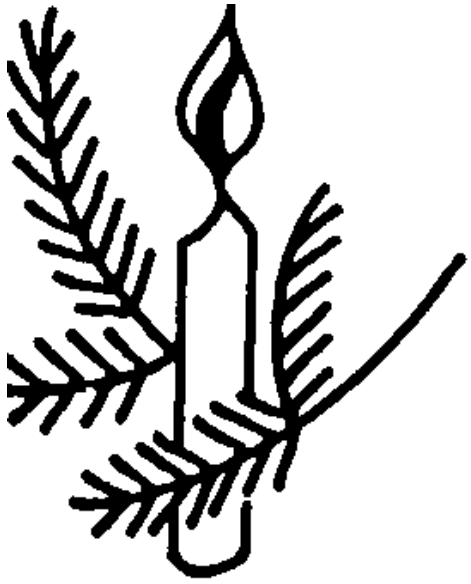
The Quarterly Magazine

St. Mary's, Carden Place

Christmas 2024



I think most of us could have been forgiven, in December in each of the last few years, for thinking that we were glad to be rid of the past year and focused on looking forward to something better in the next. In this decade we have had Covid, and political turmoil, and climate-related challenges, and wars. Alas, 2024 was not really any different, so we might end this year in the same mood.

Thinking like this is understandable, but for all that it is wrong. Every year in Advent, indeed at all times, we need to remind ourselves that we believe in a Gospel of hope. Right at the beginning of Advent our reading from Luke reminded us, through the words of Jesus, that our redemption is drawing near. On the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, St Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Philippians to "rejoice always".

Of course we must never be indifferent to human suffering and to the problems of this world, and Jesus tells us that what we do for the least members of our human race we do for him; but we must also remember that these problems are not our ultimate destiny. At Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, we will be reminded in Scripture and song that Jesus was born for our redemption.

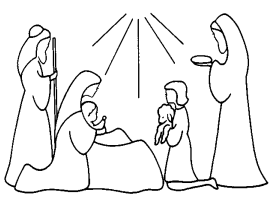
This message is particularly important at this time for our Church, which has suffered so much over the past while. We must pray for its life, and its ability to spread its message of love and redemption to our community and beyond. The Church too must be strengthened in hope, for Christ promised that it will never ultimately fail. So we all must be agents within and through our faith of reconciliation and mutual love, even when that seems a hard task.

More specifically in St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral, we must renew a sense of purpose and confidence, firm in the knowledge that our mission remains alive and strong. It is right for the people of St Mary’s to remember the important role it has in this city and this Diocese. Amidst the many things this community does, it has always been faithful in prayer, worship and outreach. Let these attributes shine out in the coming year.

So let us look to 2025 not in despair, but in hope. Let us resolve to greet the Christ child in the manger and then to step into the New Year with confidence and faith, caring for each other and our communities. Let us do this in the knowledge that Jesus told us he would be with us, to the end of the age.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice".

Rev. Ferdinand von Prondzynski



JESUS, KNOW YOU ARE LOVED AND ADORED

1 John 4:9 "We love because he first loved us."

I totally adore the Icon print of 'Mother of Tenderness' by Kelly Dillard. What draws me into the loving relationship is the mutual gazing taking place between Mary and Jesus – personally, I would describe this as loving adoration, mother for child and child for mother and for all who gaze upon them in the present and the future.

The Christmas Story is overseen by the Trinity when they, in the beginning, formed creation. Can you imagine holding such an important part of the evolving puzzle of God's Kingdom in your heart and mindset for so long? Do you think it was the perfect blueprint and that they never revisited it or altered their original plan for their Kingdom here on earth?

Personally, I like to think Jesus' birth was the original plan. How else would there be so many written or verbal connections and references in the Bible, for example, Jesus' family genealogy, and another one I connected with recently: 1 John 4:17 "because in the world we are like him".

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. Remember we don't have to fear as the world fears but fear in reverence to God, and as He is our Heavenly Father, He will embrace us and calm any internal storms just as He did with Joseph and Mary's family. We are taught reverence twofold: i) the way the Shepherds and Wise Men bowed in adoration and reverence to the baby Jesus; ii) the way that throughout Jesus' life he lived and acted out of adoration and reverence to his Heavenly Father and I dare say to his earthly mother, father, siblings, disciples, in fact all he met and encountered right up to his death. Jesus' birth and life story continue to show us the way to live and act today.

God, through Moses, parted the sea to rescue the people and bring them out of the land of slavery and fear they were existing in (Exodus 14:19-31). I believe God can and does still

part whatever ‘sea’ we find ourselves in. Remember you don’t have to wait for this Christmas to feel loved and adored because God loves always and through Jesus’ birth and life there is a mirror image towards a calmer and more beneficial life for everyone.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love” God sent His Son “perfect love”, this little adored baby showing how much God loves because that loved baby Jesus was conceived, born and lived as a sacrifice for me/us. God has certainly gifted us a heavenly pathway to a Love that will never die. ‘How deep the Father’s love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.” (Stuart Townend). I can never imagine how Jesus could carry such a realisation that his life was going to be cruelly ended – perhaps it was knowing this was not the end but the beginning of ‘something’ new, the holding of that Wisdom and not fear.

1 John 4:16-17: “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him. In this way love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgement, because in the world we are like him.”

Perfect love drives out all fear – fear aligned to respect and a healthy reverence to God

Begin each day in the knowledge that God’s perfect love is freely given for this day (today), yes it was there yesterday, and it will be there tomorrow – an absolute guarantee. Maybe this will help reassure people they are not alone and hopefully reduce fear.

To feel love is special but to feel adored is even more heart opening and warming. All who visited Jesus following his birth ‘adored’ Him. ‘O Come let us Adore Him’. Adore is not a word used very often nowadays – maybe it should be!

My Granddaughter and I were having a fun clay afternoon and she made a plaque of a dog, I would call it ‘adorable’, Georgia has yet to name it. Be mindful because Love and Adore are all around us daily, keep an open heart and mind this Christmas season.

Christmas Blessings

From

Margaret McKinnon

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION AND 2025 CALENDAR

The results are in!

In first place entry number 15 “Aberdeen Beach” by Kevin McKinnon.

In second place entry number 8 “Cults sunset” by Iain House.

In third place entry number 29 “Sardinia – 2” by Kristy McKinnon.

Entries number 10 “Park Bridge” by Iain House and 16 “Lochside, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen” by Kevin McKinnon were highly commended.

Our judge this year, Revd Canon Dr Jenny Holden said, “I really enjoyed being taken around the seasons, Aberdeen, the North East and the world near and far while judging this year’s photo competition. Thank you to all the entrants for being prepared to share their photos (and I often wondered what had led to them being taken…).”

The 2025 St. Mary’s Calendar, featuring entries for the competition, is on sale now in the church.

A THOUGHTFUL POEM

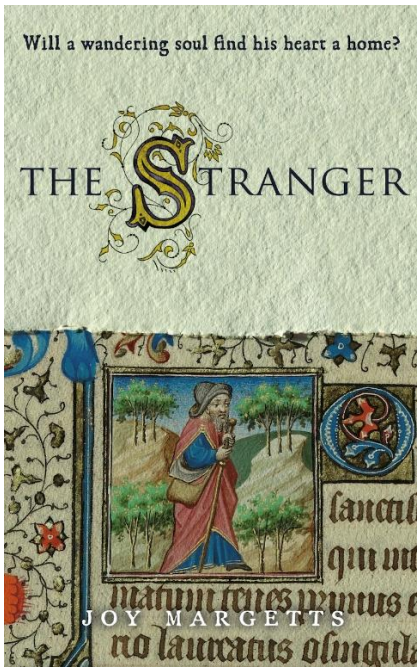
This poem, of which an elderly handwritten version fell out of one of the diocesan library books when they were being packed, is attributed to several different people on the internet, including a nameless 19 year old English girl in service. A good thought, though, as we labour over Christmas catering!

Lord of all pots and pans and things
Since I’ve no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawn light,
Or storming Heaven’s gates
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates.

Although I must have Martha’s hands
I have a Mary mind;
And when I black the boots and shoes,
Thy sandals, Lord, I find,
I think of how they trod the earth
What time I scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord,
I haven’t time for more.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love,
And light it with Thy peace;
Forgive me all my worrying,
And make all grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love and give men food
In room or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do –
I do it unto Thee.

BOOK REVIEW



The Stranger, by Joy Margetts

There is a great sense of place and time here, and we are drawn quickly into Silas' world and his mental struggles. Silas runs away from his monastery feeling he has failed in trying to establish its daughter house in a hostile environment. On his travels he is the stranger, stealing a coracle (with great incompetence), living with a carpenter's widow and helping her find her feet, learning from a lonely charcoal burner … though he seemed humble enough he learns a proper humility as those he thinks less religiously educated than himself teach him something else about his faith. While he is a stranger to them, he has tried to make himself a stranger to God, too, but God, of course, does not take this lying down. Silas' service to others is a strong theme – having felt he failed in this at Grace Dieu, he goes on to help everyone he meets quite unselfconsciously, though he also learns how to accept help from others. Though we can take Silas as the stranger of the title, one character, Cennad, who leads him and encourages him at one of his lowest ebbs is also a key stranger, not seen to speak to anyone but Silas, moving mysteriously and vanishing just when he has seen Silas to safety. This is a lovely and encouraging story, grounded in its historical setting, woven in with appropriate Biblical quotations and insights, particularly from Brother Hywel who has appeared in previous books. It is a delight to see Silas re-encounter God, the God who reminds him, surprisingly, that Silas loves Him (not the other way around, which is the more obvious statement!). A joy to read.

If you have seen an interesting play or film or read a thought-provoking book and would like to tell us about it, please contact the editor.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Our pizza and quiz night was terrific fun, and the curry evening was also well attended and a very good evening. Thanks so much for all who set and answered questions, ordered pizza, brought curry and all the trimmings. Look out for news of our social calendar for 2025!

2025 – INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF …

The Fenwick Weavers' Society, in Ayrshire, is considered to be the earliest known co-operative in the world for which full records exist. The foundation charter, now in the National Library of Scotland, is dated 14 March 1761. The first modern-style co-operative was founded by millworkers in the north of England in 1844, and since then the movement has grown so that now there are over 3 million co-operatives, of different kinds and for different purposes, in the world. In Aberdeen for many years we had the forward-thinking Norco with its headquarters at Berryden and its branches across the city, including the flagship store in George Street.

‘The United Nations General Assembly has recently adopted a resolution declaring 2025 as the International Year of Co-operatives. This resolution highlights the pivotal role of co-operatives in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and advancing global social and economic development.

‘The resolution urges member states and stakeholders to utilise 2025 as an opportunity to raise awareness about the contributions of co-operatives. It emphasises their impact on various development areas, including decent employment, poverty eradication, education, social protection, financial inclusion, and the creation of affordable housing. In addition, member states are encouraged to review and enhance existing legislation to create a supportive environment for co-operative growth. This includes addressing key factors such as access to capital, autonomy, competitiveness, and fair taxation.’

Where two or three are gathered together … !

ACCOUNTS

Due to the absence of the treasurer on holiday, the accounts will appear in the next magazine.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Rector: vacancy

Assistant Priests: Rev. Jason Hobbs, Rev. Roger Dyer (for pastoral matters please contact on 07719 458571 or revrogdyer@btinternet.com)

Rector's Warden: John Cooke

People's Warden: Iain Stewart

Vestry Secretary: David Rose

Vestry Treasurer: Lydia Ross

Lay Representative: Nicola Mills

Sacristan: Anne Farquhar

Organist: vacancy

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator: Graham Thomson

Flower Convener: (please contact Nicola Mills for now)

Church Office (01224 561383) stmaryscardenplace@gmail.com

Online: www.stmaryscardenplace.org.uk / facebook.com/stmaryscardenplace

The deadline for the next magazine, our Easter 2025 issue, will be 14th April. Copy when required to Nicola Mills, or telephone 01224 488700, or e-mail to palaeography@aol.com. Thank you!

Your Magazine

You can order your St. Mary's News to be sent to you each quarter 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!

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