



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.

June 2016

Dear friends,

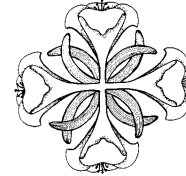
I write this still in shock and disbelief. It can't be real, surely. I'll call him in a few days and have one of our weekly chats, right? His name is still in my recent calls list. My father, at the age of 61, passed away unexpectedly this afternoon. I still don't know what happened. He had several symptoms for a number of years, but nothing seemingly major. One doctor commented not too long ago that you could drive a lorry through his arteries; they were that clean.

Yet he collapsed at a church meeting. He was right next to a medical centre and someone came over right away. But it couldn't be undone. Of course my thoughts about this month's letter have changed, and, whether for catharsis or convenience – I'm not sure which – I've decided to share some early thoughts about my Dad's death with you.

My father was a great, great man. A good man. By no means perfect; he was stubborn and often insensitive. But he was a good, good man. He gave me so many gifts and loved my family and me dearly. And that's the hardest part, to not have the possibility of the tangibility of that love for some time.

He had an utterly laughable laugh. It was gigantic, often terrifying to small children. Once people realised he wasn't having a seizure, they would laugh at his hilarity. When he smiled and his eyes lit up, it was like the sun rising over a mountain. As my cousin said soon after the news broke: 'I honestly can't think of someone whose smile and laugh lifted everyone's spirit more than uncle Steve.'

Everyone says these things about the deceased, of course, and that's because it's what you remember in those first hours of grief. Laughter and smiles: more powerful than the sorrow, bringing peace to the chaos of loss. Signs, certainly, that when contemplated prove to be God's way of hinting that death cannot bury life's goodness.



When I applied to St Mary's, I asked my Dad for advice. It was a difficult decision, for as surely as I felt called and knew I wasn't to remain where I was, it seemed the height of stupidity to leave a really good, high-paying job with lots of security and promise and a church that we loved and had cared for us very well. So I thought if I could convince him that the calling was real, there would be no denying it.

He wasn't convinced and I convinced myself that he was being selfish, wanting me to stay in the US so he could see the grandkids. After the second interview here in Aberdeen, I called him. He changed his mind on the phone after hearing me talk and he admitted he was wrong.

Admitting error and sin – that's something my Dad could do (though he had to be sure of it!). I remember when I was a little boy, sitting on the stairs, and him making a point of apologising to me for punishing me in error. I remember it powerfully, though I can't quite see his face or recall the circumstances. But I remember feeling at that moment that my Dad was a good man. I remember knowing, even at the age of 5 or so, that what he was doing was very hard, but very right. I now do the same with Rowan, though not often enough.

I'm sure there's some psychological explanation for why I remember this event so profoundly. But it, whatever it is, strikes me as less compelling than the basic Christian one, which is that we were made by and for goodness, and whenever that goodness breaks through the pride and pomp of this world, it feels like home.

Latterly, as recently as a few days ago, as I was feeling a bit overwhelmed by and inadequate to the task here, he encouraged me. He said 'There's

nothing else you can do but believe that God will provide. Give it time. The waiting and uncertainty is the hard part. God will take care of it and you can't worry about the unknowns or uncertainties but just get on with the work and follow your calling.'

I remember the goodbye to that phone call. It wasn't one of those ritual goodbyes that glaze over the tongue unthought. I paused and said intently, as if compelled, 'Hey, I love you, Daddio'. I remember thinking afterwards, well, if that's the last I speak with him, I had said it like I meant it and he knew it. How strange it is that it was.

And so it is that my Dad's last words to me are proven. God does provide, even if it is in ways we wouldn't have chosen. Those provisions give us a glimpse of the larger, hidden context of our lives, that is, God's grand, glorious plan for time, which, when we behold it, will gladden our hearts beyond imagining. Now, we have only small graces like laughter, smiles and fortuitous goodbyes that point us beyond death to the life that God eternally gives, first in his eternally blessed Son and, then, through him, to us.

I am grateful for my Dad and grateful for my God, whose subtle, stable presence not only gives a sense of peace and confidence amidst the sadness, but convinces – if we let it – that just as Jesus rose from the dead, so too will my Dad, and I shall enjoy God's goodness in him once more.

After all the news, the bitter weeping and the daze, just before going to bed, Allison and I said Compline from *St Benedict's Prayer Book*. I leave you with the words of the Psalm that are particularly apt:

'O people, how long will your hearts be closed, will you love what is futile and seek what is false?...Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord. "What can bring us happiness?" many say. Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord. You have put into my heart a great joy than they have from abundance of corn and new wine. I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.'

In sorrow and hope,

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.

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Lunchtime Fellowship

It was good to see a good gathering at the April Lunchtime Fellowship (Open4Prayer) and we look forward to gathering again at 12:30pm on Tuesday 31 May and Tuesday 28 June.

The May service will look at the visit of Mary to her Cousin Elizabeth, and in June, we'll mark World Seafarers Day. All of our services are followed by a light lunch.

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Vestry Report

The vestry has not met since the last magazine.

Dave Dillard
Vestry Secretary

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Sunday School

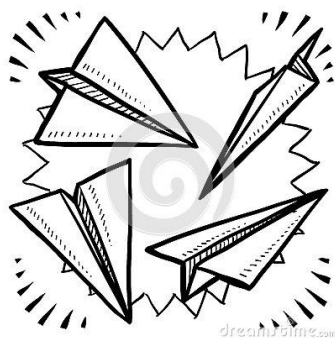
Three birthdays this month: Lewis Smith will be thirteen on the 13th., Damon Cormack will be eleven on the 19th., and Rowan Merrick will be six on the 25th. Happy Birthday everyone!

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Beetles and Paper Aeroplanes



Thanks to everyone who helped at the Paper Aeroplane competition on 23rd. April and who organised the Beetle Drive on 7th. May. Both were hotly contested and great fun, the latter for the church family and the former with contestants from around the city.



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Choral Workshops Continue!

Jason continues to run entertaining Choral workshops that will help us learn the hymns for upcoming services as well as other music. Come along on **Thursdays** at 7.30p.m. for an hour – no experience required, just enthusiasm!

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Diocesan Communications Days

Following difficulties in finding a date that will work for a diocesan wide communications day, I have been working on a plan to run more localised workshops around the diocese in the next year. Details of dates and locations are below.

The workshops are open to all who are interested in communications - while there will be a focus on online communications, I also hope to look at how they tie in with all the other communications that happen, from notice boards, magazines, and anything else you do, so please do encourage

those involved in your church communications team to attend.

As the days will follow the same plan and structure, people are welcome to travel to another workshop if they are unable to attend their local one (or feel they wish to attend more than one). I do ask though that those wishing to attend a workshop RSVP to me so that we can plan for numbers attending.

The Dates and Venues are (with what I believe to be congregations local to this venue - there may be some cases where another venue might be easier, in which case do feel free to attend that one):

Saturday 3 September, 2016, 10:00am to 1:00pm at St Ternan's Church Banchory

Local Congregations: Aboyne, Ballater, Banchory, Bielside, Braemar, Kincardine O'Neil, Westhill

Saturday 29 October, 2016, 10:00am to 1:00pm at All Saints' Church, Buckie

Local Congregations: Banff, Buckie, Cuminestown, New Pitsligo, Portsoy, Strichen

Saturday 28 January, 2017, 2:00pm to 5:00pm at St Ninian's Church, Aberdeen

Local Congregations: Cathedral, CAF4E, St Clement's, St James', St John's, St Margaret's, St Mary's Carden Place, St Mary's Cove, St Ninians, Bucksburn,

Saturday 18 February, 2017, 10:00am to 1:00pm at All Mary's Church, Inverurie

Local Congregations: Alford, Auchindoir, Insch, Inverurie, Kemnay, Oldmeldrum, Turriff, Whiterashes, Woodhead

Saturday 20 May, 2017, 2:00pm to 5:00pm at St Mary's Church, Ellon

Local Congregations: Cruden Bay, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Longside, Old Deer

More information on each event will be available nearer the time.

Mary McKinnell

Church Heating – can we meet the challenge?

Many of us are uncomfortably aware that our old heating system is gradually failing us. It is now impossible to get parts for the gas heaters, and some of them have stopped working altogether, while others sometimes seem to overheat.

Obviously this is going to be an expensive undertaking, but here's an idea to kick-start the fundraising. Can we pledge £10 a week for a year? Some can, some can't, but even if forty people do, we'll have £20,000 and a great start to a new heating system that will look after our building and our wellbeing for years to come!

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Book Review: *Called or Collared?* by Francis Dewar



'we live in a karaoke society ... Many people feel they have to dance to someone else's tune, to sing someone else's song.' This is a book addressed to those seeking ordination in the Church of England, but it has a much wider scope than that. It explores the meaning of vocation in all of us, lay and ordained, and how we should respond to it, whether it is a vocation to ordination or a vocation to arrange flowers or to clean the brasses or to help with the Sunday School. It's an easy read with interesting anecdotes and examples along the way: the writer is an ordained Church of England priest himself who left parish work some years ago to fulfil more educational roles, and he has a keen sense for the need to educate and value the laity, as well as for the challenges facing any rector in a congregation. He warns against being

drawn to false vocations, someone else's tune, and analyses how to identify vocations. The book was revised in the aftermath of the introduction of women's ordination in the Church of England, and those parts sit a little uncomfortably in the whole, but this is a valuable book for anyone contemplating ordination, anyone running from the very idea, and anyone sitting in a pew – or standing in a pulpit – on a Sunday morning, and wondering how the view looks from the other side.

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The World According to Student Bloopers – read and learn! Part II

In our first exciting episode we reached the time of the Ancient Greeks. Now read on ...

Eventually, the Romans conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlic in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to make king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them. Then came the Middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Danes, King Arthur lived in the Age of Shivery, King Harold mustered his troops before the Battle of Hastings. Joan of Arc was canonized by Bernard Shaw, and victims of the Black Death grew boils on their necks. Finally, Magna Carta provided that no free men should be hanged twice for the same offence.

In medieval times most of the people were illiterate. The greatest writer of the times was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter, Donatello's, interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and

discoveries. Guttenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper. The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abness on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the 'Virgin Queen'. As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops they all shouted 'hurrah'. Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.



The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies, and errors. In one of Shakespear's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill the King by attacking his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespear was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained. During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Fe. Later the Pilgrims crossed the ocean, and this was known as Pilgrims Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porpoises on their back. Many of the Indian heroes were killed along with their capooses. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for settlers. Many people

died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the war, the Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally the colonists won the war and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared 'A horse divided against itself cannot stand.' Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead. George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. The constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms. Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, 'In onion there is strength.' Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while travelling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-Negroes citizenship. But the Clu Clux Clan would torcher and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented law and odour. On the night of April 14, 1855, Lincoln went to the theatre and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposingly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

(thanks to Mary Allardyce)

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Gallowgate Fair

Don't book your holiday before you plan your baking for the Gallowgate Fair! First Saturday in August – stand by for further details!

Saints' Days in June:

- 1st. St. Justin
3rd. The Martyrs of Uganda
4th. John XXIII
5th. St. Boniface of Mainz
8th. St. Ephrem the Syrian
9th. St. Columba
11th. St. Barnabas
12th. John Skinner
14th. Ss. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianus, & Gregory of Nyssa
18th. Bernard Mizeki
20th. St. Fillan
22nd. St. Alban
24th. The Birth of John the Baptist
25th. St. Moluag of Lismore
26th. Robert Leighton
27th. Alexander Jolly
28th. St. Irenaeus of Lyons
29th. Ss. Peter & Paul



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

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Assistant Priest: Rev. Jason Hobbs

Rector's Warden: David Rose

People's Warden: Mary Allardyce

Vestry Secretary: Dave Dillard

Vestry Treasurer: Lydia Ross (864072)

Lay Representative: Nicola Mills

Sacristan: Mary Allardyce

Organist: Christopher Black

Sunday School: To be arranged

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator:
Elizabeth Smyth

Flower Convener: Lucy Fleming

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All copy for the July/August double-issue magazine must be with the Editor by 20th. June, 2016. Hard copy to Nicola Mills, or telephone 01224 488700, or e-mail to palaeography@aol.com. Thank you!

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