

ALYTH PARISH
CHURCH

MAGAZINE

AUTUMN/WINTER
2025





Dear Friends

I have really enjoyed the months I have spent as your Locum at a very friendly Kirk in a lovely town.

There have been sad times when some have lost dear ones, however I have always believed that helping others, especially when they are sad or in need is one of life's most important tasks.

There have, however, also been happy times; the Church Coffee Morning, the amazing Kirk Shop, tea and coffee times after the service, joining in activities at Burnside Court and getting to know members of such a friendly congregation.

I am looking forward to being with you at the Communion and Harvest Thanksgiving Services which I believe are both special ways of showing and sharing our faith.

Thank you for all your support and the warm welcome you have given my family and friends.

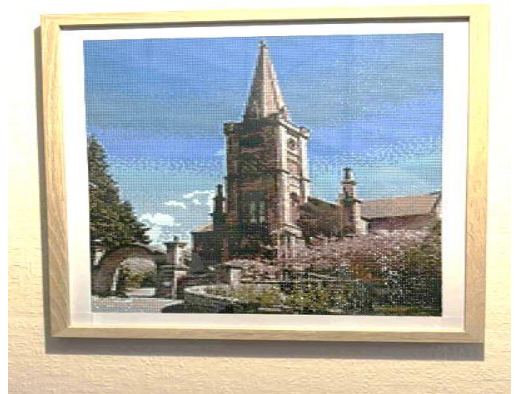
May God bless you and all those you love.

Brian



A QUICK MINUTE FROM THE SESSION

A picture paints a thousand words, an old saying, and the enclosed picture has recently been completed by my Father In Law, who has recently been indulging in a pastime of creating "Diamond Art" from various photographs. It got me thinking because this particular item has literally thousands of coloured plastic "diamonds" to recreate the photograph, probably even more than the sandstone blocks of our Kirk. There are a couple of skills that you need to undertake this pastime, and patience and a steady hand are two that stand out for me, again not dissimilar to the period when our Kirk was originally being built.



The end result of when the last "diamond" was put in place was a great sense of achievement, much like when the last stone was laid in place at the top of the tower, the main difference between the two now is that one person spent a few hours of pastime, versus hundreds of tradesmen who undertook the original Kirk Building programme over some considerably longer timescale.

More recently we had a very rare example of some storm damage when "Floris" came to town and knocked down a couple of the louvres below the clock faces in the tower. Ironically the louvre design in place not only allow us to hear the bell chiming, but also to take off some of the wind pressure on the structure of the tower. Thankfully this was an easy repair swiftly carried out by our local tradesmen who ensured that the wind would have to puff a great deal harder in the future for any similar event to take place.

When inspecting the storm damage you can see how over hundreds of years the wind and rain has slowly eaten away at some of the softer elements of sandstone, and it's amazing the power of the wind especially during a significant storm. The good thing is the Church is still standing and remains a refuge for both worship and prayer when we can take a little while to be in the sanctuary of God's company when perhaps life is throwing a few storms in our direction.

*Steven Tait
Session Clerk*

SEEKING

"Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God"
There's a thought to start the day
But finding Jesus is no easy task
Among the troubles of today
Wars and battles, famine, floods,
No peace o'er all the earth
Yet, through it all, men speak his name
And celebrate his birth.

He came to earth to save our souls
And was treated something rotten
By bigots who've since come and gone
But he's never been forgotten
We lose sight of him from time to time
But his message is unique
And it's faith in what we've learned from him
Makes us turn the other cheek.

"Jesus Bids Us Shine"
Little children love to sing
At Sunday School or mother's knee
Where learning all begins
Then they reach the teenage years
With their searching, probing minds
Jesus Christ's not a priority
And they question every sign.

"I Want To Walk With Jesus Christ"
But where do I begin?
Is it enough to pray and go to Church?
And struggle against sin?
For believing is a struggle
Being a Christian takes some gall
Since there's no hard concrete
evidence
God's even there at all.

The Bible says if we have faith
We'll keep Satan firmly out
For mischief making is his game
It's bad news when he's about.
Our faith is something we can't see
Or taste or touch or feel

It's believing there's a better life
And Jesus' love for us is real.

"What a Friend we have in Jesus"
We can call him night or day
And there are no recriminations
When we slip or lose the way
"At the Name of Jesus"
Every knee shall bow
Whether mother, nurse or teacher
Or professional with knowhow.

Retirement brings another change
A different ball game yet again
Jesus' words seem more acceptable
When and why? Become Amen
Gods' love is here among us
And so we strive to shine
We are the branches and are spreading
The fruit of Jesus Christ, the vine.



Submitted by Elma Mitchell

A FORAY INTO FEUGHSIDE

There were some beautiful days in May this year and we experienced one of them as we drove over the Cairn o' Mount heading for the Forest of Birse on Feughside. First, however, was a stop for coffee at Crathes Castle and then we set off westwards passing Strachan, pronounced Straan, and following the River Feugh to Finzean, pronounced Fingin. We are in Aberdeenshire after all. This is a small community in the Parish of Birse nestled between the hills separating it from Deeside to the north, and the River Feugh to the south. It has a church, a school, a cafe and shop and is the centre of activity for the surrounding area. To the north of the village, the road crosses Corsedarder Hill, the highest point on public roads in the parish. It is the location of the ancient Dardanus Standing Stone, the Birse Parish War Memorial and the Birse Parish Millennium Stone. The Dardanus Stone is a block of reddish granite which was dug up before 1842, and was erected on top of the hill of Corsedardar in the belief that it marked the grave of some eminent person. Tradition says that it marks the spot where Dardanus, a Pictish king, was killed. Nearby is a burial cairn which is believed to be the resting place of Dardanus. However, later research has cast doubts on these legends. It is now held together with iron bands having been broken in two by workmen in the late nineteenth century.

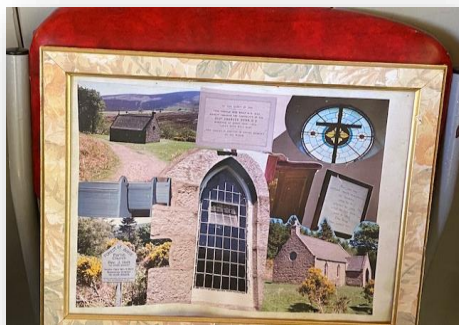
Near the summit of the hill is the Ballogie Soutar's (or shoe-maker's) Shop. A remarkable reminder of days gone by. It was built in 1896 by James Merchant on a croft in Ballogie and he continued his soutar's business there until his death in 1941. The contents then survived largely untouched, with boxes of shoes on the shelves in the front shop, the soutar's tools and materials still in place in the back workshop, detailed ledgers of his business and a range of other related material. While such rural soutar's shops were widespread in Scotland until little over a hundred years ago, the Ballogie Soutar's Shop appears to be the only one that still survives intact in rural Scotland. The local Birse Community Trust (BCT) now own the shop and are working to preserve it and make it available to the public.



Our destination was, however, up Feughside and so we took the road heading west. Not far out of Finzean there are three interesting water mills which are now owned by BCT, a turning mill, a sawmill and a bucket mill. The site of the mills came under the ownership of the BCT in 1999 and all three mills have been restored to working order by the Trust. When first restored the sawmill produced flooring for the main chamber of the Scottish Parliament building. The bucket mill was built in 1853 and was repaired and returned to working order in 1970. In 2024 a not-for-profit social enterprise was formed to safeguard the skills required by the next generation of bucket makers. The turning mill was built in the 1830s by the Duncan family and was operated by David Duncan, the fourth generation of his family to work the mill, until his death in 2024.

The road continues to follow the River Feugh through the Forest of Birse. The broom was resplendent in the sunshine and the whins, although beginning to fade, added colour to the scene. Soon we were at the end of the public road which opens on to a wonderful scene made more beautiful by the fine weather. We have been here a number of times over the past fifty or so years but I do not think it ever looked so lovely. Further on up the farm track is one of the ancient roads over the Mounth, the Fungal Road. This starts near Aboyne and heads up past Birse Castle to cross the hills to Tarfside in Glenesk. The late Robert Smith in his book *Grampian Ways* describes walking over there in winter and how cold and wet he was. I am sure he would have enjoyed that walk in May 2025. Birse Castle is an occupied towerhouse owned by Viscount Cowdray of Dunect Estates. It was built in the late 16th early 17th century but was burned down in 1640. Having been rebuilt, by 1887 it was in ruins but was gradually restored to its present state. It cannot be seen from the public road.

What can be seen and visited from the car park at the end of the road is the Forest of Birse Church. It is a



very small building situated down off the road on the banks of the river. The original church was built in 1790 and was replaced by the present building in 1891. It was also used



as a school until 1933 when there were only three pupils. In 1987 the congregation was united with Strachan and Finzean parishes and in 2005 it closed to public worship. It continues to be used for weddings and such like and indeed a few days before our visit a wedding had taken place there. It is open to the public and is worth a visit.

Before ending it is worth noting a similarity with Alyth. As with our town, over the years there have been many arguments and, perhaps, some unpleasant episodes over the commonities. Whereas the Alyth commonity on the hill has never been settled, the Birse Commonity was finally resolved amicably in 1999 in a historic agreement between the Birse Community Trust and Ballogie and Dunect Estates.

And so it was time to head home having spent a lovely day in a lovely part of the country.

Submitted by Bill Davidson

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Be kind in word and deed
Be there for friends in need
Take time to listen and
understand
Give your heart and lend a hand.

Be careful with your words,
Once they are said, they
Cannot be forgotten

There's nothing as bonnie as flowers
when they bloom
Their wonderful colours bring beauty to
gloom
When the sunshine adorns or the
raindrops enfold
It's clear to be seen they're a joy to
behold.

When someone you love
Becomes a memory
The memory becomes
A treasure.

To hear the whispers of God
You must turn down the
Volume of the world.

An umbrella cannot stop the rain
But it allows us to stand in the rain.
Faith in God may not remove our trials
but
It gives us strength
To overcome them.

Gardens are a haven of peace and
solitude
Being at one with nature, uplifts
mind and mood
Pottering or relaxing, wildlife,
cloudless skies
Are good for our well-being, and
finding how time flies.

Don't be scared to walk along the winding
path of life
Experience will show you happiness and
strife
But as you travel God will always be there
To support and guide you, showing that he
cares.

Though the skies may be grey
today
Filled with dull clouds
That won't go away,
Behind every cloud is a ray of
sunshine
That can't wait to shine again.

A TIME FOR REFLECTION

A couple of weeks ago Rev Brian recounted the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. He spoke from the perspective of the small boy who came forward with five loaves and two fishes. It was a small act; the unnamed boy could never have expected his small offering could be the solution to feeding so many people, but it was all he had. Sometimes, all we can do is a small act of kindness, or of friendship. I am sure that many of us have felt the need to change the world, but faced the reality that each of us can only do so much, and would face an overwhelming tide, such is the size of the task. Most of us, like the boy in the Bible story, can only do our best, and hope this inspires others do the same. Perhaps if each of us do something, it will add up to something enormous and significant.

As I listened to Brian, I was reminded of our friend Stewart Falconer. He was a man of principles, he showed many traits and skills I admire. He was eloquent with strong opinions; he used his skills to write many letters that were published in the press. He was honest, in that I heard him say on more than one occasion that he put the Kirk high on his list of priorities. He was loyal, and not only to his beloved St Johnstone FC. He was also compassionate as he made many contributions to a food bank in Perth. He was also considerate, as the story goes that he befriended a blind football supporter who was a stranger to Perth. All this shows just the small things that Stewart did, many of which he did anonymously. He would have been the first to accept that he was not going to change the world. What I see is that the influence he left, even after his untimely and sad death, is long lasting and significant.

Submitted by Derek Colley

CONGRATULATIONS!

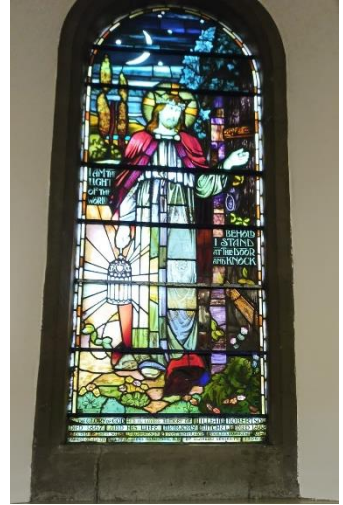
To one of our church elders, Mr Dennis Arnold, who at 99, walked round his Balhousie home until he covered the mileage from Coupar Angus to Alyth, where he previously lived. In doing so he raised £1,310 for the home's activity pot. He ended the walk by visiting the Singing Kettle from Square to celebrate. WELL DONE DENNIS!!



OUR BONNIE CHURCH

How often do we go to church but never really look for any length of time at the most beautiful stained glass windows we have.

This window is the central one under the north gallery. It is the Robertson window and donated in memory of William Robertson who died 1867 and his wife Marjory who died in 1868, by his family, one member being the ex-postmaster of Alyth. It was designed by Stephen Adam of Glasgow and dedicated on 22nd September in 1906. It is called "Christ the light of the world" and if you look closely, no matter what time of day you are in the church, the lantern is always lit.



On the right of the Robertson window is the Ramsay window in memory of Rev James Ramsay, one time minister of the church, his wife Elizabeth and their six children. It features Jesus' attitude to children and on looking carefully you will see it depicts local scenes eg, Pack bridge, Arches and Kirk.

The font that was originally in the High Parish Church. It would be used for many of our baptisms. It is carved stone and was donated by the Sunday School. It was first used in July 1908. It has an 18th century pewter basin.



This is the Funeral Escutcheon which is to the right of the organ pipes. It commemorates the death of Sir George Ramsay, 6th Baronet of Bamff in a duel at Musselburgh in April 1790, which was one of the last duelling deaths in Scotland.

BRIAN, THE MINISTER'S OLD CARS

When I was a young lad I always loved old cars. As a primary pupil there was a house I walked past where they had a 1930s Morris. I often would stop beside it just to have a look at it. My ambition was always to have an old car to drive.

After having a few chats with a relative of Christine in the Cotswolds I decided to build an Austin 7 special. I managed to buy a 1932 chassis and wheels, then found an old engine. For about two years I worked on the project, saving up for new tyres and building and painting a body myself.

Eventually, in July 1996, I was able to go to the D.V.L.A. to register my Austin 7 and was given the age registered number SV6155. Over the next few years, especially in sunny days the car went all over this part of the country, including one Austin 7 rally which went through Alyth on its way to north Perthshire.



Another car I also dreamt of owning was a Morgan. However, even older second-hand ones were very expensive. Then in 2007 I saw a Morgan 4/4 Four-Seater advertised at a low price in a car magazine. The car belonged to a man who had lived and worked in France but had a holiday home in Devon. He was now quite elderly and the Morgan had been in a shed for years. The family decided to sell it for a reasonable price. I purchased it and it was brought up to Scotland in April 2008. It needed a lot of restoration done.



That same month I met a man called Russell who had opened a Morgan garage in Perth. He agreed to help me with the restoration. I would clean parts and tidy up things while Russell's team did a great job getting the car ready to go back on the road. Russell also became a very special friend of mine.

The Morgan took over a year to restore but it was well worth the wait and it has been a great car to drive and often gets a lovely wave from the folk I pass. It is old-fashioned now but that makes me feel at home when I am out in it. A real pleasure. Together we have also managed to raise lots of money for charities.

I sold my Austin 7 Special to help pay for parts for the Morgan but last year I inherited a 1934 Austin 7 saloon from Christine's relative in the Cotswolds. It is a lovely little car but one with special memories; I was a passenger in it at the National Austin 7 Rally at Beaulieu Motor Museum in the New Forest in the summer of 1980.

I have lots of happy memories of all of these cars; trips out with the family, including grandchildren, with friends, and taking part in charity fund raising rallies and car events all over Scotland. Hopefully will have some more runs through Alyth.



Submitted by Rev Brian Ramsay

GRIEF

The following is a speech prepared by Amy Ballantine, aged 15, which she delivered at Harrogate Grammar School as part of her GCSE English following the recent and sudden death of her grandmother Fay Ballantine. Amy received a distinction for this presentation.

THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

Grief. Arguably one of the hardest things a person can go through in life, but something nearly everyone in a population of 8 billion people has to experience. A sense of grief is inevitable for around 95% of the world's population in some shape or form. But what really is it?

Whilst I am certain a high percentage of you in this room will have experienced it, myself included, it is likely that most of us still cannot understand what grief really is. The truth is there is very little science behind grief, it is an inevitable feeling. However, the Kubler-Ross model simplifies this entirely complex subject into 5 stages which can help us to comprehend it. The stages include: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Denial A sense of feeling numb after loss. Denial is common in the early stages after bereavement and is debatably the most confusing to people out of all the stages. Denial occurs as a defence mechanism which our brains sometimes use to protect us from the initial overwhelming pain. Individuals often refuse to accept or acknowledge the death, avoid the topic in conversation and state that the loss is not true.

Anger Death can seem cruel and unfair, and once the denial stage is over, reality often sinks in and the bereaved individual may begin to feel a strong sense of anger. Anger is a completely natural emotion, and especially natural if someone dies. This can be directed to themselves, God, doctors, family members or even the deceased loved one.

Bargaining As we feel a sense of grief, we often feel overwhelmed by thought, especially with a persons first loss. Many individuals begin to question "what if" or "if only", and potentially try to make deals with a higher power in exchange for a different outcome. Bargaining is often known as the most irrational stage, where people turn to negotiation in order to regain a sense of control that they lost after a loss.

Depression A feeling of complete sadness, accompanied by a lack of hope as a result of a lost loved one. This is the stage in which the bereaved feel the most intense pain. It is also the most inevitable stage, but affects some more than others. Studies show that around 50% of widows experience depression like symptoms after loss, including changes in sleep, significant weight change, lack of energy and a loss of interest in activities that the individual would usually enjoy.

And finally we come to the last stage,

Acceptance This refers to the period of grief when a person feels as though they can finally come to terms with the reality of what has happened. As time passes, most people find that the pain of grief becomes less intense. It is a state of no longer denying or struggling with

grief, when we can finally focus on cherishing memories and celebrating the life of a lost loved one, instead of mourning the loss. However, this stage does not mean forgetting about the loss, but more so learning to live with it and being able to find enjoyment again, while accepting that they will always miss the person who has died.

- Grief can present itself in many different ways. Whether it's physical or mental reactions. Some people disagree about how grief presents itself, making the Kubler-Ross theory model up for discussion.
- Some people argue that the 5th stage of the model does not exist - you can never accept if you just have to live with it - whereas some people argue that with time, acceptance comes to you and you can feel at peace with your loss.

Many people who have experienced this sense of loss have argued against the model in the past, stating that you never "get over" a loss, more so that the feelings you experience because of it may alter over time, when the individual may be more able to cope with them.

This ultimately proves to us that the Kubler-Ross model may not be entirely accurate, as some of those who have experienced grief first hand have never fully accepted their loss. Whilst the feeling of grief may alter as life carries on, many never fully accept that someone they loved so deeply is gone. Many have expressed how they experience grief of some kind daily, and don't feel as though they could ever 'accept' their loss, even though their grieving has changed. However, studies show that around 60-80% of people experience what is known as 'normal' grief, where they eventually move towards some sense of acceptance.

Finally, whilst we have just been through the Kubler-Ross model and discussed different arguments about how grief presents itself, grief still cannot be explained or defined. Each and every one in this room who experience grief will go through it in a completely different and entirely personal way.

Thank you for listening.

Submitted by Bruce Ballantine



Our beautiful Church flowers

WORDS OF WORTH

Recently, while tidying out a cupboard, I came across a booklet - Words of Worth 1839-1989. This booklet was compiled to mark the 150th year of Alyth Parish Church. Members of the congregation were invited to submit quotations, bible verses, poems etc which meant a lot to them. Mrs Nan White was the driving force behind this booklet. I came across one poem in particular which seemed to speak to me. It had been submitted by the late Charlie Thorpe, whom some of you may remember. I'd like to share that poem with you.

THIS DAY IS A GIFT FROM GOD

A day that starts without a prayer is like an empty shell,
And a day that ends without a prayer, cannot be ended well.
For when your heart turns Heavenward, you find a sweet release,
And you understand the meaning of 'His mercies never cease.'
When life brings pain and sorrow which you feel too weak to bear,
There's strength in God's abiding love.
And in the power of prayer.



So never start a day unless there's prayer within your heart,
And never take an action of which prayer is not a part.
Don't make a firm decision until you've prayed about it,
For prayer is like a golden gift, you just can't do without it.
And though at times you feel as if your prayer has not been heard,
Remember - God is listening and he hears your every word.
He may not always give the things you wished and hoped he would,
But in His love and wisdom, He does all things for your good.

Submitted by Liz Norrie

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always on your back
May the sunshine warm upon your face
May the rain fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.



Faith, makes the uplook good
The outlook bright
The inlook favourable
And the future glorious.

Submitted by Janey MacFarlane

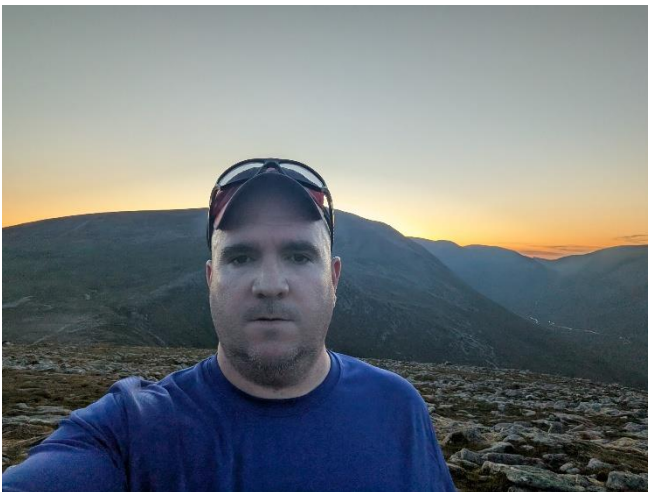
MY MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES - THE BRAERIACH TRAVERSE

Tackling the giants on the western side of the Lairig Ghru had been on my agenda for a long time now. There are 4 Munros - Devil's Point, Cairn Toul, Sgor an Lochaine Uaine (Angel's Peak) and Braeriach, 3 of which are in the top 5 highest in Scotland. These can be tackled in one very long day but both myself and my friends thought it better to tackle them over 2 days, with a night under the stars on the plateau.

We set off from Linn of Dee, near Braemar, late on Friday afternoon and were soon passing Bob Scott's Bothy and Derry Lodge. From here we were treated to the first views of the Cairngorm giants - Ben Macdui looming large in the distance. By late evening, we had entered the Lairig Ghru - a mountain pass cutting through the Cairngorms - and were soon met with the site of Corrour Bothy. We stopped for some food and with the sun beginning to disappear quickly made our way onto the bealach between Devil's Point and Cairn Toul. This is where we would bivvy for the night.



After a brief discussion, we decided it would be best to summit the Devil's Point that night, meaning we could make better progress north in the morning. There was serious heat forecast for the following day and we needed to be on our way as early as we could to try and avoid the worst of the heat. As the sun set, we were up to the summit and back to our bivvy site in no time and were soon off to sleep, alarms set for a very early rise!



4am and we were up and ready to get the show on the road. Eating breakfast as we went, we headed up the steep slopes of Cairn Toul. Within a couple of hours, we were on the summit of the 4th highest mountain in Scotland. By this time, the sun was peeking out above the peaks to the east and the heat was already getting up. We could see our next target of the day and were bounding towards Sgor an Lochaine Uaine in no time, reaching the summit within an hour.

From here we could see the massifs of Braeriach and its impressive corries. There is no better place to see the effects of climate change as one of these corries is (usually) home to permanent patches of snow. The Sphinx and The Pinnacles are patches of snow which until 100 years ago, were permanent features.

They have disappeared completely in each of the past 5 years. Although still visible when we were there, it was only a matter of time before they melted.



The heat was now getting up as we approached mid morning and the sun cream was soon out and water bottles were replenished at every opportunity. The traverse over the sweeping slopes was pleasant and we stopped for a break at the Wells of Dee - thought to be the source of the Dee which flows into the North Sea at Aberdeen. A short time later and we were on the summit of Braeriach and the sun was now blistering. 4 Munros completed but the hard work was only just beginning.

Despite taking in plenty fluids and numerous energy gels, the heat was really getting to me. I was starting to struggle and it was a relief to reach the floor of the Lairig Ghru again and drink from a cold stream. We still had some way to go to reach our final destination of Aviemore. By the time we reached Loch Morlich and hopped on the bus into town, I think heat stroke had hit and had we any further to walk, I think I may have been in some trouble.

With fluids replenished and a visit to the chippy, I began to feel better and the air conditioned bus back to Perth was welcome relief from the still lingering heat. With 119 Munros now climbed, I was pleased with the weekends efforts but a lesson was learned and I think I'll be avoiding the hills when high temperatures are forecast. Bring on the winter!!



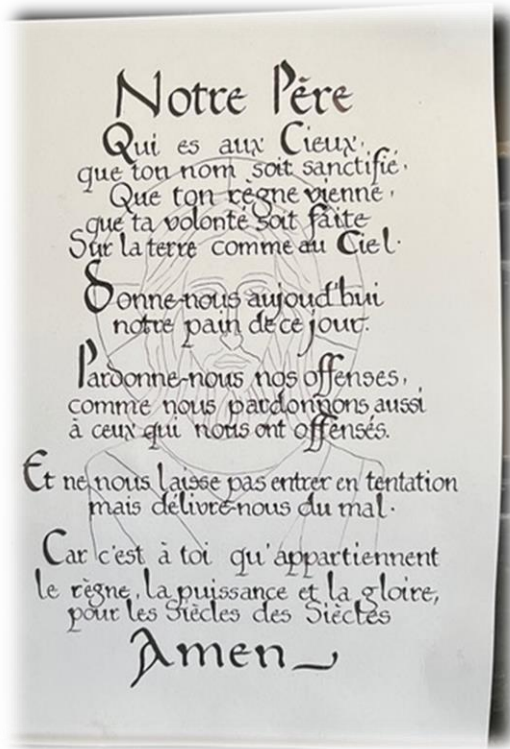
Submitted by David Robertson



On hearing the recent thunder, it brought to mind the story of the wee boy in Loch Fyne. As you possibly know, Loch Fyne kippers are quite a delicacy. A local family was having kippers for tea but the youngster did not want to eat his kipper. Eventually he was told God was not pleased and was put upstairs to his bed. Some time later there was terrible thunder and lightning, and the mum became concerned about the wee fellow, so crept upstairs and as she neared the bedroom door, heard the wee boy say: "What a fuss God is making about a kipper". Needless to say, the mum took him downstairs to be with the rest of the family.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In the Medieval village of Péroutes in eastern France, we visited the very old church. In it I found a sheet on which "The Lord's Prayer" was written—in French. I don't know why, but I was surprised that it is an exact translation of the version that we use in this country. Why should I be surprised?



Submitted by Tam Thomson



WINTER'S PROMISE

When winter comes, as come it must,
Short days diminish body and mind,
Long night fill with dreams that are memories
Fear and longing are both easy to find.

But in old age there is still to see:
The beauty of the bare-branched tree
The cold blue sky shows heaven's gate
Where hope and love together wait

And beneath the frost-hard ground
Is the promise of another spring.



Submitted by Andee Fraser

QUOKKA ON ROTTNEST ISLAND

Alistair and I went to Australia in January to visit our daughter Anna who was working there for a year. Here, in a roundabout way, is something about that trip.

The bible tells us about the nature of God, how God wants to be in relationship with us and how we can express that relationship in how we live our lives. It says in Genesis 1:31 "Then God looked over all he had made and he saw that it was excellent in every way." In Genesis 2:15 "The Lord God placed the man in the garden of Eden to tend and care for it."

Alistair and I have the enormous privilege to live in a beautiful peaceful place. We love nature and try to live in environmentally friendly ways. We like to think that this is one way we can honour God to tend and care for his creation.

It didn't feel very environmentally friendly to be taking a long haul flight to Australia! Our first two weeks were in Tasmania where Anna was finishing a nursing contract at Hobart Hospital. She had some time off and we stayed a few days in Freycinet National Park, walking, swimming and loving the beauty. We had a pademelon in our garden. (A type of nocturnal marsupial, like a kangaroo about the size of a terrier dog. But kangaroo like). We loved the song of the magpies - like UK magpies - much scruffier in appearance but they make the most beautiful noise.



Then we had a week in Victoria, mostly in Melbourne but visited the Grampians National Park. There'd been forest fires in the area and the firefighters outnumbered the tourists. One evening at the holiday park we stayed at, there were lots of yellow crested cockatoos and hundreds of kangaroos. As we were leaving I told the receptionist that we'd loved the stay, particularly we loved seeing the kangaroos. She said oh, that kangaroos were nothing! Had we seen the deer? I told her I saw more than enough deer at home thank you.



Our last week we went with Anna to Perth in Western Australia. Partly to visit another part of Australia but also to visit a nephew and his young family. We went to Rottne Island where there are marsupials called quokka. They're very tame and don't seem to mind having photos taken! Also there we saw seals trying to cool down by swimming with a flipper in the air They looked a bit shark like but we were assured they were seals "thermoregulating". They were too hot. In spite of the explanation, I wouldn't have been too keen to get into the water in that area. In four weeks we saw a tiny fraction of the continent and the wildlife.



On our trip to Australia we got a sense of God looking with pleasure over his very excellent creation. Submitted by Sarah Cowper

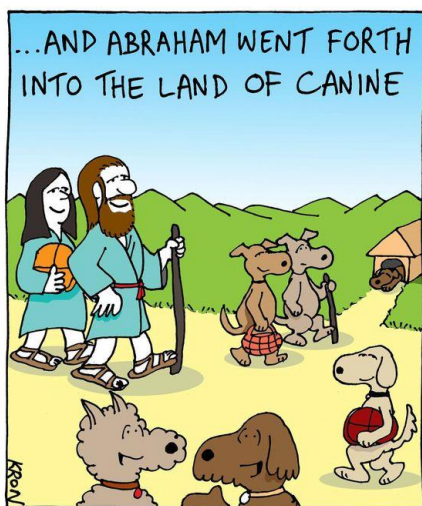
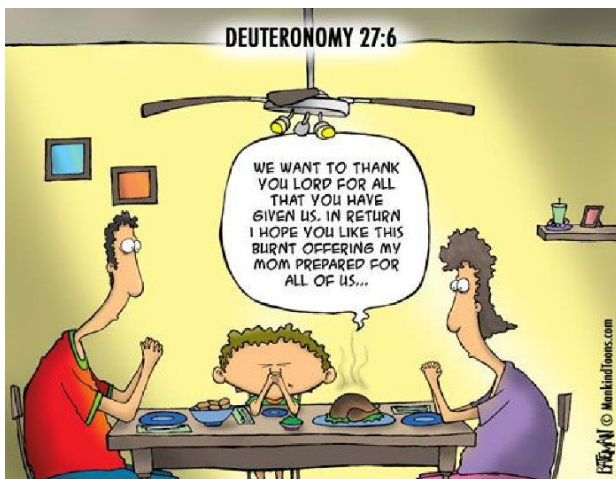
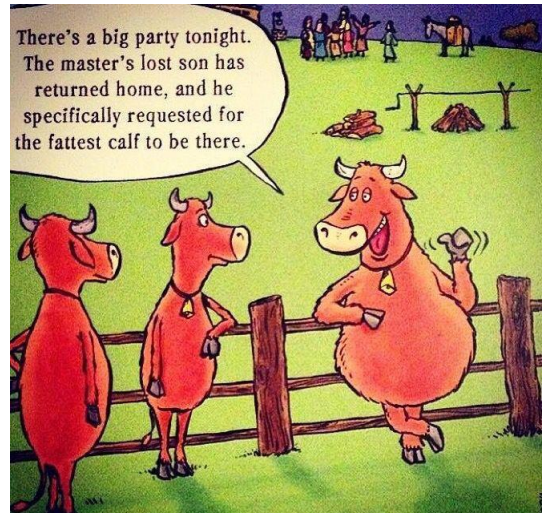
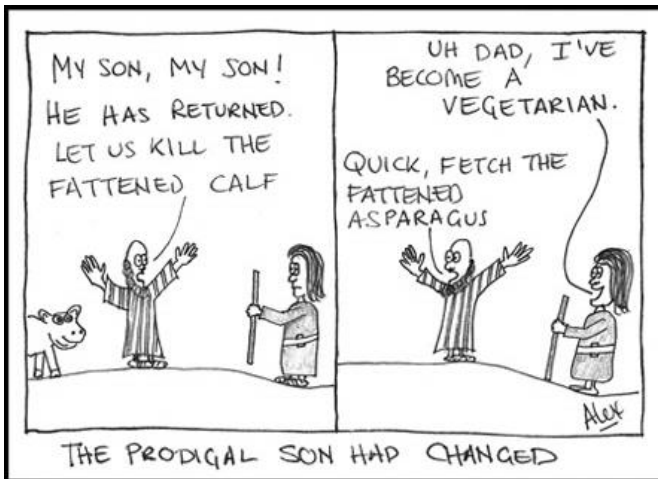
KIRK SHOP

THANK YOU EVERYONE!

Without your support we could not have made **£12,646.**

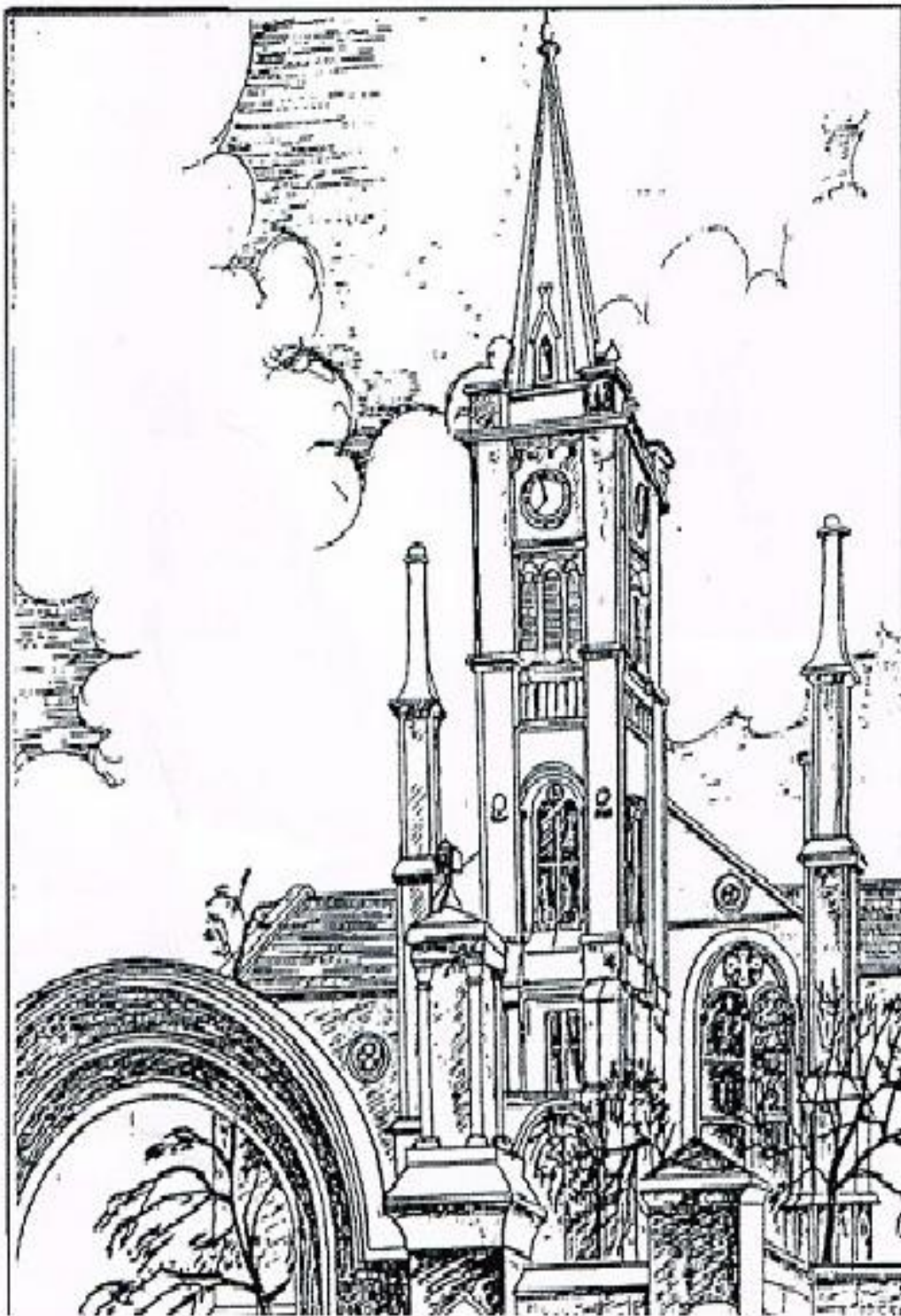


TIME FOR A LAUGH



A woman invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied.
"Just say what you hear Mummy say," the mother said. The little girl bowed her head and said: "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"



Drawn by the late Ian Anderson

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