The Chronicles of St John's Kirk of Perth





The Minister

Dear Friends,

In his book *View from the Summit* Sir Edmund Hillary ¹tells us what was on his mind as he stood on top of the world. He thought of Mallory and Irvine who'd set out on the same climb in 1924 and were last seen going strong for the top. He felt indebted to the two members of his own team who had climbed as far as they could and then had left on the route two precious bottles of oxygen for use on the return journey. He speaks of the Sherpas who carried up the tons of supplies the expedition



required. Thus, Hillary acknowledged that he and Tenzing Norgay as they stood on top of the world, they only did so because they had, *"climbed on other men's shoulders."*

Robert Louis Stevenson acknowledges this same debt in his foreword to *Catriona* the sequel to *Kidnapped*, which he wrote while in Samoa. In it he says: "*The sights and thoughts of my* youth pursue me, and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there far in the north, to cast me out in the end on these ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny."

On two-pound coins we attribute the quote" "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants, "²to Isaac Newton as he modestly gives credit to the work of his predecessors for his own work on gravity. ³It was Bernard of Chartres who died in 1124 who originally said it. We know the quote came from Bernard because John of Salisbury, who was writing in 1159, tells us: "Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, if we see more and farther, it isn't because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature."

Bernard was comparing the modern scholar of his own time, the twelfth century, with the giant philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. He was alluding no doubt to the influence of Plato on St. Augustine but was also unwittingly prophesying the influence of Aristotle on St. Thomas Aquinas in the following century.⁴

Bernard probably said what he did as he'd seen the five lancet windows that stand below the great Rose Window⁵ in the south transept of Chartres Cathedral created by some nameless Medieval artist in the early 12th century. The middle lancet depicts Mary holding the infant Christ. The two lancets on either side of Mary present the four main prophets of the Old Testament carrying on their shoulders the four evangelists: Jeremiah carries Luke, Isaiah carries Matthew, Ezekiel carries John and Daniel carries Mark.

We know that St John's Kirk has been a place of worship and prayer since 1126 when King David I granted its tithes and endowments to the Benedictine Monastery at Dunfermline. Over the succeeding centuries it has borne witness to the marches and counter marches of Scottish history.

If we are to restore and develop St John's so that future generations are to also able to use and enjoy this magnificent medieval church, significant funds will need to be found to support this work.

I would encourage you to pray for the work of the Trust of *St John's Appeal*. Our prayers are the engine room of every Christian life and every living church. If this ambitious work is to progress successfully, your prayers will be essential, Philippians 4:6.

With every blessing, Philip Majcher

¹ Edmund Percival Hillary (20 July 1919 – 11 January 2008) was a New Zealand mountaineer, explorer, and philanthropist. On 29 May 1953, Hillary and Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers confirmed to have reached the summit of Mount Everest.

 2 The idea of knowledge as cumulative — a ladder, or a tower of stones, rising higher and higher — existed only as one possibility among many. For several hundred years, scholars of scholarship had considered that they might be like dwarves seeing farther by standing on the shoulders of giants, but they tended to believe more in rediscovery than in progress.

³ The new £2 coins have "standing on the shoulders of giants" stamped on to the milled edge. ... According to a press release about the coin issued by the Mint, the words refer to Newton's work on gravity, and indicate the modest way in which he described his success as being based on the work of his predecessors ⁴ Bisherd Southern

⁴ Richard Southern

⁵ The rose window in the south transept depicts, *The Glorification of Christ from the Book of Revelation*.

Session Clerk



This amazingly wet autumn has certainly demonstrated that although the work around the Bartizan has improved the leaks in that part of the spire, there is still much to be done to deal with the leaks elsewhere. The Launch on 29th September of the Trust for St John's Fundraising campaign to raise £4M brought expressions of support from across Perth and Perthshire which were enormously encouraging. Knowing that we have so many people and organisations working for us and offering support to enable the Kirk to have a strong and vibrant future makes such a difference. Our members are a vital part of that so please get involved.

This was the context for the Congregational vote on Sunday 22nd October to choose whether to agree to end the linkage between St John's and St Leonard's. The decision to end the linkage was passed almost unanimously, and now Presbytery will decide soon the date when that will happen. That will clear the way for the 0.25 Locum position allocated for St John's to be filled, and release Philip who has supported both St John's and St Leonard's so wonderfully during our vacancy.

The Presbytery Plan also envisages that St John's will work more closely with other churches in the City Centre, particularly St Matthews and the North, and that has begun to happen. We will be considering what part each church can play in meeting the needs of the Centre of Perth. More information will be shared as this develops, but the chance to work more with our neighbours has long been sought.

When the new Museum opens next spring, we can expect many more visitors to St John's, not just by tourists but by local people who will be keen to see inside the new museum. There they will learn much about how Perth grew up around St John's, and will be encouraged to come across to spend time in the Kirk. We really need more Stewards to make sure the Kirk can continue to open its doors, and if you think you can spare a few hours to help, please let Kay Morrison know (kay.morrison@btinternet.com).

As most of you know, our Church Officer, Doug Pringle is retiring after 12 years of looking after the Kirk. Sunday 24th September was a special day when we could say a huge thank you to him and to his family, Vivien and Lucy, for all their support. So far, we have not been able to find anyone to replace him, and as well as staying on to induct his replacement, Doug has also delayed his departure in the lead up to Christmas which is one of the busiest times for the Kirk. Once again, we are enormously grateful to Doug and Jim Withers for all they continue to do for us. We are indeed blessed to have such dependable and loyal support.

As we move through Remembrance towards Advent I wish you and your family every blessing at this special time.

Bill Wilson Session Clerk

Church Family

Death of Members

Mrs Margaret McIntoshJMrs Rosemary ThomsonMMrs Jean TaylorM

July 2023 November 2023 November 2023



In recent days, sadly the St John's family have lost two prominent members.

The death of Rosemary Thomson has been announced. Rosemary and Michael have been long standing and active members of St John's for many years and Rosemary was joint Session Clerk with Marjory Howat for a considerable time. Her funeral will be held on **Tuesday 7th November at 2.00pm** in St John's.

Jean Taylor's death has also just been announced. Jean brought her love of flowers and great skill in arranging them to St John's and for many years her dramatic flower arrangements were a feature of events like Perth Festival of the Arts and Remembrance. Jean's funeral arrangements will be publicised once they have been confirmed.

St John's Kirk of Perth : Charity Number SC017132

Recent Events

Christian Aid Quiz

In September we saw the return of the very popular Christian Aid Quiz which is held in Letham St Marks. Marjory Clark, the quizmaster, did another excellent job, she has been compiling the quizzes for many years. This year they managed raised £1007.25.

The winners this year were our very own John and Marjory Wylie with the help of another friend.



Christian Aid, an international charity organization, has been at the forefront of alleviating poverty and promoting social justice for over seven decades. Their annual quiz is not just a test of wits, but a powerful means of raising funds and awareness for the less fortunate. So, let the knowledge gained and the funds raised serve as a reminder that in the end, it's not just about winning but about making a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Harvest Songs of Praise



On Sunday evening 10 September we held a Harvest Songs of Praise. As well as well-known harvest hymns, we were entertained by Rachel and Tia Steele, Kenneth MacIver, Liam Bonthrone, Rhona MacKenzie, Moira and Freyja Duncan.

This was a well attended event and we look forward to the next one.

'Design a Bookmark' Competition

https://www.st-johns-kirk.co.uk/bookmark-competition

At the start of 2023, the Worship Committee decided to run a competition, aimed at schoolchildren, to design a new bookmark for St. John's. We had bookmarks a few years ago which were sold or given to visitors as a reminder of their visit to our beautiful Kirk, but they had all gone and it was thought that with the changes of 2010 it was time to update and replace these.

All Secondary schools in and around Perth were contacted and invited to submit designs from their pupils in order to win a cash prize and potentially have their design printed. The design had to be colourful, attractive and have some of the features of the Kirk that make it stand out from other church buildings. We were also looking for some Christian message to send out into the world.

We now have the results of our competition and are delighted to congratulate Zachary Scott (12) on winning 1st prize of £150 and having his design printed. His drawing of our iconic tower makes our identity clear and the doors are open, welcoming congregation and visitors alike. Congratulations Zachary! His prize will be presented to him during the service on Sunday 19th November.

Congratulations also go to our runners-up who receive prizes of £100 and £50. Well done to all our competitors.

These bookmarks will be on sale in the Kirk when we reopen in the Spring of 2024.

Doors Open Day



We were delighted to welcome 162 visitors into the Kirk on Doors Open Day this year - many of whom were fascinated to learn more about the Kirk.

Many thanks go to all the volunteers who gave up their time that day and helped in welcoming all our visitors.

Brass Cleaning



Twice a year the Church invites members to join in with cleaning all the brass in the Kirk. However, this is not just about the brass, there numerous other are items which need our attention. from the silver plates for communion to candle sticks and glass cleaning.

It is a very worthwhile event. we are even provided with soup cooked by our Church Jim Officer Withers filled and rolls by Kay Morrison.



Fund Raising

St John's Christmas Cards

In support of its Funding Appeal, the Trust for St John's is publishing a Christmas Card showing the Kirk in snow (photo courtesy of Denis Munro).

The cards will be available in the Kirk during November/December and will be on sale at £5.00 for 10 cards, with all proceeds going to support the Fund to Refurbish the Building, starting with the Spire.

Carillon CD 'The Bells of Perth'

A CD featuring the musical bells of St John's Kirk is now available.



arillonneur: Dr lan C

It features a variety of tunes played by carillonneur Dr Ian Cassells on the Kirk's 63 bells. As part of a digital heritage project, it is the first time since the seventies that Perth's largest musical instrument has been recorded. University music and audio engineering students and staff at UHI Perth used their skills to produce the digital recording.

Each bell was recorded individually for archival purposes. Some of the bells date to the late Medieval period, with research suggesting the largest of the bells was cast in Scotland in about 1340.

The CD is highly acclaimed, described by a Cambridge campanologist as "unquestionably the best recording of bells (of any type) that I have heard. The clarity, presence, sonority and

beautiful reverb decay have been captured perfectly, and the elimination of distracting sounds from the town and mechanism of the carillon makes this a reference recording. Huge congratulations to all involved. Dr. Cassell's arrangements and delivery of pieces well known, and less known, are wonderful and bring to life this unique musical instrument, which deserves the wider audience that this CD will bring".

Anyone wishing to purchase this CD should send an email to thekirkwebsite@gmail.com

More information is also available on the website.

Foodbank News

In September we 'celebrated' our 10th anniversary. If we were a business we'd be jumping for joy-10 years & a greatly increased client base. (We fed 8823 people of which 2793 were children in the year April 2022 - March 2023 compared with 2974 people [742 children] in the first full year we were operational-2014/2015.) Instead, we feel angry & frustrated that a service such as ours is still needed. We expect numbers to be high again this winter as energy costs drain clients' limited resources-think there's often more month than money left!



Thanks to people like yourselves who regularly fill the foodbank box in the church or put something in the foodbank collection points at the supermarket we are able to continue this service. Your help is very much appreciated.

For your information the annual Foodbank drive takes place in various Tescos in our area between Thursday 30th November & Saturday 2nd December.

We are currently in need of the following;

UHT milk Small bags of rice Small coffee Small tea Tinned fruit, vegetables, tomatoes Sweets and crisps Small laundry products Any donations of these items in church or supermarket are gratefully received.

Every little helps!!!

perthkinross.foodbank.org.uk/

Anne Chatt Foodbank Representative



Life and Work is the magazine of the Church of Scotland. In a history spanning over 140 years, it has established itself as the voice of the Church of Scotland.

Though firmly rooted in the affairs of the Kirk, it also aims to cover a broad range of subjects of interest to church-goers across the spectrum, from international affairs and British political and social issues to science, ethics, and the arts.

Each monthly issue includes a forum for views on current social and moral issues; a monthly meditation and regular articles on the spiritual side of life; reviews of the latest books, videos, and Christian resources; and regular features on the Church worldwide.

Mission

Fairtrade works with farmers and workers so

they can improve their living standards, invest in their communities and businesses, and protect our shared environment. https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/



Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.



https://www.christianaid.org.uk/

Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal

Throughout October the annual BLYTHSWOOD <u>Shoe Box Appeal</u> was highlighted.

Blythswood is synonymous with shoeboxes. Formed by a group of Glasgow University students in the mid nineteen sixties, Blythswood

has grown to be able to run after-school clubs, providing nutritious meals in Scotland, food programmes in Eastern Europe, operate teacher training programmes in Pakistan and funds to harness solar power to make drinking water safe.

It is hoped to send 20,000 filled boxes to Eastern Europe for Christmas 2023. Thanks to all who filled a shoebox.

Order your Shoe Box Appeal resources or download the leaflet here Collection at Perth North Church 30 October to 3 November 10.00am – 12.00 noon

CrossReach

From November the emphasis will be on CrossReach. This is the social outreach arm of the Church of Scotland. The CrossReach Mission Statement:

In Christ's name we seek to support people to achieve the highest quality of life they are capable of at any given time.

CrossReach's work is wide ranging and enhances lives, changes lives and saves lives. The services cover:

- 1 Older People's Services-Care Homes, Dementia/Care Homes and Respite care.
- 2 Adult services-Counselling, Substance Abuse, Prisons.

3 Children and Family Services-Residential Care, Family Therapy, Perinatal Counselling. St John's Kirk of Perth : Charity Number SC017132 Page 8





Since June 2023, 400 Scottish Faith leaders have signed a declaration calling for 'Fair Work in Social Care', which aims to ensure that all frontline staff earn a fair wage to help them cope with the cost-of-living crisis. Many staff are leaving for better paid jobs, leading to a loss of expertise, undermining key services which jeopardises support for those who need it most.

Rt. Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland states: 'As people of faith we have a calling to honour care and service. Dignity and respect for others is at the very heart of the faith message'.

You can support CrossReach by purchasing the CrossReach Calendar 2024. Orders can be placed on the form at the West Door.

Perth Action of Churches (PACT)

Dates for the Diary:



Saturday 9 December 2023 <u>Town Lantern Parade</u> - St. Ninian's to St. John's Kirk. Friday 22 December 2023 PACT Carol Service – North Church at 7.00pm.

Marj Wylie

Friends of St John's

Most readers of the *Chronicle* will have seen the Cockerel in the North Aisle of St John's. It is somewhat battered, and is certainly lacking in the shiny gold finish which positively sparkled in the sun only a few years ago, as this photograph, taken in 2013, shows.

The cockerel has been watching over the old Royal Burgh now the City of Perth since 1510 when it was first installed following the completion of the spire. It may have been refurbished when the lead sheeting



on the spire was replaced in 1767, after it had been torn off in a storm, and it was certainly regilded 45 years ago by the Perth craftsman, Roben Antoniewicz.

However, more recently it became clear that it was becoming unstable and there was the fear that it might fall down and cause considerable damage and perhaps injury. And so, more than a year ago now, it was taken down and it has been languishing in the Kirk ever since - sad looking, but not forgotten, visible evidence of the state of the spire.





The cockerel had become unstable because the fixings in the oak beams deep inside the spire were being damaged by water ingress due to deterioration in the lead on the spire which is over 250 years old. As those who attended the launch of the *Save St John's Appeal* (or read about it in the newspapers) will know The Trust for St John's Kirk is seeking to raise £4m for major work on the spire, the roof and the masonry of the Kirk to ensure its long term future. As a contribution to this major work, the Friends of St John's Kirk offered to undertake the restoration and regilding of the Cockerel.

Estimates for the work were sought, and we have appointed Ratho Byres Forge from Edinburgh to do the work. The firm combines traditional blacksmithing techniques with innovative modern technology to produce award winning artistic metalwork which is both functional and sculptural. The work they did on the restoration of the Mackintosh School of Art in Glasgow, featured recently on TV.

The outer shell of the cockerel has split and is in quite bad condition. Ratho can only price the work accurately after the cockerel has been stripped down, but the worst case scenario estimate is £8,250, excluding VAT (which we hope to be able to recover). This will also include working with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) to make a video of the work, and set up a Master Class in gilding which will probably be held in the Heritage Trust's HQ in Lower City Mills.



The Friends has sought contributions from the Perth Common Good Fund, which has offered £2,930, and from PKHT which has promised £5,000. We have received a generous donation of £1,000. and at the

Friends AGM we agreed to set aside £1,000 from our own resources for the project, and so we have enough money now to go ahead. Accordingly, I have contacted Ratho Byres Forge to confirm the contract, and they have promised to have the work completed before Easter. The cockerel, in its regilded glory will then be displayed in the kirk and will be a symbol of our faith in the long term future of St John's kirk.

When the restoration work is completed, the cockerel will be restored to its former position at the top of the spire to watch over the City of Perth, its people, and St John's Kirk, for at least another 500 years. The cockerel has been taken to Rathro Forge and will be returned to St John's for Easter 2024.

Dr John Hulbert, Chairman, Friends of St John's Kirk of Perth SCIO. Registered charity. No SC 047919

Church Districts

In the last Chronicles we explained that we were addressing the communication methods for all our members on the roll. This exercise has now been done and we are in the process of rearranging the roll. For those who have selected to still receive a personal visit or phone call, then we will have a team of Elders allocated to contact you. Members who indicated email or post will have information sent in that format. All other members can check the website for updated information.

- 1 a personal visit by an Elder
- 2 to be contacted by email
- 3 to be contacted by telephone
- 4 to have information by post
- 5 to check the Church website/Facebook for information

If you have changed your email address or would like to provide one, then please email the <u>Roll Keeper.</u>

If for any reason throughout the year you require an Elder or the Minister to contact you, then please email the Roll Keeper at <u>rollkeeper.stjohns@gmail.com</u> or call 01738 582137 and this will be arranged for you.

Church Officer Vacancy

We have an exciting opportunity for someone to fill the role of Church Officer. This is a part time post consisting of 15 hours per week with additional hours as and when required.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in applying for the position then please click <u>here</u> for the job description and here for an <u>application form</u>.

This is an exciting time to be taking on this role what with the opening of the new Perth Museum in early 2024.

If you would like to discuss the role further, then please contact our Sessions Clerk at <u>clerk.stjohns@gmail.com</u>

Opening Times

This year, 2023, St John's Kirk was open to the public between 11am and 4pm from Holy Week to the end of September which adds up to a total of 26 weeks.

We wish it could have been for longer but volunteers are hard to come by and those we have are very valuable.



Some visitors only come in to get out of the rain but many show great interest in our beliefs and our history. On the whole it is a pleasure to talk to them and listen to their stories.

It never ceases to amaze us all that people come from so many different countries including Abyssinia and Russia, Japan and Czechoslovakia.

Many are delighted to be given copies of our written guides in their own language especially as this year we have added Chinese to our original 11. We still need Greek and Portuguese but these will come in time.



St Johns is the city church and therefore as part of our mission to the community it is important that we continue to welcome all who wish to come in. This year our visitor numbers reached over 9000 and we are looking forward to a vast increase when the new museum opens in the spring of 2024.

If you would be interested in becoming a Kirk Sitter, then please contact Kay Morrison on 01738 447123.

Service Dates

Sunday Services		
Every Sunday at 9.30am	St John's Kirk	
Every Sunday at 11.15am	St Leonards in the Field	
Morning Service is held on every Sunday throughout the year at 9:30am with the first Sunday of each month being occasions when the sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated during morning worship.		
Wednesday Service		
Every Wednesday at 1.00pm	St John's Kirk – Knox Chapel	
Christmas Services		
Sunday 24 December 2023 at 9.30am	St John's Kirk	
Sunday 24 December 2023 at 11.15am	St Leonards in the Field	
Sunday 24 December 2023 at 6.00pm	St Leonards in the Field	
Sunday 24 December 2023 at 11.30pm Singing from 11.00pm	St John's Kirk	
Monday 25 December 2023 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	

St John's Kirk of Perth : Charity Number SC017132

Greek Orthodox Services		
Saturday 18 November 2023 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	
Saturday 16 December 2023 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	
Saturday 20 January 2024 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	
Saturday 17 February 2024 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	
Saturday 16 March 2024 at 10.00am	St John's Kirk	

In order to enable as many people as possible to share in worship, there is a ramp at the south door for wheelchair and pedestrian access; an audio induction loop system is in operation and large print hymn books are available at the door.

Events in St Johns Kirk

Clorstaidh Chaimbeul (Accordion)	Saturday	4 November 2023	1.00pm F
Silent Film – The Hunchback of Notre Dame	Monday	6 November 2023	7.30pm T
Organ Recital - Morley Whitehead	Saturday	2 December 2023	1.00pm F
Perth Chamber Music – A4 Brass	Monday	4 December 2023	7.30pm H
Brandon McPhee (Accordion)	Friday	8 December 2023	7.30pm T
Scottish Ensemble Candlelit Concert	Monday	11 December 2023	7.00pm H
Chansons	Saturday	16 December 2023	7.30pm T
* Perth Chamber Music Liam Bonthrone (tenor)	Sunday	21 January 2024	3.00pm H
Organ Recital – Laurent Jochum (Saint Jean-Baptiste de Belleville, Paris)	Saturday	3 February 2024	1.00pm F
Perth Chamber Music Stroud Zhang Duo	Saturday	24 February 2024	7.30pm H
Fettes College Chapel Choir, Edinburgh (Director, Angus Tully)	Sunday	25 February 2024	3.00pm F
Organ Recital – Steven McIntyre (St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow)	Saturday	2 March 2024	1.00pm F
Caledonian Winds	Sunday	17 March 2024	3.00pm F

* Resol String Quartet	Sunday	24 March 2024	3.00pm H
Organ and Cello Recital – Simon Leach (Cannongate Kirk Edinburgh) and Kim Vaughan		6 April 2024	1.00pm F

* Denotes events promoted by Perth Chamber Music but taking place at customary St John's Music times (NB: these require paid admissions)

F = Free AdmissionT = Tickets at the DoorH = HorsecrossCheck out our websitefor further upcoming events in the Church, some are even free!

Communication

Visit the Website	st-johns-kirk.co.uk/
Online Services	youtube.com/results?search_query=st+johns+kirk+perth
Follow us on Facebook	facebook.com/stjohnskirkperth/ facebook
Music and Concerts:	st-johns-kirk.co.uk/concerts-and-music
3D Inside St John's	st-johns-kirk.co.uk/flythrough
St Leonard's in the Field	slitfperth.co.uk/

Contacts

Locum Minister	Revd. Philip Majcher	01738 813226 07789 046187
Interim Moderator	Revd. Craig Dobney	cdobney@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk	Bill Wilson	07958 447858 <u>clerk.stjohns@gmail.com</u>
Depute Session Clerk	Kay Morrison	01738 447123
Treasurer	Lorna Ferguson	01738 632206
Gift Aid Convenor	Wilma Malcolm	01738 622807 st-johns-kirk.co.uk/support-donations cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/
Events Coordinator	Wilma Malcolm	01738 622807 <u>st-johns-kirk.co.uk/venue-hire</u>

Roll Keeper	Aileen Morrice	01738 582137 rollkeeper.stjohns@gmail.com
Friends of St John's	Website	
Church of Scotland	Website	Contact Form 0131 225 5722
Perth Presbytery	Website	perth@churchofscotland.org.uk 07596 868064
St Leonard's in the Field	Website	office@stleonardsinthefields.co.uk 01738 632238

Final Thought

And finally,

Christmas is just around the corner as we approach this busy time, we need to be aware of the

"Reason for the Season" – Jesus

Anne





