

The Kirk Quair

February-March
2024



For every thing there is a season
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

St Andrew's
In the Grange
Church of Scotland



I don't know when Christmas officially ends for you. For me, it's when the tree comes down, decorations are packed away, and the house returns to its "normal" state. Christmas, indeed, ended when I walked into my office and switched on the computer to see over 100 emails needing my attention.

After numerous cups of coffee, I cleared my inbox, sat down and started to plan for the year ahead. With a blank calendar before me, I began to fill in the year planner and, as I slowly started to add the dates, I realised what a fantastic year 2023 had been. God has been busy in our community and it was only when I took the time to reflect that I genuinely became cognisant of it.

I don't usually get this feeling but I became excited about the year ahead. Some of the events I'm looking forward to include our Lent studies, Easter, Summer services, all the events we have planned and our exciting development to make our building more disability friendly. There is so much to be excited about. I am most excited to see what God will do in us and through us as both individuals and as a church in the coming year. God is still busy working with us and in our community. We get to be part of the exciting process by participating and being recipients of God's restoration in the world.

I know that not everything this year will go according to plan and heartache will be an unwelcome friend for some of us. Whatever this year holds, please know that you can always reach out and contact me.

From all of us at the manse, Happy New Year. My prayer for you and those you love is that you will know God's deep, profound love and presence, whatever this year brings. I am incredibly humbled that I get to journey with you all.

Blessings

Justin

Pastoral Care

If you're facing life's challenges, seeking guidance or simply needing a listening ear, our dedicated pastoral care team is here to offer support. Whether you're struggling with personal matters, navigating difficult transitions or feeling overwhelmed, we want to reach out and offer assistance.

To connect with pastoral care: Call the Minister at 257345 or Carolyn Oxburgh on 07781 132699. Alternatively, email : jtaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Confidentiality is assured. We are here to offer support and guidance without judgment. Remember, you're not alone. We are here to walk alongside you during life's journey

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Congregational Survey

In the last magazine, members of the congregation were invited to complete and submit a survey of their views on the way they would like to see worship being conducted. The response, so far, has been underwhelming to say the least and, as we said last month, it would be really helpful when planning services to know what you like and what you don't like.

The survey is very straightforward and can be completed either digitally or on paper. If you prefer paper, please ask Justin or Sally for an email or paper copy, fill in and return to them or, alternatively, go to the following link:

<https://blocksurvey.io/worship-audit-at-st-andrews-in-the-grange-L52WQA5SSTSXZXdsYsY1Q?v=o>

Congratulations



We were delighted to learn that Julia, a daughter of the late Marion Bowditch, was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for her services to sport in Guernsey.

Julia was described in the Guernsey Press as the "Island Games Supremo" and worked tirelessly for five years to ensure that all the arrangements ran smoothly, organising and coordinating the efforts of more than 1000 unpaid volunteers on whose behalf she accepted the award.

The games were a great success with Team Guernsey topping the medal table. Congratulations indeed!

StAG News

Charity Committee

The collection on Remembrance Sunday raised £235 which was divided equally between Humanitarian Aid Guernsey and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, the donation to the latter being augmented by a further £132.50 from our charitable fund bringing their total to £250.

The Christmas Lunch raffle of items donated by members of the congregation raised £215 for the Salvation Army Christmas Lunch and retiring collections of £359 over Christmas were given to Safer, a charity helping victims of domestic abuse in Guernsey.

The amount raised for Guernsey Welfare at the Scratch Nativity was £585 and a further £60 has been given to an appeal for replacement of the Spider climbing frame in Sausmarez Park.

Information Banners

The purchase of signs to be put up on either side of the church forecourt with information about our Sunday Services is being explored. Watch this space!

Press Officer

We recognise the importance of maintaining good relations with the media and are pleased to be able to report that Gill has agreed to act as our Press Officer. Gill is no stranger to the media world having worked for Channel Television for over 15 years before moving into the hospitality business and we are grateful to her for taking on this role.

GVS Foodbank

We continue to collect food for the GVS Foodbank and, if you would like to know their most wanted items, then look no further than their website: www.guernseywelfare.com

Bereavement Service

The Annual Bereavement Service, held on 9th December, was well attended and very moving. Hilary read a wonderful poem and decorations with personal messages were put on the tree.

New Church Fridge!

A new fridge has been fitted in the kitchen. Thank you, George, for installing it!





Mission Team



Mission Team were delighted at the enthusiastic, large turn out on Thursday 21st December, the last late night shopping evening in town, when an impromptu choir from St Andrews, accompanied by Alan on keyboard, gathered in a somewhat windy Market Square to sing Christmas Carols.

The setting could not have been more Dickensian with cobbles

underfoot, twinkling fairy lights above and a majestic Christmas tree.

Folk passing by also stopped to add their voices to those of the choir. A successful, enjoyable evening and we hope to be back next year.

Ps Children passing by greatly enjoyed the free sweets!



... and beach cleaning

Alison tells us that beach cleaning will be back on the agenda in 2024 and Mission Team would be delighted if any of you environmentally minded “Wombles” (see below) would volunteer to be part of a beach clean on Sunday 14th April at 2 pm meeting at the Chouet kiosk. No need to reserve a place, just turn up on the day! Friends and family welcome. The more the merrier!

Sun

April
14

Definition of “Wombles”

In 1968, Elisabeth Beresford wrote children’s books about fictional pointy nosed, furry creatures who live in burrows where they aim to help the environment by collecting and recycling rubbish in creative ways.

Did you know that Madame Cholet, a kind hearted Womble cook had an assistant called Alderney after our neighbouring island?



More StAG News



Wheelchair Ramp

Disabled access update from Stuart, our Property Convenor.

You will recall from the Christmas edition of the The Kirk Quair that we reported on the upgrading of the disabled access to church and hall. On 15 November, as the newsletter was going to press, a congregation member suggested we apply to the organisers of the Saffery Champness Rotary walk for support with our venture.

We had 2 weeks to review the plans, decide and agree our approach and submit application forms by the deadline of 5.00 pm, Thursday 30th November. Rotary required us to identify an element of the works upon which the sponsors could pin their label. Fortunately, we had been in touch with St John's for advice and prices on a variety of disabled friendly lifts. The platform lift we are looking at is integral to our scheme. It can be operated independently by the user. Cost to supply and fit? Approximately £10,500.00.

Completing the application form was more complicated than we expected ... to be submitted by post or on line. We printed off a hard

copy of the form from the sponsors website to do a draft as we worked out what we needed to cover in our application. When we finally returned to the computer and filled in the form on line, the bloney thing wouldn't "send"! We were running out of time. Drastic action was needed. Hand delivery the only option. 4.30 pm Thursday 30th ... submitted.

We were told that decisions on applications would be made before the end of the year ... and sure enough, on the day before Christmas Eve we were advised that our application had been successful ... how amazing! How exciting! What a fantastic Christmas present! But we had to keep it secret until Rotary were ready to make it public.

So if the walk is successful and raises the amount expected, we should receive the whole of the money for the lift we requested, hopefully some time in September.

Meanwhile the plans for the re-design have been submitted to Planning Control and we await to hear from them before we can start pricing the whole project.

We now need support walkers to accompany the minister for all or



part of the way when he undertakes “the walk” and even, perhaps, some training sessions in advance. We are also expecting to help run a support station on the day. Anyone available to help with the latter, please contact Carolyn Oxburgh. The date for your diary? Saturday 8th June.

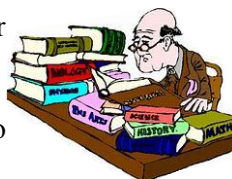
From the Editor

We are at that time of year again when we reflect on what has happened in the past twelve months and wonder what the next twelve might have in store.

Last year, there was a focus on mission, the underlying subject of Alistair’s report (p 8,9) about his visit to Israel just before the outbreak of hostilities in Gaza which continue unabated with so much death and destruction. Please keep the innocent victims of this ongoing conflict in your prayers..

We have had changes in patterns of worship, welcomed by some but not by others, and there is still an opportunity to express our feelings by completing the congregational survey. Details on page 3. If the Minister and Worship Team don’t know what we like and what we don’t like, they can’t plan accordingly! Good communication is, after all, vital in any organisation,

business, or family and church families are no exception!



Advent and Christmas were as busy as ever with a number of special services and the Congregation Lunch at Les Cotils.(p12)

Now, as we look forward, our cover reminds us that there is “a season for every thing” but we may need to be patient. Our thoughts are already turning to Lent and Easter which will soon be upon us. For details of the Lent Course starting on Wednesday 14th February see page 11. Good news, too, that we are to benefit from the proceeds of the Saffery Rotary Walk which should meet the cost of installing the disabled ramp/lift but not until later in the year. (p6)

Finally, a short reflection on Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day which coincide this year (p13) but don’t forget your pancakes on Shrove Tuesday! *Ed*

BEYOND OUR SHORES

With Alistair

The Resource and Presence Group of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team has oversight and governance of the Church of Scotland properties in Israel/Palestine including a hotel in Jerusalem overlooking the Old town and City walls, a hotel and church in Tiberias overlooking the Sea of Galilee and Ta-beetha School in Jaffa. My visit in early October as Convenor of the team revealed a profound Mission in Action.



The Hotel in Jerusalem employs Muslim and Christian Palestinians alongside Jewish staff, exemplifying unity despite challenging travel restrictions. The staff, transcending religious and cultural differences, work seamlessly serving tourists of all faiths and backgrounds, host events, and showcase Palestinian culture through artwork and goods. This integrated team embodies the Church's mission of bringing communities together and offers hope, echoing Christ's call to unite rather than discriminate. That is Mission in Action.

I was particularly moved when visiting the properties on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in Tiberias to look across the water and reflect on what happened there 2000 years ago. The hotel, formerly a hospital founded by Dr David Torrance, welcomes people of all faiths and none with staff, many born in the hospital, from all sections of the community working together to welcome pilgrims and tourists alike. It also provides employment for many members of the community with special needs and sells Palestinian products including the award winning Olive Oil from Nabeel Olive Groves. An even more moving experience was to sit in the church by the lake shore, singing together the hymn “Lord you have come to the Seashore.” Revd. Muriel Pearson, Minister of the Church of Scotland in Tiberias, led the worship with only seven of us present but, as we sang that hymn, many of us with tears in our eyes, we became aware of people coming into the church, people of different nationalities with no connection to The Church of Scotland. They joined in the hymn either in words, humming or tapping out the rhythm, we prayed together and, at the end, we all shook hands in Peace . That is Mission in Action.

Tabeeetha School, founded in 1863, an educational and spiritual home for pupils of more than 40 different nationalities, is truly unique as it welcomes all children regardless of race, nationality, gender or religion and creates a positive, challenging and supportive learning environment, valuing individual differences and learning styles. I spoke with a group of Christian, Muslim and Jewish Year 10 & 11 students preparing for their exams, all learning, playing and socialising together. No discrimination, each an equal. That is Mission in Action.

Another very moving experience was the celebration of Holy Communion in an Olive Grove near Bethlehem in the Palestinian West Bank during a visit to Tent of Nations, an initiative led by the Nassar family, Palestinian Christians facing oppression from the Israeli government as they strive for a positive approach to conflict management despite continuous attacks and threats. Their commitment to nonviolence and Christian values underscores a powerful Mission in Action.

Within 24 hours of my departure, war erupted in the region. *“No-one knows the future who can tell someone else what is to come”*. *Ecclesiastes 8: 7*. Reflecting on the Nassar family's resilience, their refusal to succumb to hatred, despair, or enmity stands out. Despite great injustice, they aim to transform pain into positive action, embodying the essence of Mission in Action. Their commitment to a better future, trusting in God's justice, and promoting nonviolent solutions is powerful testament to the enduring spirit of hope. As the scenes unfold and the horrific stories emerge, I am reminded of the words of Daud Nassar, “We know that we should not hate, despair or flee. We refuse to be enemies and we try to transform our pain and frustration into positive actions that will help us to create a better future. We want to help the oppressed and the marginalized to realize that they are powerful and can do something positive, even if they have to live under difficult conditions. We all have the task to create the future with our own hands and not to wait for others to do it for us.” They confront obstacles, challenges, continuous destruction and attacks in a peaceful non-violent way based on Christian values and trust in God's justice. In the face of adversity, the Church of Scotland's presence in the Holy Land emerges not merely as property ownership but as a beacon of unity, fostering hope and resilience in a region in desperate need. That mission is not just words but tangible actions, a narrative of faith extending beyond the walls of any church or the boundaries of any conflict.

EVEN FURTHER BEYOND OUR SHORES

Hundreds of Christians arrested under India's anti-conversion laws



The recent anti-conversion laws in India have led to the arrest of hundreds of Christians, according to church sources. UK-based Release International, which raises the voice of persecuted Christians worldwide, warns: “The persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in India increases dramatically with each passing month.”

Twelve of India's 28 states have now passed anti-conversion laws, and momentum is building to impose a national law across the whole of India. This would limit the freedom of religious minorities, including Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Sikhs, from sharing their faith.

Police are arresting Christians under a law that is intended to prevent conversion by force, but in practice prevents any Christians from sharing their faith – even though their right to do so is enshrined in the Indian constitution.

UCA news report that nearly 400 Christians have been arrested in the state of Uttar Pradesh since the law was passed three years ago. They say most of the 398 Christians arrested are Protestant pastors and church members. Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous state. It has long been a hotbed of ‘Hindutva’ – ‘Hindu-ness’ – which is championed by extreme Hindu nationalists who claim that to be Indian is to be Hindu. Observers warn that Hindutva religious nationalism is on the rise across the country.

India is set to hold national elections in 2024, raising the possibility of further gains for the Hindu nationalist BJP.

“Given the prevailing trend, the persecution of Christians in India is likely to increase,” warns Release International CEO Paul Robinson.

Last year in Manipur, ethnic/religious rioters killed about 175 people, burned down 300 churches, and drove some 60,000 people from their homes.

Release International has launched an appeal to help Christians in India. For more details go to: <https://releaseinternational.org/campaign/thumleima/>

... AND CLOSER TO HOME



As we embark on a new season, we are excited to announce a particular focus in our worship – a deep dive into the Gospel of Mark. From now until Easter, our church will be delving into this Gospel's profound teachings and stories, aiming to foster spiritual growth, reflection, and a closer connection with our faith.

Why the Gospel of Mark?

Mark, the shortest of the four Gospels, is a powerhouse of vivid storytelling and impactful narratives. It offers a unique perspective on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, emphasising His actions and their profound impact on those around Him. Through Mark's lens, we witness the compassion, power, and transformative love of Jesus.

Embarking on a Lenten Exploration: "Seeking another kind of life" by Trevor Hudson

As we enter the reflective and spiritually significant season of Lent, we are excited to announce our chosen Lenten study – "Seeking Another Kind of Life" by Trevor Hudson.

Lent: A Time for Spiritual Reflection

Lent is a season of intentional reflection that encourages us to journey inward, reevaluate our lives, and draw closer to our faith. It's not just a time of giving up but of taking on and delving into spiritual practices that enrich our connection with God and transform our hearts.

"Seeking Another Kind of Life" – A Guided Exploration

Trevor Hudson, renowned for his insightful teachings on spiritual formation, leads us through this Lenten journey.

How You Can Participate?

Join Our Weekly Wednesday Night Sessions: Attend our weekly gatherings to engage in meaningful discussions and enrich your understanding of "Seeking Another Kind of Life." Starting on the 14th of February at 19:30 – 21:00 (Running for six Wednesdays) and ending on the 20th of March

As we embark on this Lenten Exploration, let us open our hearts to the transformative possibilities that "Seeking Another Kind of Life" presents. May this season be one of profound growth, spiritual renewal, and a deeper connection with the divine.

Christmas at St Andrew's in the Grange

Our celebration of Jesus' birthday this year began with a Scratch Nativity on Sunday 10th December. Everyone entered into the spirit of the occasion so that we had Mary and Joseph, a fine array of shepherds and Magi, a star and, even, a well behaved lamb and a donkey!



As usual, we were able to come forward during the service to place gifts of biscuits, chocolates and money under the Christmas Tree and raised £585 for fuel vouchers for Guernsey Welfare.

Our service of Lessons and Carols, the next Sunday, was followed by three services on Christmas Eve beginning with Traditional Worship in the morning and then the Pyjama Service in the afternoon and, finally, Watchnight with Bethlehem in the evening. The pictures below were taken during the Pyjama Service when, after a short time in the sanctuary, we moved into the hall to get involved in some craft activities. No service on Christmas Day but, instead, we were invited to watch an Online Reflection on the church website.



‘Lenten Valentines’

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God’s love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

‘What, do you wish to know your Lord’s meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was His meaning.’



The picture in Alistair’s report on page 9 is a sculpture outside The Church of Scotland in Tiberias. For more information about the places and organisations he mentions, visit:

www.tentofnations.com, <https://tabeethaschool.org>,
www.scotshotel.com, www.scotsguesthouse.com.

Church Calendar

February

Sunday	11	10.30	Morning Worship
Tuesday	13		Shrove Tuesday
Wednesday	14	19.30	Lent Course starts See p11
Sunday	18	10.30	Morning Worship
Sunday	25	10.30	Morning Worship

March

Sunday	3	10.30	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Sunday	10	10.30	Morning Worship Mother's Day
Sunday	17	10.30	Morning Worship and Stated Annual Meeting
Sunday	24	10.30	Morning Worship
Thursday	28	19.00	Maundy Thursday. Holy Communion
Friday	29	10.30	Good Friday. With members of Bordeaux Methodist Church*
Sunday	31	10.30	Easter Sunday Morning Worship with Holy Communion BST starts. Remember to put your clocks forward.

April

Sunday	7	10.30	Morning Worship
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NB

Please note that The Stated Annual Meeting will be held after the morning service on 17th March. An opportunity to have your say.

*March 29th Good Friday. Last year, we joined with Bordeaux Methodist Church on Good Friday. This year, the Methodists will be joining us at St Andrew's in the Grange for Morning Worship.

Holy Communion will not be celebrated on Sunday 7th April.

Church Register

No changes

Meet & Greet

February

- 11 Jo and Iain
- 18 Sally and Stuart
- 25 Andrea and Robert

March

- 3 Morna and Peter
- 10 Charmaine and George
- 17 Hilary and David
- 24 Sally and Stuart
- 31 Beth and Emily

April

- 7 Edith

Sunday Readers

February

- 11 Linda
- 18 Ethel
- 25 Elizabeth

March

- 3 Robert
- 10 Charmaine
- 17 Alison
- 24 Stuart
- 28 Gay
- 29 Amanda Sarah

April

- 7 Iain



To conclude, time for a Valentine's Day smile

Romance, love, marriage and all that stuff – the way children see it.

How do you decide who to marry? Nobody really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. Kirsten, age 10

What is the right age to get married? 23 is the best age because you've known the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. Derrick, age 8

What do you think your mum and dad have in common? Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8

And a definition of marriage Marriage is like twirling a baton, turning handsprings, or eating with chopsticks; it looks so easy till you try it. - Helen Rowland

Church of Scotland

St Andrew's in the Grange, Guernsey

The Minister

Rev Justin Taylor

Tel 257345

Website: cofsguernsey.org.gg

Email: jtaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk

Sunday service is held at 10.30 am each week with a creche available for the very young. Details of activities for older children are given in the Church Calendar.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

Car parking is available, by courtesy of the States of Guernsey at the Lukis House car park, 80 yards down the Grange and also at Healthspan (windscreen stickers must be displayed at the latter). Both car parks are on the same side of the road as the Church .

Session Clerk	Ms Sally Wilkinson	Tel 263991
Treasurer	Mr Steven Jones	Tel 720547
Freewill Offering	Mr David Lewis-Jones	Tel 726561
Safeguarding Officer	Ms Ethel Robb	Tel 264559
Church Organist	Jurat Dr Alan Boyle	Tel 246153
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