The Quarterly Magazine

St. Mary's, Carden Place

Easter 2025

This year marks a rather unusual birthday in the life of the Church across the world. 2025 is the 1,700th birthday of the Nicene Creed.

To be more accurate, this is the 1,700th anniversary of a great church gathering called the Council of Nicaea (now Iznik, in Turkey), at which the basis of the creed was established. It was the first great ecumenical gathering of the Church,. There are those who say it should be called the Nicenoconstantinopolitan Creed, because it was revised at the Council of Constantinople fifty-six years later, but (1) that anniversary is a long way away and (2) it's really hard to say!

Icon depicting Emperor Constantine with the bishops of the First Council of Nicaea (325), holding the Nicene Creed as adopted in 381 (Wikipedia).

It might not even have been called the Nicene Creed, because the Council was to have been held at Ancyra (now Ankara). However, the Emperor Constantine decreed that it should be held further west at Nicaea for the greater convenience of the Western churches, and the much lesser convenience of the Eastern ones. Constantine himself, it seems, did not want to travel all the way to Ancyra. The representatives of the Eastern churches did, apparently, turn up late, but not so late that they could not take part in the business of the Council, which, apart from drawing up the Creed, also tried (unsuccessfully) to establish a uniform date for Easter, and enacted a few canons including one forbidding kneeling on Sundays and during the Easter season.

We don't know whether or not the churchmen at Nicaea had the Apostles' Creed to work from – it's not absolutely clear that the Apostles' Creed is really older than the Nicene. Nevertheless they probably had some statement of beliefs, and they also had a context to which the creed was in places a reaction. In the first place, Constantine was very keen on church unity and continuity, which is why the word 'apostolic' appears, referring to a tradition going back to the Apostles, and the prophets are also mentioned, to incorporate the Old Testament into the canon. It is also possible that that is why Pontius Pilate is clearly named, because it dates and places the actions surrounding Christ's crucifixion, giving it a point in history.

The reason there is nothing in the Creed about Jesus' teachings is almost certainly because in the church context these, at least, were not controversial. The four Gospels had been

chosen as the most reliable accounts, and this was mostly agreed on. But there were several serious heresies current at the time, and these had to be countered. A lesser one was the Marcion heresy, which argued that a good God could not have created a material world to be a distraction from Himself, so the Creed states that we believe in a God who is 'maker of Heaven and Earth'. A much stronger heresy, and one which it is thought the Nicene Creed may have been developed specifically to counter, was the Arian heresy.

Arius believed that there must have been a time before Christ, that Christ was created by God. Therefore there would have been a time when God was not yet the Father. The broader Church believed that in fact creation and time came into being at the same time, that Jesus was always Christ, and that Christ was 'eternally begotten' and 'begotten, not created'. Arius also believed that Christ was 'differently divine', not the same as God, therefore the Creed states that He is 'of one substance with the Father'.

By the time the Creed was revised at the Council of Constantinople there were further subtle changes partly due to scholarly study that had happened in between: work done by the Cappadocians and Gregory of Nazianzus led to the paragraph in the Creed on the Holy Spirit, and there is more emphasis on us, the believers, and the effect of Christ's sacrifice on us.

This is a short summary of a workshop which is planned for this year's General Synod in June, to be given by the Rev. Professor Charlotte Methuen. She also pointed us in the direction of this summary of what the Creed is to us, from *https://anglicancompass.com/the-nicene-creed-a-rookie-anglican-guide*:

'For Anglicans, the Nicene Creed is also a regular feature of Sunday worship. In our communion liturgy, we stand and, as a congregation, declare the creed, rehearsing each week the basic content and story of our faith. In so doing, we remind ourselves every week of God's grace to us in his Son Jesus Christ, and we confess that he is both Savior and Lord.'

Look out for events this year marking this remarkable birthday!

On Saturday 10 May an ecumenical study day will take place looking at the Council of Nicaea,

The study day is jointly organised by the Scottish Episcopal Institute and St Ninian's Cathedral, and is led by Prof Lewis Ayres, Professor of Catholic & Historical Theology at Durham University and author of the book *Nicaea and its Legacy*.

The study day runs from 2.30pm to 6pm. For more details and to register an interest please contact provost.perth@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

Once again this year we were able to donate a sizeable collection of selection boxes to Barnardo's, and our Tin Christmas Tree, which we kept running until Candlemas, finally amounted to 137 tins, which were donated to C-Fine. Many, many thanks to all who gave so generously.

(thanks to Lydia Ross for the photo)

ST. MARY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

After taking the 10am service on 2nd. February, Bishop Anne then chaired our AGM, which was well attended and cosy in the Choir Vestry. Reports had been circulated by the secretary, treasurer, lay rep and safeguarding officer, all of whom were available to answer questions. Freddie Stephen also made a brief presentation on Net Zero and how the congregation can contribute to the discussion on reducing our energy use. The secretary's report included information on building work at the church and rectory and on the ongoing effort to sell the current rectory to be replaced by a building that is easier to maintain. As regards appointing a rector, with Bishop Anne only recently back in post it was reported that there would soon be meetings to discuss our options.

BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL 2025

Lent is a time of giving and repenting, so if you are wondering where to give, why not consider the Bishop's Lent Appeal this year for the charity DaysforGirlsUK (charity reg. number 1189219). 'Never heard of it,' I hear you say, and neither had I, but now I can't believe that was the case as it is such a worthwhile and effective charity. At the Lambeth Conference, Bishop Anne was invited to a meeting of African Bishops and their wives with DaysforGirlsUK. The demographic was somewhat different from a UK Bishop's meeting, with spouses brightly dressed younger women accompanied by young children.

A core discovery at this meeting was that in the world, the average Anglican is a woman, living in Sub-Saharan Africa, in her 30s, on less than $4 a day. This is a significant difference to our core membership in the UK.

As you can imagine, managing menstruation is quite an issue for these people and many days of school and work are lost because of this. In Angola for example, children live on less than a dollar a day. How many of us remember sitting important school exams? So much work, so much to remember and then on the day of your exam your period comes, and you must stay at home the whole week until it stops, and you miss them all, sitting on a towel or newspaper. When a decision on income is whether to pay for rent or food, sanitary products are well down the list, yet completing your education is a powerful tool for improved income.

What does Days for Girls do about this? DaysforGirlsUK aims to reduce period stigma, boost health education in men, boys and girls, provide sustainable pads and build social entrepreneurs as well as being involved in policy and advocacy. On a recent visit to Guinea the DaysforGirlsUK rep was able to reach 11,000 children by going into schools, set up a sewing group and distribute 1,500 kits in four months. All over the world the beautiful bags they make

in small groups provide a positive and sustainable way into menstrual management. You can see more detailed information on their website at https://www.daysforgirls.org/uk.

Donations are welcome at https://www.justgiving.com/daysforgirlsuk, noting 'Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney' on your donation. If you prefer, you can send a Cheque payable to Days for Girls UK to: DaysforGirlsUK , 24 Marney Rd, London SW11 5EP with the following information attached:

'I wish to submit this donation for Gift Aid as I am a UK Tax payer.
'My address and post code
'I am donating as part of Bishop's Lent Appeal of Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney'

If you would like to see the bags that are produced or are interested in forming a sewing group, do please contact me at St Mary's as it would be wonderful to make this into more than a Lent one-off donation.

Julia House

NET ZERO: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

REMEMBER THE THREE CS – COMFORT, COST AND CLIMATE

Since our AGM we have had a board at the back of the church seeking your thoughts on some of the Net Zero team's suggestions, and asking you to contribute any of your own. So far the idea of putting curtains up around the doors seems popular, as does the more expensive idea of installing underfloor heating to complement the heaters we already have. As stated before, it is possible that we might be able to find funding for this, and to power it by air-source heat pumps (these are not usually efficient for heating a building like ours that is difficult to insulate, but if the energy is directed to an intermediate heating system they work much better).

We've been gathering information on temperature swings and how to use our present heating better within the church itself. If you have any comments on the heating in other parts of the building (which is on a different system), please let us know so we can consider that, too.

We hope to take the board down and collate the ideas just after Easter, but if you have any contributions to make that you think of later, or if you'd like to join the Net Zero team, just let one of the Net Zero team know, or any vestry member.

Thought for the Net Zero day: Apples are one of the best fruit to eat if we want to be kind to our planet. Once the trees are planted, they need much less in the way of fertiliser than other fruiting plants, and carry on fruiting year after year. And though it's best to buy locally where possible, if you are eating apples from abroad they can be transported by ship, not flown, and don't need to be frozen on the way.

John Cooke
Julia House
Nick Mills
Freddie Stephens

HOPE AND JOY TO EVERYONE THIS EASTER

"I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning." (*Through Lent with Pope Francis,* p78, Ignatian Spiritual Centre, Glasgow)

John 15:11NIV:

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other, as I have loved you."

I have chosen Hope and Joy as my theme this year because they are very much uppermost in many people's hearts and lives this year. You probably have a few hopes and joys of your own floating around this Easter too.

This led me to wonder whether the disciples had hope in their hearts when they saw Jesus being led away and hearing of his crucifixion. My believe is that the two Marys and John all carried a heart of hope right up to Jesus' last breath.

How I see Judas has also changed over the years, and after watching the Passion Play a few years ago, I got a sense that he had hoped Jesus' capture would have resulted in a very different ending, with Jesus performing some sort of miracle and turning the situation on its head – and of course he would have had a pouch full of money in his possession.

All too often it's so easy to get carried away with single-minded or motivated hopes and outcomes – not appreciating there actually could be another scenario … Jesus had tried telling the disciples about his future, but sadly even their eyes weren't open to seeing the bigger picture either.

I love hearing and seeing children expressing their hopes. They are so innocent, and okay, not all turn out as expected, but eventually they learn to accept the outcome. No different for both Marys and the disciples, although Mary was pre-warned that her heart would be broken.

Georgia's current hope is that the seeds she has planted turn into Sunflowers, Cosmos and Carrots.

One of my hopes has come true, and the tulip bulbs I planted have all produced beautiful flowers. This, for me, is when hope turned to joy. Especially this year as they've had such beautiful sunshine to grow and bloom in.

I'm quite confident that the joy that Jesus' resurrection brought to everyone's hearts transformed them completely, with ripples of joy flowing like a river throughout the lands the disciples visited and preached in. The disappointed who had hoped Jesus was the Messiah must have realised the truth – yes Messiah, but not in the way they wanted him to be! The joy in their hearts after the event would have opened their eyes to see the truth. Hence the numbers who believed, after the resurrection.

In fact, James and John discovered their joy didn't require them sitting close to Jesus' side (as their mother hoped for), but rather getting out there amongst the people and preaching the good news of Jesus. Indeed those ripples of good news still flow today in many Churches and countries, wherever the love of Jesus is preached. John's written word is still pivotal in the conversion of many, many people today. James was a passionate preacher and died giving his life for Jesus' resurrection message. Jesus would have known their futures, hence his turning down their mother's request. They were meant for bigger and better things. I wonder if their mother lived long enough to see the transformation in her sons and probably in her life too?

Angels played such a hands-on role, not only with Mary but in Jesus' life and death too. I have an angel wings plant which this year has spread beautifully. My Easter blessing for everyone is that they too experience the Hope, the Joy, and possibly the touch of an angel's wing this Easter as the celebrations flow like a river through our Churches, Diocese and beyond.

Love and Blessings
Margaret McKinnon

SENSIO DIVINA: ***A WONDER-FULL WALK WITH FRIENDS***

The last Sunday of the month in the afternoon, a very special event takes place on the banks of the river Dee.

We come together, from Banchory, Aberdeen and from surrounding areas, carpooling where we can.

This is Wonder-full, the Forest Church.

It started with Rev. Canon Lynsay Braybrooke, Rector of St Ternan's in Banchory, who was seeking an inclusive approach to learning and worshipping in nature. At the same time, Rev. Roger Dyer had lost his daughter Millie after a long illness and was exploring the out-of-doors across the diocese.

They were joined by Rev. Dr Jenny Holden who was curate at St John's until taking up her role as Advisor for Christian Life for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in 2023. Together the three share leadership of the Forest Church.

The place itself is quite special. Attendees are given instruction helped by a What Three Words location due to it being off the beaten path, down a private one-way drive where you are more likely to see dog walkers than meet other vehicles.

Once parked we gather at the gate where either Jenny, Lynsay or Roger say a short prayer or a reading and offer a suggestion of something to look for, something to feel or notice using one of our senses, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch.

There is always plenty in this verdant stretch of Deeside, something that has changed, even in colder darker days, whether it is the rustle of leaves, the sound of the river or the bright green of new moss on felled trees. Then it's a short 20-minute walk to the fishing hut veranda, nestled right beside the Dee. We are invited to take some time to wander – and wonder – then come back together.

This is *sensio divina*, Rev. Lynsay explains.

'This involves looking at the world or being in the world and saying, so what did you see or smell or hear or touch that was of God?'

Rev. Lynsay notes the place has been used to pray before. Owned by Julian and his late wife Miranda, there is no fishing on Sunday so Forest Church is invited to use it. Lynsay's predecessor, Rev. Canon Lisa Eunson, who died in 2017 aged just 63, often used the little hut to take confirmation classes and hold retreats. Raised in the USA but with ancestors from Shetland, Rev. Lisa had her ashes scattered there. Her memory still lives on too through the Green Shoots Trust, a bequest she left to be administered by the people at St Ternan's, and which is used to buy nourishing soup or delicious hot chocolate from Tease Coffee Bar on Banchory High Street to share with Forest Church goers.

The format of the service, which takes around an hour and a half to two hours, is loosely inspired by what happens in evening prayer. Rev. Lynsay explains,

‘We start with a greeting that happens at the gate. Then in evening prayer where you have a Psalm or a Canticle, that is our walk down there. Then we have our first reading and time to sit with it. Then we have a second reading, the equivalent of a sermon, as we sit and discuss over our soup or hot chocolate. Then we have a response that happens, like you would have the Magnificat, that is us going back up, then a blessing.

‘We have noticed on the way back the conversations we have are different from the way down. You could almost argue they are more prayerful, they seem to be a bit deeper.’

A funny story happened on the way to the establishment of Forest Church. To denote the awe felt being in God’s creation, there was a suggestion perhaps it could be called the Awe-full Forest Church (we won’t say who suggested this, to spare his blushes). Thankfully it was settled to call it Wonder-full instead.

Come this summer, Forest Church will have been running for three years. Recently the three leaders took a retreat in Dunkeld for a few days to plan and discuss its future. If it gets bigger, say it starts to regularly attract more than twelve worshippers, other locations will be sought. People from across the province are also becoming interested in how Forest Church works.

In Dunkeld it was also decided Rev. Roger would continue to attend Forest Church as a punter rather than as a leader, so we give thanks to him for his service here as well as all other areas of the diocese where he continues to support so many.

For Rev. Lynsay, Forest Church continues to be a special place and event often still full with Wonder.

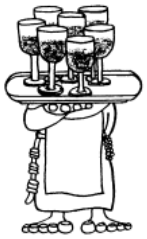
‘I am surprised by how much people are willing to share. It’s at a level different to what I have experienced in most church groups that I have been a part of,’ she says.

‘We as leaders find it very replenishing which is unusual. It is not often you come away feeling replenished from a service. You often feel you need a nap, even if it went well and you were pleased.

‘We meet with people who might not otherwise come into church. We have sometimes had leaders of other churches who also need a bit of a pick-up. But the kinds of conversation we have and the space and peace which is held for one another is really attractive and leaves room for God to be at work.’

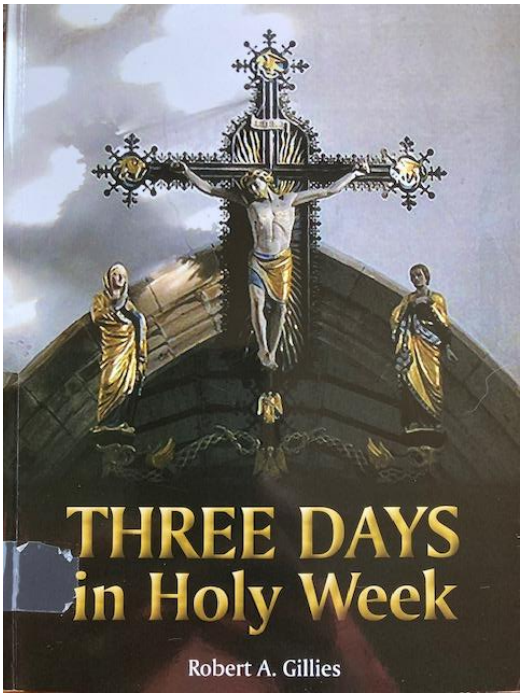
Erikka Askeland

SOCIAL EVENTS



Our Ladies' Evening and Gentlemen's Evening are coming up fast on the 16th May. There will be sign up sheets shortly at the back of the church for you to say you're coming and suggest a venue, so please take a look.

BOOK REVIEW



Robert A. Gillies, *Three Days in Holy Week*: This little book by our former Bishop Bob reflects, in straightforward, honest fashion, on the words spoken by Jesus on the Cross, drawing on personal experiences and accounts of friends and colleagues as well as Biblical scholarship. It's informative and very readable, and draws its account together at the end with reflections on the discovery of the Resurrection on Easter morning, comparing the four Gospel versions, and on the lessons we can learn from these three days in Holy Week in terms of leadership, evangelism, deepening faith and discipleship, four contributors towards growth in our church

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.

ACCOUNTS

February 2025

Income:	4,911
Expenditure:	5,590
Net result for month:	-679

March 2025

Income:	4,342
Expenditure	5,930
Net result for month:	-1,588

Balance unrestricted funds:	54,020
Balance restricted funds:	16,825
Balance at month end:	£75,345

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)

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

The deadline for the next magazine, our Trinity 2025 issue, will be 30th June. 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).