an unforgettable time in Borneo.

Anyway, in May 2011, I happened to see a holiday in Saga magazine, ‘From the Adriatic to the Aegean’, and I booked it as I thought it looked interesting, visiting Albania, Macedonia and Greece. As we all gathered after the flight, I realised there were three people on their own, Ron, an oldish single chap, me and Ken, a widower. During the holiday, if we had any spare time, Ron, Ken and I would go off on our own, until one day in Macedonia Ron wanted to do something different and Ken and I set off to a small Orthodox church on the side of Lake Ochrid. This tiny church of Saint John at Kaneo was exquisite. A little old man on the door could only speak some French and as Ken could speak it quite well, we could communicate. We were told that the church is dedicated to John of Patmos, the writer of Revelations, and construction was believed to have started around 1447, though



the foundations were older. At the end of the small tour he produced what we thought was a bottle of water, and offered us a drink, which we took, not wanting to be rude. We found it was Rakia, a very strong distilled fruit spirit, not what we would normally drink! But it was all in keeping on such a magical afternoon.

After the holiday Ken and I emailed, and not wanting to look too eager I left it a while before coming up to stay near Dunblane, where Ken lives, in June of that year. We got on so well that we eventually, in the spring of the following year, went to Sicily, this time following our own itinerary. One night we booked into the most wonderful Bed and Breakfast in Agrigento. The place was superb, but the view..... across the village and olive groves to the mountains. Absolutely idyllic. We were looking at the view on the balcony, and next thing I knew, Ken was on one knee and had proposed. Of course I said yes and we married later that year, after I retired from the hospital and had sold my house.

This May I will have known Ken for ten years. I have never regretted that Macedonian holiday, and I bless that poor lady on my ward who told me to live my life to the full. Ken and I have so much in common, bird watching, art, wild flowers, moths, gardening, cinema, books. And, of course, travelling. I have never met anyone else who loves airports as much as I do. I love the whole business of flying and arriving in a strange land (and starting another bird list!) Our mutual interests have never been so important as during this Covid time, we've discovered the joys (and frustrations) of jigsaws, I'm improving my schoolgirl French and researching a book on women artists in Paris. I can now do Sudokus too, we even share an exercise video when the weather is too bad to walk.

Last but no means least, our Faith is very important to us. Ken is Roman Catholic but I have no qualms about attending a mass when on holiday, which I have, even once participating in a marriage blessing ceremony in a tiny village in the South of France.

I wanted this little article to be positive, not another moan about what we can't do. Ken has had his jab, I have mine tomorrow - weather permitting. We will travel again. We will be back together again in church before too long. Emily Dickinson says this so succinctly:

‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops-at all -

Patricia Tribble 1934-2021

The photo was taken at Peebles in 2017 at the annual Jowatt gathering, with Patricia sitting in a 1952 Jowatt that had belonged to her husband and restored by her son Peter.

Everyone in church want to say a huge thank you to Patricia for what all she was and did for us in St John's during the many years she was part of the congregation. She was happy always to read the lessons and she was our most valued flower person: every Saturday she spent hours - with or without helpers – filling St John's with wonderful flower arrangements – most of the flowers coming from her own garden. We loved her singing and the way she managed – together with our organist Ursula - to get the best singers in the congregation to join her in special performances during particular church services. She was invaluable at our Summer Fayre that takes place in the Priory garden, where she personally organised the very popular and money-spinning garden stall, filling it with various plants she had grown in advance. We all loved Patricia's good humour and kindness. She was very special. (AMS)

James Tribble, Patricia's oldest son, has written a “eulogy” for his mum here:

Mum was born in in West Malling, Kent in 1934 - On the high street in her Fathers Dairy.

One of 5, Uncle David, Uncle Keith, Uncle Eric and Auntie Valerie. They have all passed before, so hopefully a big reunion party will happen.

Her Primary school was behind the Church in which she would be married 30 years later.

While there she watched the battle of Britain from underneath.

She then attended the Upper School in Snodland, where she showed promise as an artist. She had to leave at 14 though and learnt to touch type and do Pitman Shorthand

She worked for a number of years at a canning factory until eventually she met David Tribble, Dad.

They married in 1965 on the 2nd of January.

They brought up three boys, James, Peter and Mathew, in a couple of locations.

Firstly, in Northwood Hills Pinner for the first 8 years, then moving to Upper Gravenhurst in Bedfordshire where she lived for 26 years and where she became a keen bell ringer

Dad died in 1993 and before he did he encouraged Mum to fulfil her artistic promise. Mum went back to education and eventually passed a degree in fine arts, which she was very proud of.

Finally she moved up to Abercrombie in Fife in 2002, where she could enjoy being part of a new community and being closer to her two grand children.

She loved music, flowers, gardening and people. She also liked the Queen which is why I chose a version of her favourite song, sung on the Queens 90th Birthday in St Pauls Cathedral with the Queen and family singing. We both sang in St Pauls Cathedral as well, a good memory.

In Abercrombie, she threw herself into the church St Johns in Pittenweem, singing in the Anstruther Philharmonic Society, into art as a founding member of East Neuk Open Studios and being part of the Women's Institute and the Women's Rural Institute, where she performed shows as well as taking part in competitions.

She is greatly missed by all around – not least by her treasured cats - and will be remembered with much love.



Contributions to the Church Magazine are always welcome. Copy deadline is March 14. Janet Bulloch will be the editor and can be contacted on 01333 310872 or send any contribution to janet.bulloch@btinternet.com