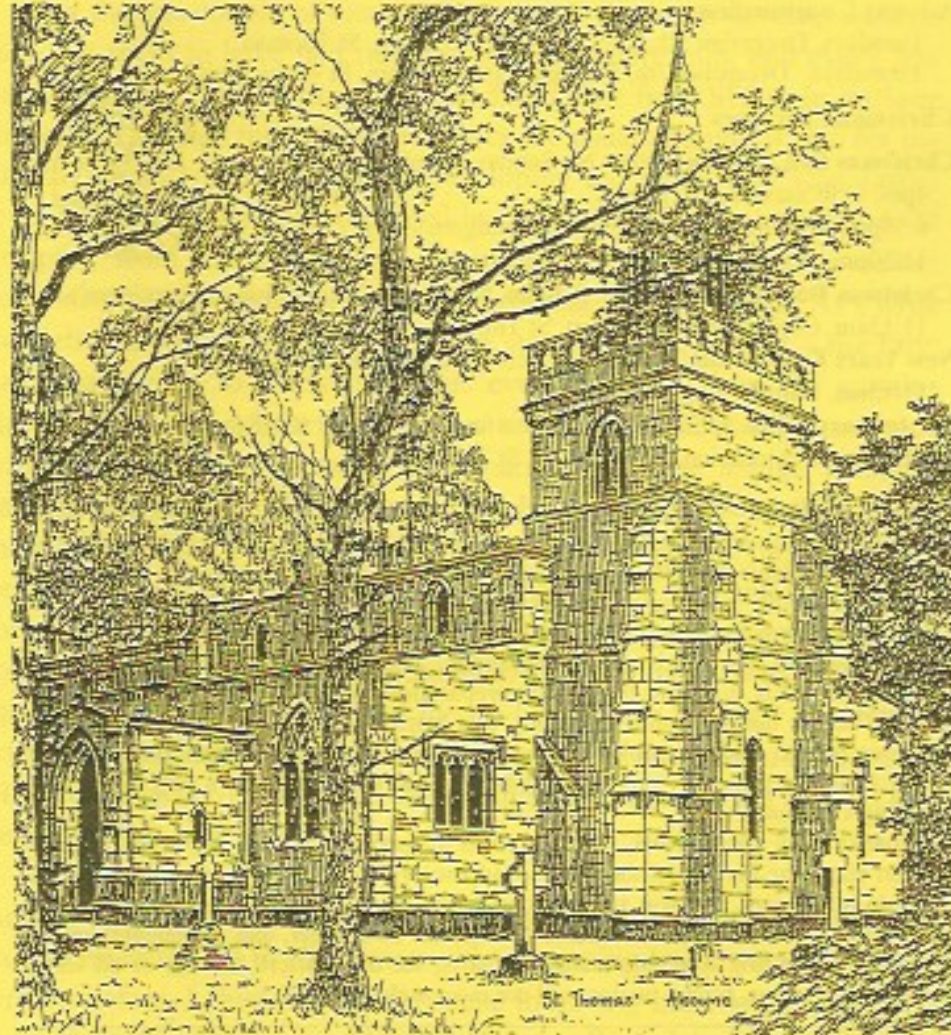


The Deeside Tattler

December 2023 and January 2024



St. Kentigern's, Ballater, St. Thomas's, Aboyne
with St. Ninian's, Braemar



Rector: Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock
The Rectory, 7 Invercauld Road, Ballater, AB35 5RP
Tel. No. 013397 55919 email: vittoriahancock@gmail.com
Lay Reader: Hugh Dawson, Tel. No 013398 87054

Note: DAY OFF. Vittoria is taking Friday as her normal day off, and it would be helpful if we would respect that.

Advent Communion

Tuesdays, December 5th, 12th and 19th, 11.30am, St Thomas'
Thursdays, December 7th, 14th and 21st, 11.30am, St Kentigern's

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve, 24th December No Sunday morning services
4pm, Crib Service, St Thomas'
6.30pm, Carols around the Crib, St Kentigern's
11.30pm, Midnight Communion, St Thomas'

Christmas Day, 25th December, 9.30am, Christmas Communion, St Kentigern's
11.15am, Christmas Communion, St Thomas'

New Years Eve, 9.30am, Service of Carols and Readings, St Kentigern's
11.15am, Carol-a-long, St Thomas'

7th January, 2024, 9.30am, Communion for Epiphany, St Kentigern's
11.15am, Communion for Epiphany, St Thomas'



From the Editor: We call this the Christmas Edition - but in fact a lot of other things happen too at this time of year, much of which is reflected within the Tattler this time. We have reports of the Harvest celebrations, then a lovely article that reminds us of the meaning of our Remembrance, all the more poignant this year with so many dreadful things happening in the world today.

Then before all the Christmas celebrations, there comes Advent, and we are reminded that this is a time for serious preparation for the coming of Christ to the world. Then at last we come to the joy of Christmas, first with our midnight and other services to celebrate, followed by all the fun, food and presents that we enjoy all the more when happily prepared for it. We wish all our readers a very happy and fulfilling Christmas.

Our thanks to all contributors, who make this magazine what it is. We recently had a sermon about the parable of the talents - apparently a very large sum of money. One man hid his talents, and was roundly condemned for not making use of it. And we are reminded that we all have talents of one sort or another, and are encouraged to use them to the full. And this includes writing for the Tattler! Articles of all sorts, short, long, serious, funny, poems - all are most welcome. **Ed**

Sheila Maxwell Tel 013398 86740 EDITOR and Aboyne contact
Email: sheilamaxwell@btinternet.com

Anne Richardson, Tel 013397 56088 Contact St Kentigern's
Email: richardson716@btinternet.com

From the Rector,
Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock



Dear Friends,

After the last couple of months, I suspect I may soon develop webbed feet. We seem to have had rain and rain and more rain, and every few days the phone rings with yet another flood alert from SEPA. In Ballater in October we had more than five times the usual amount of rain for the month, and November seems to be developing the same way. This Tattler letter is being written accompanied by the sound of rain outside and the dripping from an overflowing drain-pipe. Not exactly the weather conducive to writing about Advent, Christmas, and New Year. As I write this letter however, the date marks the start of Celtic Advent – the forty days leading up to Christmas. This evening I will close the curtains against the dark and the wet, put on a Christmas CD, and commence wrapping Christmas presents in preparation for the annual Hancock gathering. I do find that year on year I am buying fewer things, and more experiences, or food based presents. I am receiving the same. Last year in my stocking was a voucher for a helicopter ride, and another one for a falconry experience. I haven't yet managed either, but I haven't forgotten about them. My old friends down south didn't want more stuff this year, but really appreciated the on-line cheese tasting I got them a couple of years ago, and so are having a festive cheeseboard delivered. My aunt likewise doesn't need more things, so afternoon tea for two will be winging its way to her.

Advent is an odd time of year. Sometimes it seems as though we leap from Remembrance to Christmas without pausing in-between. As I have written before, I think myself fortunate in having been brought up with Advent traditions as well as Christmas ones. We celebrated St Nicholas on the night of the 5th December. We remembered St Lucy - St Lucia on the 13th. We had our Advent candles at home, when we were old enough not to set the house on fire. The Christmas tree went up usually as close to Christmas Eve as was manageable.

Advent is not the same as Christmas – it sounds obvious, but all too often the two seem to run into each other. Advent is a time of penitence. A time of preparation of our hearts for the coming of the Messiah. A retelling of the story of faith through time. Technically it used to also be a time of fasting. Perhaps we ought to bring that back. Not necessarily a fasting from food and drink. But a fasting from excess. A fasting from the expectations pressed upon us by this world. A fasting from the mad rush towards Christmas. This is what the prophet Isaiah says about fasting – we are to 'remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives.' That strikes me as a good way of holding the Advent season.

Advent is the beginning of a new year, in church terms. It is a time to reflect, to assess, to think and pray about what is important. Christmas guides us to a great celebration, and Epiphany to a great revelation. But to get there takes time and thoughts and planning. The Christmas celebration is just a party without knowledge of God. Epiphany is a chance for that God to speak to you. This festive season I encourage you to pause, breathe, explore. What might God be showing you? What might be revealed to you? What will you find to celebrate? Pause, take hope, and rejoice in the peace and love that is a gift of God to you and all.

Wishing you every blessing at this season and in the New Year,

Vittoria

Zip-wire for Alzheimer's Scotland

Vittoria's zip-wire adventure has raised just over £1000! Thanks to all the generous contributors. If anyone still wants to give, the justgiving page is still open <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/vittoria-hancock>,

or you can send a donation straight to Alzheimers Scotland, referencing Vittoria on the back of the cheque:

Alzheimer Scotland Freepost Edinburgh



Dates for the Diary

30th November, 1.30 – 3.30 Christmas Craft Afternoon, St Kentigern's

2nd December, St Kentigern's Church Fair

3rd December, Advent Sunday

9th December, Wedding, St Thomas'

10th December, 6pm, Nine Lessons and Carols, St Thomas'

17th December, Ecumenical Service of Nine Lessons and Carols,

Glenmuick Church

20th December, 2.30pm, Christmas Service at Praesmohr Home, Birse

27th January, 12 -3, Dee-Don Group meeting, St Andrew's, Alford

31st January, 7.30pm, St Thomas' Vestry meeting

14th February, Ash Wednesday

Bishop Dorsey McConnell

During the suspension of Bishop Anne as bishop of this Diocese, Bishop Dorsey McConnell has been appointed as full-time interim Bishop, with full ecclesiastical authority. You will all have the pleasure of meeting him in person on Sunday 21st January, when he is coming to take services of Holy Communion at both St Kentigern's and St Thomas'.

Bishop Dorsey McConnell is a former Bishop of Pittsburgh, and moved to Orkney in 2022. He is known for being a bridge builder, and seeking to draw different parties together to find a middle way.

Soul Soup Lunches

Soup for the body, company for the soul. These lunches will continue at 12pm on midweek communion days. This is open to anyone – you do not need to come to the service to join us for lunch, nor do you need to be a member of the church in anyway. Please come and join us and enjoy some company and some warmth.

Aberdeenshire South Foodbank

The Foodbank in Banchory is run by the Trussell Trust, and aims to provide emergency food for people who are referred to them as being in genuinely serious need of the help. It is run by volunteers, using mainly canned, dried or packet food that has been donated to them. Food parcels are given that are usually intended to tide a family over for 3 days until the emergency is dealt with. They also offer advice to people with their finances, where this is wanted.

We will all be aware of the increasing need for this, at a time when expenses have gone up so much, especially for heating. They are having a Christmas Appeal, and something we can do to help is to collect suitable food and donate it to the local branch in Banchory.

Both churches will have a box in church to collect donations during Advent, and it would be good if people would bring something for it each week, and make it a generous donation to such a worthwhile charity.

Remember there is also Fareshare in Aboyne and the Ballater Food Pantry, both of which are not only designed to help those in need, but also to cut down on food waste. Both local Co-op's have facilities for donating to these.



Sharing Advent and Christmas

Advent and Christmas are perhaps the most commercialised time in the whole of the church year. How, amongst all the shopping and parties and twinkly lights, do we not only hold on to the seasons, but share them with our families and friends? Here are some suggestions

Remember the liturgical colours and use them in your homes – purple is for Advent, gold and white for Christmas. Don't let Christmas invade the house too early – if you do want to put decorations up, why not use the purple colour of Advent and then swap to the gold and white of Christmas on Christmas Eve.

Have an advent wreath in your own home, and light one candle each Sunday. Or get a count-down candle to Christmas with the names of Jesus on, and light it each day while you're having your meal together.

With each square of the advent calendar, read part of the Christmas story. Or instead of an Advent Calendar, try putting up Jesse Tree decorations instead. Suggestions – and outlines – can be found on the internet.

Why not try the Mexican idea of a Posada – a nativity set - the holy family, shepherds, and kings move from house to house during Advent. Each family takes a turn to host them, before they end up in church (or somewhere central) on Christmas Eve.

Try reading a book with the family – both the Advent Calendar by Steven Croft and The Christmas Mystery by Jostein Gaardner provide interesting alternatives to the well-know story.

Be really radical - put Santa Claus back where he belongs, and celebrate his day on the 6th December instead!

Take time as a family to enjoy some carols – you could go singing (wrap up warm), or just stay at home with some hot chocolate and the words.

When you put the Christmas Tree up, use the Christmas Tree Blessing prayer to remind you why we have one:

Holy Creator of Trees, bless with your abundant grace this our Christmas tree as a symbol of joy.

May its evergreen branches be a sign of your never-fading promises.

May its colorful lights and ornaments call us to decorate with love our home and our world.

May the gifts that surround this tree be symbols of the gifts we have received from the Tree of Christ's Cross. Holy Christmas tree within our home, may Joy and Peace come and nest in your branches and in our hearts. Amen. Author Unknown

Buy an extra present to give to someone as a surprise... or find a local refuge or shelter and ask them what they need.

Invite someone who is alone to Christmas lunch – and make sure they have presents to open afterwards.

Celebrate the days after Christmas as well – there are various traditions that can be revived, such as going for a ride on St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day), drinking spiced wine on St John's Day (27th December), eating porridge on Holy Innocents (28th December), and eating doughnuts on St Sylvester's Day (31st December).

Take time at the New Year to rededicate yourself and your family to God.

Remembrance



Autumn is always a time of reflection for us, especially since a voyage in the Eastern Mediterranean some years ago. The ship berthed in Alexandria in early November and there was the opportunity to visit the El Alamein war graves and battlefield museum. We were privileged to participate in a wreath laying ceremony in the allied cemetery which is immaculately maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The remains of 7,342 allied servicemen are buried there, each grave having a headstone with the name rank and unit of the deceased, where known, others “Known unto God”. Viewing the graves of teenage shipmates buried side by side was particularly moving. In addition the remembrance plaques record the names of over 8,500 people who died in that theatre of operations but who have no known grave.

The Italian cemetery and the German mausoleum are no less impressive, the German one records the deaths of boys as young as fifteen, who in our society would not be allowed to leave school, but who were killed fighting in the desert.

The museum contained a wide variety of military hardware and artefacts from all sides, and was interesting in its impartiality recording events as something which took place here in Egypt but not something in which the Egyptians participated. In this respect it is similar to the Vietnam War museum in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon).

Seeing the devastating human losses from just one area of a larger conflict one cannot help but reflect how hatred stirred up by one group against others can cause such carnage, and yet if they are unopposed the result can be genocide. Seeing the amount of conflict currently occurring or being incited in the world at the moment one prays that men with both power and reason are able to prevail to restrain the people who would widen existing conflicts into something much worse,

The next stop on our voyage was Haifa in Israel, from where visits to Jerusalem and Bethlehem helped to refresh our Christian faith and renew hope for the future. Hopefully by the time that section is written the current situation in Israel/Palestine will have improved.

Jean and Eddy Horton
November 2023

Hot Chocolate Walks

The hot chocolate walks are continuing – these are gentle strolls in the local area to explore a point of interest, with a stop for hot chocolate or a beverage of your choice in your flask. There are rarely big hills, bogs, or rivers to negotiate. If it is lashing down with rain, snowing a blizzard or blowing a hoolie, we stay at home. No endurance test is needed.

On Thursday 21st December, Vittoria was to be walking from the square in Tarland up to Tomnaverie to celebrate the Winter Solstice. This has had to be cancelled, but will take place in due course. There will be no walk in January as she is away for two Sundays. Any suggestions for other walks, please let Vittoria know. Taking part in these walks is at your own risk. Please come suitably dressed with appropriate footwear.



Hot Chocolate Walk - October

On Sunday 15th October walkers from Ballater and Aboyne joined Vittoria on a beautiful Autumnal walk to Formaston to visit St Adamnan's Kirkyard, just on the eastern edge of Aboyne golf course. (St Adamnan was once Abbot of Iona being elected to that role in 679. He is also famed for being the biographer of his famous predecessor, St Columba).

The now ruined church was once the original church in Aboyne. It was granted to the Knights Templar and confirmed by Alexander 11 in 1242. The church yard has Pictish routes and it was here that part of the beautiful Pictish Formaston Stone was found - now to be seen on display at the Victory Halls in Aboyne.

Our walk was most enjoyable but we were all grateful for flasks of Hot Chocolate and marshmallows that warmed us up while sitting on the mossy mounds in the picturesque and peaceful setting of this ancient site of worship, before returning along the Deeside Way to our cars.

Carol Birss



Harvest Celebrations at St Kentigern's

We had our Harvest Communion Sunday 8th October, followed by a Bring and Share lunch, which was well attended. Hilary made her Harvest bread, which was delicious as usual. The tables were laden with lots of delicious foods and puddings. It was a lovely celebration.



Douglas made a tasty potato salad with potatoes grown in the church garden.



Craft Sessions at St Kentigern's

On 26th October we had a craft session in the church hall. We created various items to sell at our Christmas Fair on 2nd of December. Vittoria did a masterclass in making willow stars and baubles. It was great fun and we now have an added string to our bows. We'll be holding another session on 30th November, just in time for the event.



Craft session, all hard at work!



Sabine shows off some decorations

BASS NOTES

Staring into the Future

The *ai* (pronounced *ah-ee*) is a three-toed sloth found in South America; it is also the noise many people make when confronted with the mysteries and frustrations of modern technology, and it's a great word for Scrabble players. However, when ai is written in capital letters – AI – it generally represents that most recent and controversial of technologies, artificial intelligence.



The American, Elon Musk – a man whose name sounds like an expensive male fragrance – has opined that AI will in the future make work unnecessary, unless we choose to do it. On the same day that I read about this utterance from him, I also spotted a cartoon of two boffins staring at a large box emblazoned with the letters 'AI' and which was clearly in the process of collapsing completely. One of the boffins was holding a card which read *ISRAEL/GAZA SOLUTION?* and saying

to the other, 'Well, it was worth a try.' Surely, I thought, with an internal sneer of satisfaction, there cannot be problems so intractable that they are beyond AI and the scent of Musk.

Things change. This is one difficulty for Elon and the rest of us when attempting to predict the future, especially the distant future. Some scientists in the mid-twentieth century claimed that nuclear power would make electricity so cheap that in the future it would be free to every household. That worked out well in 2023.

So, Elon, I think you should row back a bit on the big theoretical predictions about work and remember that what you are really dealing with here is the human race. I am sure that someone human will need to be around when things powered by AI go wrong – and they will. What happens when the power goes off or the battery dies? Who is going to teach and supervise the people who have the skills needed? What will replace the pleasures, challenges, joys and sociability of work? I am prepared to bet a thousand of your US dollars that one thing which will not change in the future is human nature. We will still, on the

creative side, be capable of producing great art, music and literature and cures for diseases, with or without AI, while on the rather less positive side we'll still be capable of generating bitter conflict, committing crimes and devising more and more ingenious ways of killing one another.

Anyway, my wife warned me that because this is the Christmas edition, I should keep it light. I've succeeded in that, don't you think, especially towards the end of that last paragraph? So I'll finish by giving you an update on the postgraduate Creative Writing course I mentioned in *Bass Notes* a couple of years ago. I have now completed it and await the result, though I had to take an extra year due to my propensity for falling over during 2021 and 2022. My final assessment was to write up to five pieces of short fiction totalling no more than 15,000 words. I squeezed five short stories into 14,998 words. These were brilliant and entertaining, as I've told Archie, my whippet several times. I now await the results. These were to be announced in December but due to industrial action - by human beings - this has now been postponed until January 2024.



I confidently predict that I will either be sobbing into my coffee or jumping for joy like a teenager one day in January next year. Take that for seeing into the future, Elon.

Merry Christmas.

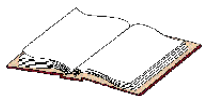
Eric Sinclair



St Kentigern or St Mungo

This year we will be celebrating St Kentigern's day in our churches on 14th January. St Kentigern was a missionary and bishop during the 6th century. He is reputed to be the son of a princess, and was born in Culross, Fife. He studied under St Serf at Culross Abbey. During a time of religious persecution in Scotland, he went south to Wales. He founded a monastery at Llanelwy in North Wales – later known in English as St Asaph, after his successor in that place. After several years of missionary work in Wales, Kentigern returned to Scotland. In Scotland, Kentigern founded a number of monasteries and churches including St Mungo's Cathedral in Glasgow. According to legend, Kentigern performed many miracles during his time in Scotland. He was said to have brought a fish back to life, and to have restored a woman to life after she drowned in the River Clyde.

Kentigern was known for his commitment to the poor and needy. He was said to have given away all his possessions to the poor, and to have worked tirelessly to help those in need. He was also known for his wisdom and spiritual insight, and many people came to him for advice and counsel. He is remembered as a model of missionary zeal, spiritual insight, and compassionate service to others.



Readings for December, 2023 and January, 2024

3rd December ADVENT SUNDAY	Isaiah 64:1-9 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13:24-37	Susan Smith	Sue and Warren Burgess
10th December Advent 2	Isaiah 40:1-11 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8	Sabine Muir	Anne Harper
17th December Advent 3	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28	Margaret Jaffray	Carol Simmons
24th December Advent 4 Christmas Eve	Isaiah 9:2-7 Titus 2:11-14 John 1:1-14	<u>No morning service at either church</u>	Michael Bruce
25th December CHRISTMAS DAY	Isaiah 62:6-12 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20	Marcus Humphrey	Andrew Wilson
31st December Christmas 1	Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40	Carols and readings	Carol-a-long Anne Harper
7th January Epiphany 1	Isaiah 60:1-6 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12	Sabrina Humphrey	Sue and Warren Burgess
14th January Epiphany 2 St Kentigern	Isaiah 52:7-10 Romans 15:17-21 Matthew 28:16-end	Stanley Ewen	Jill Binns
21st January Epiphany 3	1 Samuel 3:1-10 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51	Anne Richardson	Carol Simmons
28th January Epiphany 4	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20	Hilary Mutch	Meg White

CHURCH SERVICES AT BALLATER AND ABOYNE

St. Kentigern's, 9.30am

1st Sunday Morning Worship
 2nd Sunday Holy Communion 1982
 3rd Sunday Holy Communion 1982
 4th Sunday Holy Communion 1970
 5th Sunday Morning Prayer

St. Thomas's, 11.15am

Morning Worship
 Holy Communion 1982
 Holy Communion 1970
 Family Communion
 Morning Prayer(Matins)

Sunday Club

St. Kentigern's, Ballater

Children are welcome to attend any Sunday Service, and families are invited to use the materials in the Hall if so required.

The **St Kentigern's Sunday Club** normally meets on the **third Sunday of every month at 9.30am** in the Church Hall. The children are brought back into Church to join their families during the Offertory Hymn.

These Services will be advertised when they have been resumed.
Anne R

Young Church at St. Thomas's

Children are welcome at all the services at St Thomas's. The children's corner contains books, colouring and toys for small children, so do make use of them.

Morning Worship at St.Thomas's

(on the first Sunday of the month)

This is normally a non-Communion Service, not specifically for children, but they are of course especially welcome.

The next services are:

3rd December - Beginnings

7th January - We three Kings

**4th February
Christingle for Candlemas**



Autumn Advent

Autumn showers of gold, bronze and russet,
 Leaves falling, fruits ripening
 Rose hip red and scarlet berries,
 Purple heathered hills.

Colours fade, days shorten, winter nears,
 Brightened by green needled spruce and fir.
 In frost and snow footprints point the way,
 In the starlight we follow,
 A baby cries.

Carol Simmons

From the Bible, for the young and not so young
John the Baptist



Christmas is on the way, with all the excitement and celebrations of the birth of the baby Jesus. But we are reminded that before that comes Advent, which is a time of preparation for the event, and a bit of serious thinking. And a large part of that is concerned with John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus. At the beginning of the Christmas story, we read of 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight' - lovely words that come originally

from Isaiah in the Old Testament. And John's was this voice.

The story starts right at the beginning of the Christmas story, in all the four Gospels of the New Testament. An elderly couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth, were told by the Angel Gabriel that they would have a child - at their age! And his name was to be John. A few months later, a cousin of Elizabeth, called Mary, was also told by the Angel that she would have a child. She was a young woman, engaged but not married to Joseph, and was to have her child by the Holy Spirit. She was the Virgin Mary - and the baby was to be called Jesus. So John was a cousin of Jesus.

John's mission started earlier than that of Jesus, and in fact it was John who brought about the start of Jesus's work. We are told that he was in the wilderness, going into all the region round about the river Jordan, and preaching to the people. There is an interesting description of him clothed with camel's hair with a leather girdle round his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey. John warned the people about their evil deeds and the wrath to come. The people asked him what they could do, and John said to repent, and to come for baptism at the river, for the forgiveness of their sins. It seems that a large number of people came to him to be baptised.

And one day, along came Jesus! John knew him of course, they were cousins. And he perhaps realised there was something special about Jesus, because he protested that he was not worthy to be baptising him, it should be Jesus baptising him. But Jesus insisted, John baptised him, and there was a wonderful happening. The heavens opened, the Spirit of God came down like a dove, and there came a voice from heaven saying 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'

Jesus must have been overwhelmed by this, and realised the time had come to start his own mission to all people. He went into the wilderness, was tempted by the devil but refused all his suggestions - and then gathered his disciples and started preaching and healing.

And so the words of John came to be. He said he was baptising with water, but one coming after him - Jesus - would baptise 'with the Holy Spirit and with fire'. And that is the baptism that still goes on today in our churches.



Long ago began the journey
Before the days when people sang
When God's creation praised the one
 The source of life itself
 Out of nothing came a spark
A light bright in the dark
 Sent on its way
 To travel on
 To tell the tale
 To sing the song

It danced through history of time
Light ever seeking place and day
When ready hearts would see and sing
 Lift voice in joyful praise
 In depth of heaven above
 A star in darkness shines
 Sent on its way
 To travel on
 To tell the tale
 To sing the song

There under midnight bowl of sky
 The universe applauds a birth
A beam of light declares the way
 To heaven here on earth
God's son held in maiden's arms
 As Light is met with light
 Sent on its way
 To travel on
 To tell the tale
 To sing the song



Vittoria Hancock

Harvest

It was the last thing we did before we left. The ‘ Aunties ‘ had brought the bowl up from their London house in 1952 when they moved back to Ballater, but it was badly cracked and we threw the contents on to the border in the back garden. ‘ Birnam ‘ had been sold and finally cleared. Newly married we were on our way to Africa, via Oxford. The year, 1958.



Thirty four years later we returned to ‘ Birnam ‘ to find the horse-chestnuts from that broken bowl had taken root and were substantial trees. Janet Legge, one of the two ‘ Aunties ‘ and a botanist, years before had planted five horse-chestnuts gathered from the top of Streatham Common in London into a shallow bowl. Like bonsai they never grew beyond a foot but shed their leaves every winter leaving sticky buds.

We have always had it in mind to re- create ‘ Auntie Jan’s ‘ bowl and some weeks ago I found a suitable one in Clan. The idea was to plant chestnuts from our trees but they did not oblige. So, on Sunday 8th October I had determined to pick some up from the tree on the traffic island as you come into Ballater - after attending Harvest Festival at St K.

Up stands Vittoria in St K to give her Address - and produces a little bowl containing horse-chestnuts with acorns to distribute to the congregation - some of the conkers from the traffic island. There are moments - and this was one - when you do wonder about ‘ guiding hands ‘.

We now have ‘ Auntie Jan’s ‘ re- created bowl. The chestnut showing in the photo is from our daughter’s tree in Hertfordshire, unseen are Vittoria’s planted round it.

Roger Searle



News from Aboyne-Dinnet Church

The following events will take place. Everyone is welcome, so do come along.

Saturday, 2nd Dec '23, 10 to 12 noon: the annual **Guild Christmas Bazaar** will be in the church hall on Huntly Road. Tea, coffee and a fine piece will be served. Tickets £3 for adults and £1 for children. There will be a cake & produce stall, a bottle stall, and a children's corner.

Sunday, 3rd Dec'23, 6.30pm: **1st Sunday in Advent**. Come and join us in celebrating Advent at Aboyne-Dinnet Church. We will sing wonderful Advent hymns and be reminded through Scripture what Advent is all about. The service will be candle-lit.

Friday, 8th Dec'23, 8pm: **Candlelit Carol Singing** at the Boat Inn. Please come along and join our carolling.

Saturday, 16th Dec'23: 'Joy to the World' - Annual Carol Singing in Aboyne. We start at 2pm outside the shops adjacent to the top car park. We will then decide where else to go. Please come along or join in the singing when you see us.



Christmas Trees for sale at St Thomas's!

There is a large quantity of lovely small fir trees growing in the grounds of St Thomas's, where the felling of some large trees a few years ago let in some glorious light for them. These need thinning anyway, eventually, and meantime some will make super Christmas trees. They range from fairly small, small to tiny!



Everyone is encouraged to take one to decorate for their Christmas celebrations. Just choose one, approach Warren who is in charge, and he will cut it down for you. If you have any problem with it, he will even help you get it into your car. You can then give a special donation to the church in return - it all helps!

Sheila



Baptism

In a church, at the font, her small brother was being christened. And the little sister whispers: “Behind his ears, too, Reverend Smyth!”

The day the Queen came to tea.

This year was one of the best for the Lonach Highland and Friendly Society's Games when our very own King Charles III popped over from Deeside and paid a visit to the annual Games on Saturday, 26th August when our granddaughter who is their secretary was introduced to his Highness along with their other dignities.



My Granddaughter Lauren being presented to The King at this year's Lonach Games

It reminded me of the day while I was working as private secretary to Mr A.L.P.F. Wallace when the Queen came to tea at Candacraig House.

Now to put you in the picture, way back in 1958, the 15th of September to be exact, great excitement was taking place when Her Majesty had accepted an invitation to come to tea after a grouse shoot on West Tornahaish from Mr. And Mrs. Wallace of Candacraig.

It gave my father, Hector Simon, chauffeur, one of the proudest days in his life when he had to meet the Queen and drive her up to the Luncheon Hut with Mrs. Wallace in the land rover together with the lunch hamper. At the hut before he could get round the back of the vehicle to open the door, the Queen had hopped out her door and was round the back opening the door for Mrs. Wallace to let her out. The Duke of Edinburgh who was taking part in the shoot was already there. Part of West Tornahaish borders the Balmoral estate way up in the hills.



My father Hector Simon

Back at Candacraig great preparations were going on in the kitchen and the tartan dining room ready for the royal visitors. Eventually the royal car rolled in after the shoot and tea was served. After tea and their departure, the butler showed us the chair Her Majesty had sat on, so we all tried it out. Silly things we did in those days, but it was very memorable for us all.

Now what did The Queen and Prince Charles have to eat, well with kind permission from Andrew McHardy, the cook's grandson, this is the extract from Grunnie's recipe book:

"Menu 15th September 1958

The Queen and Prince Philip on a shooting trip to Candacraig.

*12 for lunch out
Develled Chicken
Pink Sauce
Stuffed Eggs (with anchovy etc.)
Sandwiches with chopped lettuce, chopped ham etc. etc.
chutney, mustard.
Biscuits, butter and cheese.*



Mary McHardy

*They were also at the house for tea. Everything was home baked.
Fruit cake, ginger cake, scones, pancakes, shortbread etc etc.
There were also 5 men in the staff hall for tea.
I was very busy that day.
Mary McHardy"*

A truly remarkable day.

Eileen A. Davies, November 2023



What would you like for Christmas?

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas.

The little girl gasped and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

The Diamond Wedding of Marcus and Sabrina

In celebrating our Diamond Wedding, we renewed our vows at St.Kentigern's exactly 60 years after our wedding in St.James's, Piccaddilly, on 15th October 1963.

Family and friends attended a drinks party at Rhu-na-Haven, and there was a special family lunch at Dinnet, when all our children, and 13 grand and step grand children, were present, albeit the two elder grandsons were in America so linked with Facetime.

The family presented us with a magnificent painting by Mel Shand of the Walled Garden at Rhu-na-Haven, and the Estate employees gave us two nectarine trees for the wall of our newly restored greenhouse.



Renewing the Vows



with Sandy Manson

In addition to receiving a card from the King and Queen, the Lord Lieutenant, Sandy Manson, made a personal visit to congratulate us on our splendid achievement, as did our local Councillor Sarah Brown.

Sabrina surprised me by taking me off to Jersey for a few days, where we were well looked after by granddaughter Tara who was working in the hotel we stayed in.

We have been very touched by all the gifts and messages we have received from those we have met and served with over the years.

Marcus Humphrey



Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas.

Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy."

Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be.

"Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."

Congratulations and Commiserations

Deaths

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of Doreen Ewen. We pray for Stanley and the family at this time of loss. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Weddings

The marriage of Xanthe and Hugo took place at Birse Kirk in October

The marriage of Casey and Tom took place in St Thomas' in November

The marriage of Catriona and Kent is due to take place in St Thomas'

in December

Congratulations

Congratulations to our Rector Vittoria, re-elected as Canon in our Diocese

Congratulations to Carole Milligan, who has achieved a distinction in her recent Grade 4 singing exam.

Congratulations to Sabrina Humphrey on her 80th Birthday in November

Budding musicians -

St Thomas's held their Harvest service in October, followed by the usual sumptuous buffet lunch. And for entertainment, the children did their best, encouraged by Rector Vittoria, and organist/pianist Sheila. Fun was had by all!



WEB-SITES

St Thomas's Web-site has been transferred and upgraded. It has also been possible to return the photos to their original colour. The link is <http://www.stthomasaboynne.org>

If you want to get in touch, please email: stthomasaboynne@gmail.com

St Kentigern's Web-site is: stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk

Some services are recorded at St Thomas's. The Youtube Link is: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.thomaschurchaboynne>

oo

Pastoral Cards for the sick or bereaved

We have a small selection of very helpful pastoral cards, which are suitable to send from the Church to anyone who is sick, going into hospital, or bereaved. They include appropriate readings and prayers. Recipients have commented on the encouragement and comfort these cards have brought them.

If you would like a pastoral card sent to a friend from:

St Thomas's, Aboynne
Please contact Meg White
Tel 013398 80034

St Kentigern's, Ballater
Please contact Vittoria Hancock
Tel. No. 013397 55919

Prayer Chain Ministry

"Devote yourselves to prayer,
being watchful and thankful."
Colossians Ch 4 v2

A small group meets for prayer as requested. The group prays for anyone who requires it, which may be for healing, guidance, strength in a difficult situation or for thanksgiving. Prayer can be for yourself or for someone else (with their permission). Confidentiality is maintained at all times.

The group members are eager to be contacted at any time for prayer, visitation or simply for a listening and sympathetic ear.

Please consider joining us in the uplifting and essential ministry of prayer. We really need as many as possible to support our Prayer Group.
Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock

Important

The Tattler needs you!

Please send news, articles, stories, fillers, or anything else you can think of to enrich the Tattler. It can only be as good as you make it!

The next Edition is starting now.
Please give or send all contributions to the Editor,
or to Anne Richardson at Ballater,
by January 16th

CONTACTS :

ST. KENTIGERN'S	
Treasurer	Marcus Humphrey
Secretary	Sabine Muir
Lay Representative	Hilary Mutch
Vestry Members	Sabrina Humphrey Margaret Jaffray Sabine Muir Anne Richardson Susan Smith
Sacristan	Hilary Mutch
Organist	Stanley Ewen
Youth Leader	Anne Richardson
Child Protection Officer	Anne Richardson
Chalice Bearers	Roger Searle, Marcus Humphrey, Susan Smith, Douglas Mutch, Sabine Muir

ST. THOMAS'S

Secretary	Anne Harper
Treasurer	Sue Burgess
Lay representative	Anne Harper
Vestry Members	Warren Burgess Sheila Maxwell Katherine Rider Carol Simmons Lesley Thomas
Organist and Publicity	Sheila Maxwell 013398 86740
Child Protection Officer	Lesley Thomas
Sacristans	Carol Simmons, Jo Elson, Lesley Thomas
Chalice Bearers	Warren Burgess, Peter Sowrey, Andrew Wilson, Sue Burgess
Flowers	Jill Binns
People's Warden (Maintenance Officer)	Warren Burgess
Patron	Michael Bruce

ST. NINIAN'S

Dr Hugh Dawson:	Lay Reader, Treasurer, Organist
Astrid Cheyne:	Flowers
Anne Richardson	Child Protection Officer

Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Susan Smith, Marie Wilde, Sue Burgess

