



**SAINT MARY'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Newsletter

### Our Mission Statement:

*Saint Mary's is a Christ-centred family, caring, sharing and working together, seeking to change through growth.*

### November 2015

Dear Friends,

Over the month of October, we've been experimenting with an 'education hour' at 9am between our two Sunday services. We've been examining the Nicene Creed, which we recite every Sunday after the sermon. I've been encouraged by the interest and discussions. I've also heard that others are interested but unable to attend. I thought I should use this letter to share our conversations with the broader congregation.

Why do we say the Creed in our worship? Why does it occur where it does in our service? Who produced it? Why and when was it produced?

### **JEWISH HERITAGE**

Christianity grew out of Judaism, and many Hebrew practices and philosophies influenced the early church. Two factors are relevant: First, the Israelites saw the spoken word as means of knowing God (hence, 'Thus saith the Lord...' or 'The word of the Lord came to the prophet...'). Similarly, for the Hebrew people, declaring something truthful about God was considered an act of worship. Jewish worship often contained formal declarations about God.

It is not surprising, then, that we see hymn or creed-like declarations in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Corinthians 8.6; Colossians 1.15-20; Philippians 2.6-11) and we read about a 'pattern of sound words' taught by the apostles to the churches (e.g., 1 Timothy 1.13). Early Christians were in the habit of confessing their beliefs in public.

### **PERSECUTION AND DISPUTES**

As the early church was persecuted, this practice only increased. Martyrs would make a declaration of faith before they were killed. This made public declarations of faith that much more significant and noble.

Persecution also facilitated the development of creeds because it increased the distribution of the scriptures. The early church did not have a bound, single volume 'Bible' like we have today. Most churches would have had only a handful of the books that make up our New Testament. As churches were facing persecution, they tried to preserve their scriptures by making copies and sending them to other Christian communities. As the scriptures became more widespread, there arose questions of interpretation and even which books should be regarded as scripture.

### **RULE OF FAITH AND PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM**

It is as Christians are wrestling with various scriptures and interpretations that we read of appeals to the so-called 'Rule of Faith', a summary statement of faith, very similar to our Nicene Creed, that the apostles taught to all the churches they started. This 'Rule' was just that: a standard that measured the legitimacy of interpretations and scriptures.



Because of the disputes over biblical interpretation and other issues, there was a need to better educate Christians. The Rule of Faith was transposed into a creedal form (beginning with 'we believe...') as the church became more rigorous about training its membership. In particular, in between the Rule of Faith and the Nicene Creed lay a host of baptismal creeds, which were written to help train Christians in the faith. As is still the practice today, when a person was baptised, they would be interrogated before the congregation. They would be asked: 'Do you believe in God the Father' and the candidate would have to respond with the expected answer. This is why we use the Apostles' Creed for baptism, for the Apostles' Creed was the Roman baptismal creed.

## EDUCATION IN AN ILLITERATE CULTURE

Keep in mind that in the ancient world, at least 90% of the population was illiterate. Learning revolved hearing and reciting, not reading and writing. Both baptismal candidates and the congregation had to be able to memorise the correct answers; they didn't have the luxury or literacy to consult a service booklet for the correct answers. Creeds were brief, lyrical summaries of Christian belief that aided education in an illiterate society.



## CONTROVERSY ABOUT JESUS' DIVINITY

But what happens when there was an interpretative issue that wasn't resolved by the Rule of Faith? Such a debate lay behind the Nicene Creed. In the early church, there existed two schools of thought regarding Jesus' identity that were entirely compatible with the Rule of Faith: one school emphasised Jesus' sameness with the Father (hint: this group favoured 'like from like' language, as in 'God from God, light from light' in the words of the Nicene Creed) and another that emphasised Jesus' individuality from the Father.

A well-loved priest in Alexandria, Egypt named Arius held to a radical version of the latter perspective. He argued that Jesus could not be seen as equal with God, because scripture says that Jesus was God's 'begotten' Son (e.g., John 3.16). Arius reasoned that if God is eternal and Jesus was born (or 'begotten') then Jesus could not be truly God. At the time, the Rule of Faith (as seen in the Apostles' Creed) simply stated that Jesus was begotten of the Father (hence, why there is so much qualification around the term 'begotten' in the Nicene Creed).

## CONSTANTINE AND THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

This controversy soon spread throughout the Roman Empire. Just as the church was becoming deeply divided, Emperor Constantine was looking to unify his fragmented realm. He followed the tradition of the early church of calling a council to resolve disagreements. This council occurred in 325CE at Nicaea. It composed the Nicene Creed

as a revision of the Rule of Faith to rule out Arius' view.

We will talk about the arguments for the creedal view and the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity in November. But before I finish, I should note the reasons why we recite the Nicene Creed in our worship after the sermon are: First, it continues that Jewish and early Christian belief that making truthful declarations about God is an act of praise. Second, since the Rule of Faith was the means by which the early church discerned the proper interpretation of scripture, and since the Nicene Creed is a revised Rule of Faith, we recite the Creed after we have heard the scriptures read (the readings/lessons) and interpreted (the sermon).

## SAYING THE CREED TODAY

One final thought: I suggested in our session on belief in God the Creator that we should think of the declaration, 'We believe...' not so much as a statement of fact but as a pledge. In other words, when we say 'We believe...' we should think more along the lines of 'We are committed to...' or 'We trust that...'. This is not only a better rendering of the original Greek words; it also helps us understand our statement as a promise to live with and to the God we know. Every week, we are not just reminding ourselves of our faith; we are also reiterating our commitment to this God.

Hoping to see you as we resume our conversations in November,

James



### Normal weekly services:

Sunday: Holy Eucharist at 8a.m. and 10.15a.m.

Tuesday:  
Morning Prayer at 7.45a.m.

Wednesday:  
Holy Eucharist at 10a.m.

Thursday:  
Morning Prayer at 7.45a.m.

## Open 4 Prayer

Our lunchtime services continue to take place, normally on the last Tuesday of the month, aimed at attracting the office workers around us in the West End. This is a lovely pause for fellowship in the day with shared worship and contemplation, and a light lunch to follow. The next service is on 27<sup>th</sup>. October, at 12.30p.m.

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## Prayers for Healing

The next Prayers of Healing, a Healing Eucharist for Wholeness, Strength and Comfort, will be held on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup>. December, at 6p.m. Prayers for Healing are held on the first Sunday of every second month. In addition, there are short prayers for healing after each Sunday 10.15 service in the War Memorial Chapel.

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## Compline Around the Diocese

Starting on Tuesday 20 October, people from the Diocese are being asked to join in saying Compline (Night Prayer) at 9.00pm, wherever they are.

The order of Compline, along with Morning and Evening Prayer, is available each day on the Provincial Website, and links will also be posted on a new Diocesan Prayer Circle Facebook Group. If you are not able to access Compline online, there are printed copies of Compline available from me - do get in touch.

- Wherever you are each Tuesday at 9:00pm (or sometime that evening if 9:00pm doesn't work), join in spirit with others to say night prayer.
- ask for prayer for you or for someone you know on the Diocesan Website at <http://aberdeen.anglican.org/prayer-request-form/>. Received petitions will be collated and sent around the Diocese each Tuesday.
- email me ([sisterdorothy93@gmail.com](mailto:sisterdorothy93@gmail.com)) to join the mailing list to receive the weekly prayer petitions (clergy and lay readers will automatically be added to the mailing list so please let me know if you would prefer not to receive emails).

- join the Prayer Circle Facebook group where daily Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline links are shared, and where you can ask for prayer at anytime.

If you have any questions or wish any support in this, please do get in touch with me.

Thank you,

Sister Dorothy Clark

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## Vestry Report

The vestry met on 23<sup>rd</sup> September when the following items were discussed.

The Rector thanked the members of the communications group for preparing the church calendar.

Hand-rails to assist handicapped people have been fitted in both toilets.

Raffle tickets are now available, if anyone has not received any or can sell more to friends and family, there is plenty still left and can be obtained from Mary Allardyce.

The heaters in church are to be serviced and repaired soon.

The quinquennial inspection is due to be carried out. Several conservation approved professionals have been identified and these will be approached for quotes and to identify the most suitable one.

As parking in the grounds by members of the public continues to be problematic, the vestry has decided that the best course of action might be to fit posts at the entrances. These will allow access for people to walk through or into the building but it will be possible to fold them down when necessary.

The information given at the last vestry meeting regarding a replacement web-site co-ordinator had been incorrect and has been amended as follows. Mary McKinnell is to step down from the post with immediate effect at her request and in the short term, Avril will update information while the vestry tries to identify the best person to take over the role on a permanent basis.

A slater is to repair the roof of the choir vestry and also clear the gutters and downpipes. There will be a cheese and wine fund-raising event on 13<sup>th</sup> November. Tickets are available from Rachael.

It was agreed that a Finance and Fund-raising committee will be set up.

There will be some changes to worship at Saint Mary's. On the first and last Sundays of the month, we will use the 1970 order of service (orange books) and on other Sundays, we will use the 1982 order of service (blue books).

The Rector has spoken with Andrew Morrison from the Cathedral about how we might develop music at Saint Mary's. The suggestion is that we should find an organist first, build up on that and then try to identify someone who might be willing to take on the role of choirmaster.

The Rector has spoken with Professor David Smith who has suggested that there is an organ student who might be willing to take up the position of organist and he will contact him to discuss.

The vestry will meet again on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

Mary Allardyce

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## **Sunday School**

Just the one birthday this month: Georgina Stephens will be nine on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Happy birthday to her!

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## **Storytime Service**

On 22<sup>nd</sup>. November at 6p.m. there will be an outreach event for children and families in the city. Children come to hear stories, sing songs, say prayers and sip hot cocoa. Please consider telling a friend. If you'd be available to help or to prepare cocoa, let the Rector know.

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## **Blytheswood Boxes**

It's time to fill those shoeboxes again! Pick up a leaflet in church or ask Morag McPetrie for further information.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Choral Workshops in Advent**

Jason will be running Tuesday evening Choral workshops during Advent that will help us learn the hymns for upcoming services as well as prepare for Carol Singing. Further details to follow!

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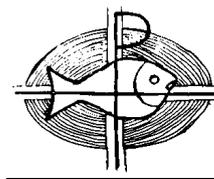
## **World Premiere for Local Composer**

A group from St. Mary's will be attending the World Premiere of Paul Mealor's Symphony 1 on 19<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30 at St Machar's Cathedral.

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## **Parking in the Church Grounds**

Do you need to park in the Church Grounds? Free permits can be obtained from Mary Allardyce. Please park considerately, and if you can avoid parking during the week it would be very much appreciated.



## **Dates for your Diary:**

25<sup>th</sup>. October: Bring and Buy after 10.15 service

1<sup>st</sup>. November: The Deeside Choristers will be visiting us for a Choral Evensong at 6.30.

8<sup>th</sup>. November: An old friend of St. Mary's, the Rev. Professor Gordon Graham, will preach and celebrate at the 10.15 service.

13<sup>th</sup>. November: Cheese and Wine – see Rachael Cormack for tickets



### Not as it First Appears ...

Today was the absolute worst day ever  
And don't try to convince me that  
There's something good in every day  
Because, when you take a closer look  
This world is a pretty evil place  
Even if  
Some goodness does shine through once in a  
while  
Satisfaction and happiness don't last  
And it's not true that  
It's all in the mind and heart  
Because  
True happiness can be obtained  
Only if one's surroundings are good  
It's not true that good exists  
I'm sure you can agree that  
The reality  
Creates  
My attitude  
It's all beyond my control  
And you'll never in a million years hear me say  
that  
Today was a good day

*now read from bottom to top*

(thanks to Mary McKinnell)

### CHOSEN

I'm an ordinary baby,  
Red, squalling, indignant at being dragged out into  
this cold, noisy world.  
But to my Mum and Dad I'm beautiful - the one  
that they'd have chosen.

I'm an ordinary little boy, naughty sometimes,  
grubby sometimes.  
I was third shepherd in the school Nativity. John  
was Joseph.  
Mum and Dad think I should have been chosen.

I'm an ordinary eleven year old. I didn't get my  
scholarship to the grammar  
school. Peter next door did.  
Mum and Dad think I should have been chosen.

I'm an ordinary fourteen year old. I wanted to  
work on the farm up the road.  
David from the cottage by the church got the job.  
Mum and Dad think that I should have been  
chosen.

I'm an ordinary nineteen year old. I joined up to  
do my bit. I was hoping  
to be made up to L/Cpl.  
George Smith got the promotion.  
Mum and Dad think that I should have been  
chosen.

I'm an ordinary twenty one year old.  
I lie in a cold grave in France. Above me a  
wooden cross.  
Someone has written in pencil "An Unknown  
British Soldier".  
Mum and Dad wonder why I have been chosen.

I'm still twenty one, still young and still serving.  
My tomb is in Westminster Abbey.  
Kings pause and bow as they pass.  
Queens lay their flowers for me.  
People file past and cry for me.  
Children stop and wonder who I am.  
I am an ordinary man.  
I am the Unknown Soldier.  
My Mum and Dad don't know that I was chosen.

Jennie Carter, Hampshire, 2011

## Old Cemeteries

*Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York:  
Born 1903. Died 1942.  
Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was  
on the way down. It was.*

>> =====

*In Thurmont, Maryland:  
Here lies an Atheist, all dressed up and no place  
to go.*

>> =====

*On the grave of Ezekial Aikle in East Dalhousie  
Cemetery, Nova Scotia:  
Here lies Ezekial Aikle, Age 102.  
Only the good die young.*

>> =====

*In a London cemetery:  
Here lies Ann Mann, who lived an old maid  
but died an old Mann. Dec. 8, 1767*

>> =====

*In Ribbesford, England:  
Anna Wallace  
The children of Israel wanted bread,  
And the Lord sent them manna.  
Clark Wallace wanted a wife,  
And the Devil sent him Anna.*

>> =====

*In Ruidoso, New Mexico:  
Here lies Johnny Yeast.  
Pardon him for not rising.*

>> =====

*In Uniontown, Pennsylvania:  
Here lies the body of Jonathan Blake,  
Stepped on the gas instead of the brake.*

>> =====

*In Silver City, Nevada:  
Here lays The Kid,  
We planted him raw.  
He was quick on the trigger,  
But slow on the draw.*

>> =====

*A lawyer's epitaph in England:  
Sir John Strange.  
Here lies an honest lawyer,  
and that is Strange.*

>> =====

*John Penny's epitaph in Wimborne, Dorset:  
Reader, if cash thou art in want of any,  
Dig 6 feet deep and thou wilt find a Penny.*

>> =====

*In a cemetery in Hartscombe, England:  
On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, Jonathan Fiddle went out of  
tune.*

>> =====

*Anna Hopewell's grave in Enosburg Falls,  
Vermont :  
Here lies the body of our Anna,  
Done to death by a banana.  
It wasn't the fruit that laid her low,  
But the skin of the thing that made her go.*

>> =====

*On a grave from the 1880s in Nantucket,  
Massachusetts :  
Under the sod and under the trees,  
Lies the body of Jonathan Pease.  
He is not here, there's only the pod,  
Pease shelled out and went to God.*

>> =====

*In a cemetery in England:  
Remember man, as you walk by,  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, so shall you be,  
Remember this and follow me.  
To which someone replied by writing on the  
tombstone:  
To follow you I'll not consent,  
Until I know which way you went.*

(thanks to Prue King)

**Remember to buy your  
Christmas Raffle Tickets!**

## Saints' Days in November:

- 1<sup>st</sup>. All Saints' Day
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. All Souls' Day
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. Richard Hooker
- 7<sup>th</sup>. St. Willibrord
- 9<sup>th</sup>. George Hay Forbes
- 10<sup>th</sup>. St. Leo the Great
- 11<sup>th</sup>. St. Martin of Tours
- 12<sup>th</sup>. St. Machar
- 16<sup>th</sup>. St. Margaret of Scotland
- 17<sup>th</sup>. St. Hilda of Whitby and St. Hugh of Lincoln
- 18<sup>th</sup>. St. Fergus
- 21<sup>st</sup>. St. Columban
- 22<sup>nd</sup>. St. Cecilia
- 23<sup>rd</sup>. St. Clement of Rome
- 24<sup>th</sup>. Lucy Menzies
- 30<sup>th</sup>. St. Andrew of Scotland



## Your Magazine

You can order your St. Mary's News to be sent to you each month by e-mail, or ask for a Large Print version, or ask for any back copies of editions you may have missed. Just contact the Editor!

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

Rector: Rev. Dr. James Merrick (397414)  
[jmerrick@stmaryscardenplace.org.uk](mailto:jmerrick@stmaryscardenplace.org.uk)

Assistant Priest: Rev. Jason Hobbs

Rector's Warden: David Rose

People's Warden: Rachael Cormack (209380)

Vestry Secretary: Mary Allardyce (704743)

Vestry Treasurer: Lydia Ross (864072)

Lay Representative: Nicola Mills

Sacristan: Mary Allardyce

Organist: Christopher Black

Sunday School: To be arranged

LEGO Young Adults Group: Mary  
[mjmckinnell@gmail.com](mailto:mjmckinnell@gmail.com)

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator:  
Elizabeth Smyth

Flower Convener: Lucy Fleming

Church Administrator: Avril Scott (561383)  
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[facebook.com/stmaryscardenplace](https://www.facebook.com/stmaryscardenplace)

All copy for the December/January double issue magazine must be with the Editor by 23<sup>rd</sup>. November, 2015. Hard copy to Nicola Mills, or telephone 01224 488700, or e-mail to [palaeography@aol.com](mailto:palaeography@aol.com). Thank you!

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Carden Place, is a charity (Scottish Charity No. SCO 14062).