



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 2016

Dear Friends,

But the news of (Jesus) kept spreading, and large crowds would gather to hear him and to have their illnesses cured, but he would go off to some deserted place and pray (Luke 5.15-16, New Jerusalem Bible)

It's very easy to skip over the many times in the Gospels that depict Jesus at prayer or leaving the crowds in order to find a solitary place to pray. Compared with his often astounding teachings or his astonishing works, his going away to pray seems rather unremarkable. But this habit of his left an impression upon his followers.

The passage quoted above is particularly interesting, because it seems like Jesus could have done some real good had he stayed; many were in need of healing. There's no doubt that were Jesus walking around today, this decision of preferring his personal prayer life over the healing of those in need would be wildly unpopular and heavily scrutinised.

We surely would doubt his divinity. Why wouldn't Jesus help? How selfish of him to think of himself when others are in need! Why would he prefer something as ineffective or at least not immediately practical like prayer to something so practical and obviously beneficial like the improvement of others' lives? It makes us ask why Jesus prioritised his need for prayer over the needs of others.

There's no question that Jesus' ministry was intense and demanding. Of course, we can

imagine a life of itinerant preaching and healing would be very taxing – always being in a new place, meeting new people, sharing the same message, dealing with the same objections and challenges, to say nothing of regularly encountering desperate people with serious ailments and sufferings. This would be very draining, and we could understand the need to get away from time to time to get perspective.

We also know that Jesus bore the sins of the world, which is to say the resistance he encountered was a species of the human resistance to God. His very own disciples are described as often obtuse, misunderstanding his teachings, correcting him and criticising him, and, ultimately, abandoning and denying him in his greatest hours of need. The crowds were either sceptical or selfish, wanting Jesus to perform for them and affirm their views. They likewise would turn on him when it became apparent that he wasn't the sort of minister they desired. And of course he frequently had to avoid traps set for him by the powerful and to debate suspicious, mistrusting leaders who were made uncomfortable by the newness of his message and suddenness of his authority.



Jesus needed a disciplined life of prayer to endure such trials, troubles and traumas as well as to ensure he remained faithful to the calling of God, not the clamouring of the crowds. Indeed, in Luke's Gospel it appears that Jesus slips away to pray just as the crowds start to swell and swamp him with opinions, requests and demands. It is when he is most needed or most sought after, most popular or most controversial that he finds it important to retreat into the love of his Father. There's a sense in which Jesus did not want his course to be determined by what people wanted from him but by what his Father wanted for him. When he felt his strength being drained, his power being commandeered, his ministry being misconstrued, he retreated to prayer to reorientate

himself to his mission, renew his love for God's people and return to the priorities of God's Kingdom.

Lately, I have been contemplating Jesus' commitment to prayer. If the Lord found it necessary to pray, how much more necessary is prayer for us? We all need time to reorientate ourselves to the priorities of God, especially since they are so counterintuitive and contrary to our own personal goals and desires.

As I write this, my time as Priest-in-Charge of St John's has come to an end. Yet new tasks are on the horizon as I have been elected to serve on the committee for the election of our new bishop. It seems an appropriate time to step away for prayer, reflection and returning to the fundamental priorities of ministry. So, I will be taking November as a time of prayer and vocational renewal. You will remain in my prayers and I ask that I remain in yours. During this time, if there are pastoral concerns you should direct them to Jason or to the Dean. Rest assured, I will miss you and I already look forward to rejoining you in Advent.

In Christ's peace,

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.

Lunchtime Fellowship

Lunchtime Fellowship continues on the last Tuesday of the month, at 12:30pm in the Choir Vestry.

Do join us if you can for a short time of worship followed by a light lunch and more conversation. Our theme next month is:

November 29th.: Hope, Joy, Peace and Love

No meeting in December, but there will be one at the end of January (theme to be decided).

Mary McKinnell

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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

Just the one Sunday School birthday in November: Georgina Stephens will be ten on the 19th. Happy birthday to her!

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Grosvenor Essay No.9: The Art of Dying Well

This essay series, produced by the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, is usually updated in response to current affairs and concerns and this one was written in the face of the Assisted Suicide Bill of 2013. As a result, some of the Church's responses to the parliamentary consultation are included. The rest of this slim volume is given over first to a history of the art of dying in Christian and other traditions, changing attitudes to death and funerals in society and in the Church. 'Dying and receiving life are central motifs of Christian worship and discipleship ... if we continually die in Christian discipleship, we approach our physical deaths as people who are continually being transformed'. This is followed by what is perhaps a more practical section examining the Hospice Movement, dementia, assisted dying and some medical perspectives, and a look at the specific case of HIV/AIDS and its impact on an age group less usually concerned by death. This is a challenging read, informative and inspiring, and argues some interesting points which will affect many if not all of us.

Some of the lovely Harvest arrangements at St. Mary's this year



The 'ART OF WAITING'

A QUIET DAY *Led by:* **Paul Watson**



SATURDAY, 19th November 2016

10.00am – 3.30pm

**St. Devenick's Church, 2 Baillieswells Road,
Bielside, Aberdeen AB15 9AP**

Please bring a packed lunch. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

We ask for a donation of £25 on the day. A smaller or a larger donation is acceptable. Cheques should be made out to 'The Epiphany Group, Aberdeen'. Cash is acceptable too.

This day has been organised by members of the Epiphany Group
www.epiphanygroup.org.uk

EPIPHANY GROUP
rooted in the Ignatian tradition

To reserve a place: please email Carole Phelan at carole.phelan@talk21.com

Contact numbers: **Carole** 07714091418 **Margaret:** 07733067001

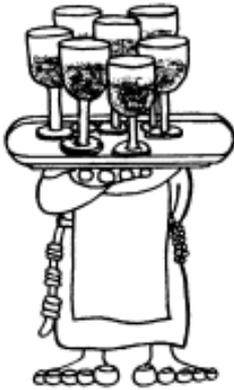
Dates for your diary

Cheese & Wine / Silent Auction

This combined event will be held on Saturday 12th November at 6.00pm in the choir vestry, with a chance to sample some excellent wine and cheese and to bid on interesting lots!

Needless to say, we are looking for donations of quality items to auction, and of raffle prizes.

Tickets are on sale at £12.50 each. Please see David Rose or Rachael Cormack. Remember to invite your family and friends to come along to join in this sociable fund raising event, one of those things that St. Mary's does so well!



Be Careful what you say!

At a recent computer expo, Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated,

‘If Ford had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon.’

In response to Bill's comments, Ford issued a press release stating:

If Ford had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash - twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road,

you would have to buy a new car.

3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.

4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.

5. Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive - but would run on only five percent of the roads.

6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single ‘This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation’ warning light.

7. The airbag system would ask, ‘Are you sure?’ before deploying.

8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.

9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.

10. You'd have to press the ‘Start’ button to turn the engine off.

PS - I'd like to add that when all else fails, you could call ‘customer service’ in some foreign country and be instructed in some foreign language how to fix your car yourself!

(sent in by Prue King)

Saints' Days in November:

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

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

Lunchtime Fellowship: Mary McKinnell
tofficer@aberdeen.anglican.org

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator:
Elizabeth Smyth

Flower Convener: Lucy Fleming

Church Office (561383)
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All copy for the December/January double issue magazine must be with the Editor by 21st. November, 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).