

St Mark's Messenger

Winter 2017



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Welcome to all our new readers who have joined us in Union from Queen Street Parish Church. For some of you this may be a new experience, having not previously been through a Union, although I doubt it! For others, like the majority of those of us who have worshipped in St Mark's for many years it is simply another change in our journey of faith.

Your new spiritual home started in 1892 as the South Parish Church of Aberdeen but changed its name to St Mark's in 1972 when we united with the East and Belmont Church, the new name was retained in 1982 when we united with Trinity Church and following detailed discussions with representatives of Queen Street and your former Kirk Session it was agreed that the name be kept for this, our latest Union.

The folks of St Mark's are aware of the history of Queen Street, involving John Knox and Greyfriars and the more historic North United Free Church, North Kirk, and the more recent North Church of St Andrew. All of us share a proud position in the history of the Church of Scotland in Aberdeen and it is our joint hope that we can continue to serve the City, bringing new meaning to our church vision statement:

'St Mark's, sharing God's love in the City Centre'.

Letter from the Interim Moderator



Dear Folks of the recently united charge of St. Mark's,

It has been an eventful year for the former congregations of Queen Street and St. Mark's. There were the retirements of the Rev Dr Graham Deans and the Rev Diane Hobson and then the process of moving towards a union of the two congregations. I'm sure that those who attended the service of union on Friday 3 November were uplifted and encouraged by that service of worship. It is good that on a regular basis Mr Stiubhart MacChoille has been available and willing to lead morning worship at St. Mark's. I understand that the morning services led by Stiubhart have been very much enjoyed. Remember Stiubhart and his family as he continues this valuable ministry at St. Mark's. In regard to pastoral care which requires the attention of a Minister, as your Interim Moderator I am available for that. Thanks, are expressed to Rev Andrew Christie who has assisted pastorally on many occasions during the vacancy.

There is much for the newly united congregation of St. Mark's to address in the coming months: The Kirk Session will shortly be meeting with the Presbytery Advisory committee regarding Vacancy procedure. Following that there will notice given of the electing of a Nominating committee who will have the task of seeking after a minister who in due course will lead worship before the congregation and a vote be taken regarding the Call of the nominee.

There is the applying of the Unitary Constitution which is a new experience for both former congregations but is a requirement of the newly united charge of St. Mark's as specified in the Basis of Union. In Summary this means that the Kirk Session is the principal governing body for all matters of the congregation which includes matters

previously dealt with by the Congregational Board (Finance and Fabric). The idea is that more power and resourcing is devolved to working teams on a variety of areas of the Church's life and ministry. Members of the congregation would be encouraged to participate in these different teams. They do not have to be Elders or former Board members. The Kirk Session is setting up a working group to give a structure that will be appropriate for implementing at St. Mark's.

There is also the issue of the intended sale of the Queen Street building and how to proceed with that. There will also be the sale of the Mile End Avenue Manse and the retaining of the Osborne Place Manse as the Kirk Session has so decided.

So, there is a lot for the congregation and the office bearers to proceed with. I have been impressed with the hard work and dedication of office bearers such as the joint Session Clerks Ian and Marjorie Lord, Treasurer Mr Alex McConochie and Property Convener Mr Graeme Low. It's very important that we offer our support, encouragement and prayers for them with all the challenges and opportunities before them.

In closing let me focus on Christmas, the Gospel: For God so loved the world that He gave His Son (John 3: 16). With the many changes that we see year in and year out we draw near to the Eternal truth: God's Amazing Love revealed in a child born in a stable, who grew to be a man who journeyed to the Cross. What Grace, what transforming love that can touch each and every generation in the midst of all the changes. Emmanuel: God with us. Hallelujah!

Wishing you a deeply joyful Christmas!

God bless

Rev Duncan Eddie

Interim Moderator

Service of Union 3 November 2017

On Friday 3 November, the Presbytery of Aberdeen conducted the service of union to formally bring together Queen Street and St Mark's churches. The service was led by the Moderator, Rev Keith Blackwood and the sermon was preached by Rev Scott Rennie. Rev Edmond Gatima, St Mark's former Interim Moderator and Queen Street's former IM and our new Interim Moderator, Rev Duncan Eddie led prayers. Readings were by Ian Lord and Peter Gray.

The former minister of St Mark's Rev John M Watson was a guest of Presbytery and spoke at the tea afterwards. Greetings were also read from Rev Diane Hobson and Rev Dr Graham D S Deans. Here's what they wrote:

Moderator, Members of Presbytery, St Mark's and Queen Street.

'I am deeply sorry that I am unable to be with you on this very special evening. I had the privilege of being St Mark's Minister and a friend of the good people of Queen street. I pray confidently that you will all know Jesus's pleasure as you are United in His name.

As you all grow together may you know a deep sense of belonging, acceptance and love for each other. May you share laughter, fun, forgiveness and most essentially the love of God as you worship and seek to serve this world for God's Glory.

God's blessings be abundantly yours.
In Jesus Christ's name and fellowship,
Revd Diane Hobson'.

And from Graham:

'MESSAGE TO THE UNITED CONGREGATION

This is a day of new beginnings;

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but if for a moment a voice from the past may be allowed to speak to those who have had to take their leave of a building with hallowed associations, let it say that it is also a time to remember the past with pride and thanksgiving.

In the faith of Him Who makes all things new, and in the power of God's Spirit, seek to let go of all feelings of loss and disappointment, so that faith and hope may be born again, as you travel towards a new future.

Therefore, I would offer my prayers and best wishes to the united Congregation as together you face new challenges and new opportunities in the days that lie ahead.

May the God of peace be with you all.
Rev Dr Graham D S Deans'.

The Final Service at Queen Street Church

Sunday 29 October saw the final service of worship at Queen Street Church with folks from St Mark's in attendance and at the soup and pudding lunch which followed. During the service, former Session Clerk, Norman Haggart spoke about the history of the building in the following terms:



The present building was opened on 1 September 1905. Previously, a smaller building known as the Free North Church had occupied a site nearby since 1844. In 1925 when the split in the Church of Scotland was healed and the Unified Church was re-established, this church became known as the North Church of Scotland. Locally it had always been known as the North Kirk. In 1967 King Street Church was united with the North Church and the name of the joint congregation was changed to the North Church of St Andrew.

As recently as December 2004 the North Church of St Andrew united with neighbouring Greyfriars John Knox and the name was again changed to the current name of Queen Street Church. Independent arbiters decided that this building should be the one used by the united congregation.

The pulpit was designed by William Gauld, architect of the building, and made from Japanese oak, it was built as a Memorial to the 65 men of the congregation who gave their lives in the 1914-18 war. Further names were added after the 1939-45 war. Mr Gauld also designed the Communion Table which now resides in the Chapel on the ground floor. The Communion Table in the Sanctuary was transferred from the Sanctuary of Greyfriars John Knox after the union. The Baptismal Font was gifted by Miss Augusta Skene, a faithful member of the congregation, and first used in 1937.

The organ is a medium sized two manual pipe organ. It was built in 1905 by the Dundee firm of Miller & Co for a church in Dundee. In 1945 it was purchased for the North Kirk and dedicated to the memory of those who gave their lives in the Second World War. Prior to 1945 there was no organ in the North Kirk and music was provided by a fiddle orchestra. Consequently, many in Aberdeen still refer to the Church as "the Fiddle Kirk". The tradition of the fiddle orchestra was maintained on the last Sunday of each month from October to March when the orchestra provided the music for the Evening Service until 1997 when the members of the orchestra retired. In 1988 a major overhaul of the organ was undertaken at a cost of £24,000.

The Congregational Hall is used for meetings of the Kirk Session and the Congregational Board, in addition to being available for other groups. The Kirk Lounge was formerly the Session House. In 1981 it was completely refurbished and is now used for a variety of purposes. The lovely ground floor Chapel is often used for small weddings and private baptisms. Prior to the installation of the lift, the Sunday morning service was relayed here from the Sanctuary by CCTV to allow

the less able members who could not climb the stairs to participate in the service. The installation of the lift allows the whole congregation to worship together in the Sanctuary.

The Main Hall immediately below the Sanctuary is used by our organisations and for social events that take place regularly. The stage with its lighting provides an ideal platform for entertainment. On the side wall there is a mural painted by Edi Swan, then one of our Elders, which depicts the city of Aberdeen and the surrounding area. The Church features in the centre of the mural, symbolic of the Church at the heart of the city. Below the Church is a fiddle, reminding us of the "Fiddle Kirk" tradition.

In addition to the Main Hall there are several other halls of varying sizes, a Church Office, a Resources Room and a large Minister's Vestry.

Since 1843 there have been 15 Ministers who have served this congregation and in addition, many Assistant Ministers, Church Sisters, Deaconesses and Student Assistants have been involved and we give thanks to God for their contribution to the life and work of the Church in this place for well over 100 years.

Norman Haggart

(Reproduced and edited with Norman's permission)

Duty Rotas

The usual pull-out supplement of duty rotas does not appear this quarter. There is still some doubt as to the availability of elders, following the union and rather than make assumptions as to who will be doing what the lists will appear in the Pew Leaflet until the picture is fully clarified. Hopefully by the next magazine the position will be much clearer.

St Mark's Rambling and Hill Walking Group



Since the last St Mark's Messenger some interesting walks have been undertaken by the rambling group and below are just a few of the highlights.

Tuesday 22nd Drumoak and back to Bielside along railway line, we took the bus to Mains of Drum and walked back to Bielside following the Deeside way, a lovely days walking.

While the leader was away on his summer holidays some walks were tackled but not listed here.

Tuesday 19th September, Pitfichie forest was a nice walk from the car park that to us up to the stone circle, coffee break, and on following the bike route this took us up onto the hill that gave us lovely views over the countryside and a chance to have lunch in the very pleasant conditions. The return to the car was down a rough track and then onto the forest Land Rover track, good day with lovely weather.

Tuesday 26th September was postponed due to poor weather

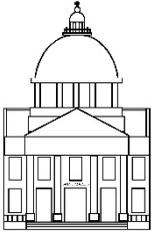
Saturday 30th September a lovely autumnal walk around the Glen Tanar Estate. Nice weather and good company made this a very pleasant day.

Tuesday 3rd October saw us head to Tarland by car to do part of the Alastrean Circuit and then followed the path that took us to the stone circle and into Drummy Wood and back to Tarland. It was a windier day with a colder temperature, but still very enjoyable.

Tuesday 10th & 17th October, both had to be cancelled and Tuesday 24th October, because of the weather forecast this walk was changed from the planned route, it took in three hills, Castle Hill,

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Worship Calendar Worship Calendar Worship Calendar



Please note that Sunday morning services at St Mark's normally start at 11.00am. Any changes will be intimated in the Pew Leaflet.

Further details of the services will be available in the Pew Leaflet or on the Church website.

www.stmarksaberdeen.org.uk/worship

During the current vacancy, **Stiubhart MacChoille** will lead us in worship each Sunday, with Sacramental Services led by invited Preachers. Further details will be available on the Website and in the Pew Leaflet on a weekly basis.

17 December Third Sunday in Advent
11.00am Morning Worship
God has a Face

24 December Fourth Sunday in Advent
11.00am Morning Worship
It's Never too late
10.30pm Carols & Fun with Alex (ends 11.25)
11.30pm Watchnight Service
Stiubhart MacChoille



There is no Christmas Day Service this year

31 December First Sunday after Christmas
11.00am Morning Worship
God guides the wise
Stiubhart MacChoille

7 January 2018 First Sunday after Epiphany
11.00am Morning Worship
Humility Shines

14 January 11.00am Service of Holy Communion
Rev Andy Christie



21 January Joint Service at Crown Terrace Methodist Church
For the week of Christian Unity

28 January Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
11.00am Morning Worship

- 4 February Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
11.00am Morning Worship
A Forgiving Heart
- 11 February Transfiguration Sunday
11.00am Morning Worship
A Worship Hungry Heart
- 18 February First Sunday in Lent
11.00am Morning Worship
A Listening Heart
- 25 February Second Sunday in Lent
11.00am Morning Worship
A God-intoxicated Heart
- 4 March Third Sunday in Lent
11.00am Morning Worship
A Compassionate Heart
- 11 March Fourth Sunday in Lent
11.00am Morning Worship
A Focused Heart
- 18 March Fifth Sunday in Lent
11.00am Morning Worship
An Honest Heart
- 25 March Palm Sunday
11.00am Morning Worship
2.00 Palm Sunday Communion Service
Service Led by Rev Duncan Eddie, Interim Moderator
for the Circle of Care, followed by Afternoon tea
- 1 April 9.00am Easter Sunday Early Service at Well of Spa
Followed by Breakfast in the Hall
11.00am Easter Day Morning Worship
- 8 April Service of Holy Communion
11.00am Morning Worship
- 15 April The Third Sunday of Easter
11.00am Morning Worship
A Pure Heart



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Schoolhill and the Broad Hill. We met at the Monkey House and walked to Marischal College for a look at the anchors, then we walked to the Beach Prom, short coffee break, then along to and up the Broad Hill. From there to the St Nicholas Centre roof area for lunch, before walking up Schoolhill passing St Mark's Church before heading to the railway station to finish.

Tuesday 31st October was a rearranged walk that involved taking the bus to Banchory and walking back to Crathes Castle and grounds. It was a little showery at the start but did dry up enough to enjoy a stroll along the old railway line and riverside. On reaching the castle grounds we especially enjoyed the autumn colours and the variety of trees. There were only four walkers for this enjoyable walk.

Tuesday 7th November, the walk was cancelled due to the weather.

Planning for the walks over the winter months had not been completed by the time this went into print, so please phone or e mail Ian for details, or look out for information on the Church Notice Boards in vestibule or hall.

Ian Lord

The O.A.K. Café Report



Just to be slightly different the OAK cafe had an Afternoon Tea in support of the Macmillan Biggest Coffee Morning in the World. The volunteers did well providing a lovely selection of nibbles and cakes. A donation of £417.00 has been sent and thanks to all who supported the afternoon.

A very successful special lunch on Thursday 5th October was enjoyed by a good turnout of diners. Soup, Mince Pie, Potatoes and Vegetables, followed by Apple Pie and Ice Cream was the menu and the after-lunch speaker, Audrey Skinner, entertained all those present with an update on the work of the Scottish Bible Society. A donation of £400.00 was presented by the OAK Chairman Mr David Yacamini.

At the time of writing this for the Christmas edition of the magazine, we are all looking forward to the Christmas meals on Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th December. Santa is due to make an appearance with a gift for everyone.

Friday 15th December will be the last day that the café will be open in 2017 and after a Shoppers' Service in the Church, a Soup and Sandwich lunch will be provided for all those who attend the service.

The café will then close for the Christmas Holidays, and will re-open on Monday 15th January 2018.

Ian Lord

OAK Secretary

All in a Moment from Stiubhart MacChoille

As moments go, this one appeared to be no different to any other. If we were somehow able to pluck it from the timeline of history and examine it, this one would look exactly like the ones that have passed while you have read these words. It came. And it went. It was one of the countless moments that have marked time since eternity became measurable.

But, truth be told, this moment was unlike any other. Because in that one moment of time, a spectacular thing took place. God became a man. Heaven opened herself up and placed her most precious one in a human womb.

The Omnipotent, in one instant, made himself breakable. He who had been spirit became pierceable. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl.

God as a foetus. Holiness sleeping in a womb. The creator of life being created. God was given eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys, and a spleen. He stretched against the walls and floated in the amniotic fluids of his mother.

God had come near.

He came, not as an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused, and dirty. No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla.

Were it not for the shepherds, there would have been no reception. And were it not for a group of stargazers, there would have been no gifts. Angels watched as Mary changed God's nappy. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with him.

And had the synagogue leader in Nazareth known who was listening to his sermons...

For thirty-three years he would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He got colds, burped, and had body odour. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And his head ached.

To think of Jesus like this seems almost irreverent, doesn't it? It's not something we like to do; it's uncomfortable. It's so much easier to keep the humanity out of the incarnation; to clean the manure from around the manger; to wipe the sweat out of his eyes; to pretend he never snored, or blew his nose, or hit his thumb with a hammer. He's easier to stomach that way. There is something about keeping him divine that keeps him distant, packaged and predictable.

But don't do it. Let him be as human as he intended to be. Let him into the mire and muck of our world. For only if we let him in can he pull us out.

It all happened in a moment. In one remarkable moment.

The Word became flesh.

Hope is here.

Happy Christmas!

The St Mark's Guild



It's hard to realise that we are so far into our Session already. We have had various speakers on such subjects as our theme "Go in Love"; we went on the bucket trail; and then we had the Antiques Roadshow; the Games Night with the Men's Club was full of fun with board games, cards and bowling.

The Thursday afternoon meetings of the Guild have been well attended and the ladies from Queen Street are slowly getting their bearings and feeling more settled. We plan to have a lunch out in January (when there are no afternoon meetings arranged) and hope a good number of members will come to that. We look forward in 2018 to various speakers including someone from the Inspire Trust and the video of the Guild Annual Gathering held in Dundee in September. The meetings will be on 1st and 15th February and 1st and 15th March at 2 p.m.

The second half of our Monday programme is also varied. We have just had our St. Andrew's Night and a joint Christmas Party with the Men's Club is on Monday 4 December; the House of Simeon; and Burns in the North-East; Music from the Films 2; and finally Passage to Kamchatka.

The Guild is open to men and women and all are welcome.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Happy New Year.

The Guild of Friendship



The first half of our session is drawing to a close, ending with our Christmas party on Monday 18 December.

We resume again on Monday 8 January 2018 with a talk by Mr Jim Dressel on his hill-climbing activities.

Member attendances have been very good with 21 on the roll and we look forward in hope to new members joining us after the New Year.

Wishing you all the Compliments of the Season.

Kay Montgomery
Chairperson

CHAPEL CHIMERS



The Chimers had their first practice at St. Mark's on 21st November and since then have started on their programme of going out to entertain various groups over the next few months. They are grateful for the welcome they have received and are all delighted with their cosy new venue in the Session Room and the storage space provided, which to their surprise can take most of their basic essential equipment.

The St Mark's Scottish Country Dance Class



By the time this goes to print, the SCD will have held their end of session party on Wednesday 29 November.

A Merry Christmas to all our members. The class resumes again on Wednesday 10 January 2018 at 7.30pm in the church hall. Hopefully, as a new church we may gain one or two new members, you will be warmly welcomed.

Further dates for 2018

Wednesday 24 January

Wednesday 7 February

Wednesday 21 February

Wednesday 7 March

Wednesday 21 March

Wednesday 4 April

Wednesday 18 April Party Night

Margaret Brown



"Do you mind? You're in the way of us spending our £200 pensioner's winter fuel allowance!"

© thePavement

Aberdeen St Mark's Roll Changes



Change of Address

Mrs Jean Wemyss	City Centre	to Stockethill
Mr Ian Wemyss	City Centre	to Residential Care
Mr John Boyne	Mastrick	to Summerhill

Disjunction

Mr & Mrs Taylor Formerly of Queen Street

Deaths - He will surround you with love on that golden day

16.10.17	Mr Victor Ross	City Centre
16.11.17	Mrs Betty Irvine	Formerly of Queen Street
17.11.17	Mrs Dorothy Brown	Residential Care



Due to Data Protection issues only very limited personal data is provided on this page.

Aberdeen St Mark's Church of Scotland



Minister	The Charge is currently Vacant	
Session Clerks	Mr Ian & Mrs Marjorie Lord 27 Hazlehead Road	01224 321882
Prayer Co-ordinator	Mrs Gail Hogg 10 Binghill Road North	01224 868924
FWO Treasurer	Miss Dianne Morison 45 Bonnymuir Place	01224 630161
Treasurer	Mr Alex McConochie 73 Oakhill Grange	01224 950338
Gift Aid Convener	Mrs Lynn Low 6 St John's Walk, Newtonhill	01569 549391
Organist	Mrs Kathleen Anderson 15 Counteswells Terrace	01224 321584
Church Secretary	Miss Carole-Anne Brazendale St Mark's Church Rosemount Viaduct AB25 1JY	01224 640672

Church Office Down steps between the Church and Library.

Open 10.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday. Answering Machine operates when the office is closed. Leave name, message and contact number.

Messenger Editor - Alex McConochie
messenger@aberdeenstmarks.org.uk

www.stmarksaberdeen.org.uk