

**THE MAGAZINE OF  
SAINT NINIAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
(Corner of Albert Drive and Pollokshaws Road Glasgow)**

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**April 2020**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all church services are cancelled  
The Scottish Episcopal Church is broadcasting a celebration of the  
Eucharist at 11 am on Sunday mornings which you can follow online  
with this link

<http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

### *Usual Service Times*

#### **Sunday Services**

**8am** Morning Prayer (1st Sunday in the month only)

**8.30am** Eucharist (said)

**10.15am** Sung Eucharist

#### **Weekday Services**

**Thursday 9.30am** Morning Prayer

**10am** Eucharist (1970)

**First Saturday of each month:** 10:00 am **Healing** Service

**Saints' Days** Eucharist as announced

### *Clergy and Ministers*

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**Deacon:** Mr Paul Whitton,

**Eucharistic Assistants:**

Mrs Liz Booth, Mr Vivian Davey

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email [info@stninianglasgow.org.uk](mailto:info@stninianglasgow.org.uk)

## *Rector writes*

To say that Covid-19 is having quite an impact on our lives would be the understatement of this generation. Our lives have been changed profoundly and, I fear, for some time to come. Nothing has been like it and we all pray that we will never see the likes of it again. We must be scrupulous in heeding the advice given to us by both the Scottish Government and Westminster.

Also, we need to help each other. It is very heartening that already “younger” members of the congregation have contacted me to offer their services to aid our more vulnerable members. We feel particularly helpless in the face of something that we cannot control and although we trust in the skill of our doctors and all NHS staff, we still feel exposed and vulnerable. It cannot have escaped our notice that all of this happens as we approach Holy Week. This is precisely the time when Jesus is portrayed at his most vulnerable and “weak”. God did not abandon him and God will not abandon us. Jesus died and rose again to become the conqueror of sickness and death. On our last Sunday together as a church family, the gospel of the day told us of the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus wanted her to drink from this well so that she might have the water of eternal life. Jesus was her saviour and he is ours. As a result of his intervention the woman departed with a new spiritual insight and her life transformed. God looks to us in this time of distress and reminds us that he is the God of love, compassion and support. Trusting in the mighty love of God we will endure whatever may be heaped upon our shoulders.

I am very keenly aware that my ministry amongst you is curtailed because I cannot visit you personally. I will do my best to keep in touch with all of you by phone and email. I am also aware that it is a wrench to stop the spiritual life we shared at church. However, just because we cannot meet in the building does not mean that we cannot have a spiritual life through prayer and study of scripture. As the Primus said recently, “Prayer is an important part of the tradition and spiritual life of the people of God. In hard time and in good times, quietly being before God and the people we love in our hearts encircles us all in God’s everlasting love and the promise of hope and salvation”. To aid our efforts I am going to launch a series of miniature guides entitled “Sunday Notes from the Rector”. They will cover Sunday readings for this month and on into the future for as long as is necessary. My hope is that on the Sunday morning you can look at the readings in your Bible, together with the Notes, and in that way you can unite yourself with your brothers and sisters and come together at a distance, as it were. If you are connected to the internet

you can use the website I use ([bible.oremus.org](http://bible.oremus.org)). I use that site to download the copies of the readings for the Thursday morning Eucharist. In this edition of the magazine I launch the first set of Notes for April. No doubt you will let me know what you think!

Until we meet again I urge you to keep safe and to have a regard for one another.

May our bountiful and merciful God bless each and every one of you and all those you love this day and every day.

The Rector



**ST. NINIAN'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
1 ALBERT DRIVE, POLLOKSHIELDS, GLASGOW  
Charity No. SC010966**

*From the Office of The Rector:*

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*[www.stniniansglasgow.org.uk](http://www.stniniansglasgow.org.uk)*

27/03/20

Dear Members of the congregation,

We write at this critical point in the life of our nation and in our own lives. Please do everything you can to keep yourself safe. We will, with great rejoicing, return to our beloved St Ninian's to worship God. Whilst we await that wonderful day, we need to discuss the practical issue of continued giving.

In the same way as all commercial premises, St Ninian's is facing a major loss of income throughout the period in which the church and halls must remain closed during the coronavirus crisis. In particular, there will be a loss of £1000 a month from hall lets and £400 a month from coffee mornings and other fund-raising events. Meanwhile the great majority of the daily costs of maintaining the building and the ministry of St Ninian's will continue and the only significant saving in expenses will be from the reduction in heating.

In these circumstances we would appeal to all members of the congregation to try to maintain their giving to the church by way of collections. We very much appreciate that during this crisis some members will be in the difficult position of a reduced income or be uncertain now of what their incomes might be.

If at all possible, however, please give consideration as to how you can maintain what you normally give in the collections.

A steady flow of income to the church will continue from those members who use a standing order through their bank, if, of course, their future income will allow them to maintain the standing order. In the case of those members who contribute through the weekly envelope scheme or put cash in the collection plate, we would ask you to consider one of these three

options:-

\* to continue to set aside each week the amount you can give so that

it will become available to the church when we resume services.

\* to set-up a monthly standing order with your bank (the St Ninian's bank details are: Sort Code 83-44-00, Account No. 00279670)

\* to send a cheque, made payable to "St Ninian's Episcopal Church", each month to Vivian Davey, the Treasurer, (2 Sutherland Court, 15 Bruce Road, Pollokshields, Glasgow G41 5EN) along with the relative envelopes where appropriate.

The second method has the big advantage of maintaining a steady income to meet expenses.

We thank you for considering these matters in these hard times and wish you and your loved-ones every blessing and continued good health.

Yours sincerely,

*Paul Romano*

Rector

*Vivian Davey*

Treasurer

## *April mindings*

- |    |                           |    |                               |
|----|---------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Annie Cauley              | 15 | Robert Bell Hannay Snr        |
| 6  | Thomas Kennedy            |    | Robert Bell Hannay Jnr        |
|    | Angela Joyce Merrick      |    | Mary Pennie                   |
|    | Tilly Knox                | 16 | Frances Cooke                 |
| 7  | Arthur Williams           | 18 | Florence Lydia Ritchie        |
|    | Dorothy Merrick           |    | Anne Zochowska                |
| 8  | Emmy Nicholson            | 19 | Catherine Henrietta Reid      |
|    | Margaret Goldie           | 20 | Robert Jamieson               |
| 9  | Florence Carey            | 21 | Tom Booth                     |
| 11 | May Harris                | 25 | Stewart Webb                  |
|    | Janet Smith               |    | Mary Emberton                 |
| 12 | Graham John Gilchrist     |    | Ronald Fleming Graham, priest |
| 13 | William Gardner           |    | Hammy Anwar                   |
|    | Patrick Whalin            | 26 | Caroline Wyatt                |
| 14 | Elizabeth Fraser          |    | Louey Middleton               |
|    | Andrew Cowan              | 28 | Hilda Goodman                 |
|    | William Douglas Gilchrist |    |                               |



## *Prayers for healing*

Please pray for Fiona Paton, Alva Caldwell, Moira Watson, John Murphy, Bernadette Chapman and Ian and Twinks Read. Very many thanks, your prayers are always very much appreciated.

Alva Caldwell



*Photos. Cover: the Easter cross made from the Christmas tree adorned with spring flowers, symbolising the link between the Incarnation and the Atonement. Left.: view of St Ninian's from Pollokshaws Road. Both by Susan Walker*

## *Sunday Notes from the Rector for April 2020*

*If you do not have a Bible at home but have access to the internet you can go to [bible.oremus.org](http://bible.oremus.org) and download any version of the Bible you choose for the passages in question.*

**Palm Sunday (5 April)**

**Isaiah 50. 4-9a**

**Philemon 2.5-11**

**The Passion according to Matthew (Matthew 26.14 - 27.66)**

We are given the opportunity to accompany Jesus on his final journey. On that journey, he suffered betrayal, torture, crucifixion and death. It gives us an insight into the fickleness of the human heart, but also into the immense compassion of God.

The **First Reading** from Isaiah contains verses from the third of the Servant Songs of Isaiah. The servant must first be a disciple, prayerfully receiving God's word, before presuming to teach others. His message evidently meets with opposition and results in persecution. However, he absorbs all the physical and mental abuse directed at him without retaliating. The insults don't really touch him, because he is confident that God will help and vindicate him. As we read these verses, we think of Jesus standing alone and unarmed before Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate.

In the **Second Reading**, taken from the letter to Philemon, St Paul describes Jesus taking upon himself our human condition. He went further: he humbled himself to the point of accepting the most shameful kind of death – death on a cross. God raised him up to make him Lord of heaven and earth. The self-emptying and ultimate humility of Christ should serve as a model for us.

In the **Passion Narrative** Jesus is presented as abandoned by the disciples and alone to face his destiny. There is no friend at the cross for him. He dies rejected and reviled. Preceding the cross was Jesus' trial before the Jewish and Roman authorities. The religious elite wanted a conviction for his "blasphemous" claim of planning to destroy the Temple and re-building it in three days. The Romans were concerned about Jesus' claim to be "the king of the Jews". Both authorities denied him justice.



The Passion fulfils the prophecies of Scripture and the fact that Jesus undertook this awesome task as an exercise of his free will. Extraordinary events follow the death – the darkening of the sky; the rending of the temple curtain; the splitting of rocks; earthquakes, lightening and the rising of the dead. These were events that were expected to happen at the “end of time” when God returned as Judge. These manifestations are connected, however, with the death of Jesus and are not the end of time. What has occurred is a turning point in human history. The death of Jesus makes possible the resurrection to eternal life of all others.

### **Easter Day (12 April)**

**Acts 10.34, 37-43**

**Colossians 3.1-4**

**John 20.1-9**

For Christians, Easter is the greatest feast of all. On this day Jesus broke the chains of death and in great triumph rose from his grave. This is the day of the Lord par excellence. It is also our day as Jesus invites us to share with him the fruits of this victory.

In Eastertide all the **First Readings** are taken from the Acts of the Apostles. In our first reading Luke is concerned with showing the triumphal progress of the Gospel throughout the known world. He attributes this progress to the work of the Holy Spirit. The reading is part of Peter’s sermon in the house of the Roman Centurion Cornelius. Peter gives a brief sketch of the ministry of Jesus, ending with the account of his death and resurrection. Notice he is keen to stress that he was a witness to all these happenings. From that experience he and his companions have been sent to bring the Good News to all peoples. Jesus is the one the prophets proclaimed. All who believe will have their sins forgiven.

The **Second Reading**, taken from Paul’s letter to the Colossians, could be seen as a message for the newly baptised but, of course, it applies to all of us who are baptised. We as Christians have died and have risen with Christ at the moment of our baptism. Our task, therefore, is to seek the things of heaven rather than the things that belong to all that opposes

God. It means that the world's standards ought not to be our standards but our model is to be Christ.

The **Gospel** from John is rich in symbolism. The darkness of 'the first day of the week' reminds us of the darkness over the primordial darkness conjured up in the first chapter of Genesis. The suggestion is being made that the death of Jesus is the prelude to a new creation. The arrangement of the burial clothes are a sign that Mary Magdalen's interpretation of the empty tomb is not in fact correct. She thinks Jesus has been 'taken' somewhere whereas Jesus has left the things of our mortal life. John has correctly understood these signs and he believes.

### **Second Sunday of Easter (19 April)**

**Acts 2.22-47**

**1 Peter 1. 3-9**

**John 20. 19-31**

This Sunday the Gospel focuses on the apostle who became known as Doubting Thomas. Thomas is a consolation to us as life can conspire to bring us troubles that make us doubt. The pandemic has laid bare our fears and we are anxious. It is hard when we are asked to believe without seeing and this can be very difficult it times of almost unbearable stress and worry. There can be dark moments in our lives when any sense of the living God has disappeared and we come to the conclusion we are alone. We are not. God will never abandon his people.

The **First Reading** is the first of three summaries in the book of Acts that describe the life and activities of the earliest Christian community. The other summaries are found in chapter 4 (verses 32 to 35) and chapter 5 (verses 12 to 16). Luke is trying to describe the final result of Peter's preaching at Pentecost. The community were committed to living a new life having as its anchor the teaching of the apostles; their sense of fellowship; the 'breaking of the bread' and an active prayer life. There was no point in their worship if it did not lead to loving service, one to the other.

During this liturgical period the **Second Readings** all come from St Peter's letters. Peter's desire in his letter is to encourage his early Christian community. He wants them (and by extension us) to keep firm

in the faith particularly at times of trial and distress. He thanks God for the new birth of baptism which is to be a foretaste of its perfection in sharing the glory of Christ's resurrection in the life to come. This is precisely the hope we need to combat the mental and psychological effects upon us caused by the pandemic.

In the **Gospel** we are presented with John's version of the great events of Pentecost. The risen Jesus appears to his apostles and shows his wounds and uses them to prove that it truly was Jesus. He prays for peace to be with them and when everyone is in a state of inner peace he gives them the great commission to preach to all nations and demonstrate through their witness that the Master had risen from the grave and as a consequence all people were to be reconciled to the Father. To accomplish this great task, Jesus gives the apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke mention *doubt* as an issue after the resurrection but only the gospel of John personifies and dramatises this emotion through the individual named Thomas. One of the great paradoxes of this episode is that from the lips of "doubting" Thomas comes the very great affirmation and profession of faith - "My Lord and my God." John, realising that his contemporary readers were for the large part removed from being direct witnesses, adds - "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe". In effect he is saying that we as modern disciples share the same blessings as those who were actual witnesses to the resurrection events.

### **Third Sunday of Easter (26 April)**

**Acts 2. 14, 22-28**

**I Peter 1. 17-21**

**Luke 24. 13-35**

The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is very touching. The risen Lord joins them on that road and during their conversation, the scriptures are explained and they break bread together. We need the risen Lord to journey with us. All of us have our Emmaus road to journey. That journey may have been one of disappointment, failure, great suffering and plans destroyed. We do not journey alone for the Lord walks with us no matter our circumstances.

In the **First Reading** Peter is seen preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem who had gathered for the Pentecost feast. Using the recent events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus he re-interprets Hebrew Scriptures. Peter is keen to emphasise that the crucifixion is not some arbitrary twist of cruel fate. On the contrary, it was part of God's plan for humanity. The crucifixion was **the** event that featured heavily in the preaching of the time.

The **Second Reading** also contains a strong reference to the resurrection. The reader is to be reminded, says Peter, of the heavy cost of redemption. All Christians are to share, ultimately, in the glory of the risen Lord and so all Christians are obliged to live up to their calling by the way they lead their lives.

In the **Gospel** notice how the gestures and words used are a mirror of the events of the Last Supper i.e. "He took the bread... blessed it... broke it... and gave it to them." Some experts argue that this reflected what was happening in the early community that Luke attended. You must remember that some 50 years or so had elapsed since the events of the resurrection so Luke's community would not have seen the events with their own eyes and the community would be relying on the oral history that was being created. Luke wants to make the point that even the Emmaus travellers who had direct contact with the Lord did not understand what was happening until he explained the scriptures and broke the bread. So for us, the preaching of the word and the Eucharist are indispensable parts of our liturgical life. It is right that we at this time we should sorrow for our inability to meet as a community and take the sacrament but, then, all the more should we treasure it when it is restored to us.

The Rector

## *Margaret Montgomery 1929 - 2020*

Margaret was born on 11 April 1929 in Glasgow. Margaret's mother, Mary McLean, was a seamstress and Martin Fletcher, her father, was a storeman. Margaret's Dad served in the Royal Navy during the first World War, returning home to his family at the end of the war. Margaret's parents, Mary and Martin had strong family relationships, a value that was held dear to Margaret which she nurtured and developed in her own family.

Margaret was the second child of four children, two of whom sadly did not live into adulthood, leaving Margaret and Donald. Despite the losses, Margaret and her "wee brother, Donald" enjoyed a happy childhood in a loving family home, along with Sandy, their dog. Margaret and Donald were deeply loved by their parents and shared many fond memories of their times together in Crookston. Margaret talked affectionately of her childhood being a sister to two brothers telling us that "playing hide and seek was never much fun, the boys would encourage me to hide and never come and find me!" They enjoyed family holidays together, many of which took them to Southport. During the war, Margaret and Donald were evacuated to Brig o' Turk, Perthshire and the story goes that their time as evacuees didn't last long because their mum collected them after a few days and brought them home, she was missing them both too much!

From an early age, Margaret was a high achiever at school, selected for a place at Woodside Senior Secondary in the West End where children were expected to gain a qualification. As a young teenager aged 15, Margaret attended Whitley Business College, learning shorthand and typing. To the end of her life, Margaret still wrote in shorthand and would often use it when leaving notes for her carer Sharon who would explain to Margaret that she had no idea at all what the squiggles meant, but Margaret did! Margaret's parents were very proud of their daughter and all that she achieved. All of us know that throughout Margaret's life she continued to value education encouraging everyone that she met to reach their full potential.

Margaret's first significant job was with the Daily Herald in Glasgow

where she became personal secretary to Sir Patrick Dollan, a Glasgow activist in the Scottish Independent Labour Party. Dollan was known as a “red Clydesider” and contributed to shaping Margaret’s political views and campaigning efforts. Just last week when choosing songs to comfort her, she sang the Labour party anthem “Keep the Red Flag Flying” word perfect! During this period of employment Margaret met one of her longest standing friends – Rena Bunting – “our Aunt Rena”. Aunt Rena and Margaret had great fun together; the finer details remain a mystery but suffice to say they remained friends throughout their lives.

Margaret and Jim met when Margaret was 18 years old at a dance in the Community House in Clyde Street. At this point in her life, Margaret was a member of the Youth Parliament, Jim was an office worker for the railways. As well as the obvious physical attraction to each other, their strong political beliefs brought them together. Margaret always referred to Jim as very handsome and a dashing figure of a man! Margaret and Jim were married on 2 October 1954 and had nearly 60 years together before papa passed away. They had the three children – Margaret-Anne, Catherine and Elizabeth, bringing them up in Jim’s family home in Cardonald surrounded by their very supportive Mclean, Fletcher and Montgomery extended families, which not only led to many family parties full of fun, singing and dancing but strong friendships too, especially with her cousin Cathy. Margaret kept in touch with them all.

Margaret’s main occupation was wife and mother during the early years of their married life. Margaret’s interest and experience in the media world prevailed and she had a Saturday job with the Sunday People and the Scotsman, before moving to the Daily Record, in the role of telephonist then copytaker for the sports pages. Much to the annoyance of Cath and Liz, Margaret’s Saturday job invariably meant that they had to miss the end of Dr Who to get in the car to collect Margaret from work! Margaret’s bridesmaid Gina and dearest friend also worked for the Daily Record as well as Norma whom the family have come to know well and share in their lives. Norma, Gina and Margaret continued to meet for lunches over the years, long after they no longer worked at the Daily Record, becoming friendly with Isobel, sharing the joys of their family lives.

Typical Margaret, the Saturday job was not enough for her and during the summer months Margaret was a summer games leader. Margaret would don her purple tracksuit, yes purple like her nail varnish, handbag, garden bench and walker, gather up a large bag of bats and balls, and set off with Cath and Liz to Elder Park for the summer games. Margaret would stand in the middle of the park and wait, lo and behold, as if the Pied Piper of Hamelin had whistled his magical tune, a large group of children from all over the Govan area would appear with Margaret getting them all organised for a game of rounders. A lasting memory of these annual events is the offerings of cakes and biscuits to Margaret from the children. Interestingly, on the same day as the feast, the local newspaper had a story that went something like this “Night-time Raid in Local Bakery Leaves Stock at an All Time Low!” Mmmmm.

Margaret’s enquiring mind continued to be challenged in her early 40s as an undergraduate at the Open University. A learning journey permeating family life through her ‘homework activities’ – Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Salvador Dali and Leonardo da Vinci to name a few of the regular visitors to the house. Early morning radio broadcasts and TV lectures were the norm, while examining and chopping up sheep brain, rescuing dried worms that Margaret had forgotten to take out the packet to give them fresh air, exploring a plethora of psychological testing with weird and wonderful pieces of equipment were all done with background music from the classics. It was a proud day when Margaret was awarded her BA Social Sciences from the Open University when she was 45 years old – well done Margaret! Her degree was the springboard back into full-time employment and she became a careers officer. She started in Harthill, for Strathclyde Region Education dept as well as working for the Youth Opportunities Programme in Townhead and the Princes Trust in Clydebank. Margaret retired at 58 and went on to set up her own consultancy business M&M Associates which enabled her to continue to make a difference to young people’s lives.

Margaret’s retirement became an opportunity to further expand her active brain and incredible knowledge for a wide range of subjects. She loved reading the newspapers, books and poetry. She attended the

University of the Third Age, kept up to date with modern technology – a trailblazer with a 1-megabyte computer as well as an early adopter of the mobile phone! In her 80s she regularly attended computer and internet classes at the local library in Thornliebank, keeping fit with Vitality Classes at the Sports Centre. Family gatherings were very important to Margaret where her love for her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren shone through and radiated in her smile. Margaret’s interest in them as individuals, her sharp mind and ability to relate to people impressed them all making each of them recognise how important they were to her. She would keep up to date with relevant topics for young people gaining insights from programmes such as Skins and the Big Bang Theory, and listening to political debates on Brexit and Scottish independence.

After dad’s death in 2012, Margaret’s faith, family and friends supported her through this difficult time. She was a regular member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Hillington, Church of the Ascension in Cardonald, then St Ninian’s in Pollokshields. She was a member of the Book Club, supported Church coffee mornings, parish lunches and various other church fundraisers. Margaret also enjoyed St Ninian’s RATS drama group productions at the church. The pantomimes in particular had her roaring with laughter! As a member of the Mothers Union, her knitting skills came to the fore, creating warm clothing for newborn babies in Uganda, many of whom are affected by HIV and Aids. She attended pilgrimages at “The Cathedral of the Isles” in Millport, Whithorn and Walsingham, with fellow church members, benefiting from the time to reflect as well as developing long lasting friendships.

At 87 she decided it was time for a change and in 2017 Margaret moved to Gullane nearer to Cath. She settled into her lovely new home and embarked on a new phase in her life joining the U3A, taking part in the musical appreciation society as well as the opera group in Haddington. Margaret attended Gullane Day Centre three days a week, where the staff and volunteers took great care of her emotional health, making sure she felt valued and respected as well as her physical health, keeping appointments with Nurse Michelle at the health centre and podiatrist Allison. Suffice to say Margaret took part in many of the



activities and equally refused to take part in a few, choosing to read the newspaper as an alternative to throwing the ball in the basket! She was known affectionately as the spell checker for the spelling game. An all-round package of love, care and support was provided and appreciated by us as a family.

Margaret's spiritual faith continued and she attended St Baldred's in North Berwick to which she was driven in style to and from by Bill, a volunteer from the Royal Voluntary Service. Bill's kindly, gentle and charming manner was supportive and encouraging.

Margaret made friends with Mandy who became her companion and the two would set off on their Thelma and Louise adventures trying out the various coffee shops across East Lothian with a particular preference for Joli which apparently had the best cake and best reception for the two coffee goers. We just learned recently that Mandy and Margaret would cheer with joy if they looked in the diary and nothing had been organised for them. Jackets on, car keys in hand, they would head off for some of their own fun... which usually involved... yes... coffee and cake! A special thank-you to Mandy who enjoyed Margaret as much as Margaret enjoyed her. Mandy supported Margaret to maintain an interest in her appearance and style having her nails painted by Suzi at Longniddry and going to Lou Lou's where Louise styled and took care of Margaret's lovely hair. "Margaret was a lovely lady and so appreciative of us."

Margaret was very well supported in her new life and thanks must be expressed to all the carers from McSence who encouraged Margaret to get up and organised in the mornings, put on her glad rags and embrace the day. Their consistent, committed and loving care provided Margaret with the security she needed during these final years of her life. Their support for Margaret in these past few weeks of her life together with the support and care from the District Nurse team has been respectful and dignified, consistently treating Margaret as a person, this has meant a great deal to the family.

We will finish with one of Margaret's favourite passages, from the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13:4-8: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour

others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fears.”

Montgomery Family

### *Embodying Justice*

#### *A visit to Rabbis for Human Rights Israel*

*Newsletter of John McCulloch, Church of Scotland Minister in Jerusalem*

A few days before Covid-19 brought lock-down to Bethlehem and the West Bank, I had the privilege of meeting again with Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), a long-standing partner of the Church of Scotland here. Sitting in their small offices in Jerusalem, with the aroma of black coffee in the air, we sat and discussed how at the heart of Judaism & Christianity is the call to embody justice. We shared of how easy it is to fall into despair, when you reflect on the world around us, and yet, as people of faith, how we must hold on to hope. It was Martin Luther King who defined hope as *the ultimate refusal to give up*.

They told me of how some weeks ago, they had been to a Palestinian village in the northern part of the West Bank, to plant olive trees (some of which had been previously destroyed by extremist Israeli settlers), but they were stopped from doing so by the Israeli army.

In response to the army's action, RHR's Executive Director Avi Dabush stated: *We came to plant olive trees with rural Palestinian farmers who suffer from systematic violence and harassment, and honour together Tu Beshvat, the Jewish holiday of the trees, with the hope that this kind of activity will build optimism and solidarity between us and our Palestinian partners. It is sad and humbling to see how indiscriminately and arbitrarily the army issues 'closed military' orders as a way to prevent activity that is only about agriculture and peace. It is beyond my understanding why the army would interpret the planting of olive trees and the eating of dried fruit as an 'attempt to break the order.'* Surely the only order violated here is the only one that is truly relevant - the traditional call to plant trees on Tu Beshvat. (You can read the full story on their website <https://rhr.org.il/eng/>)

RHR live out their faith in direct connection to the intractable conflict here, and thus embody the solicitation of Micah 6:8 which reads: *And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.* In a context where West Bank Palestinians mostly encounter Israelis who are soldiers or settlers, RHR fulfil a very important role. Their bold stance for justice and their care and compassion towards their Palestinian brothers and sisters is a living sign of God's hope for a land.

Drawing of the work of Rabbi Rosenberg Gershon Shaga, scholar Miriam F. Kaye sees the role of the *tsadik* (the righteous) as one that *seizes the shards of destruction and refashions them into building blocks for reconstruction* (*Jewish Theology for a Postmodern Age*, London: The Litman Library of Jewish Civilization, in association with Liverpool University Press, 2019).

In a world where fear of the other, structural injustice, war, occupation and ecological devastation wreak havoc with our world, God is made known in the lives of those who are committed to reach out beyond all dividing walls, to call for justice and to embody healing.

As the 16th century Spanish mystic St Teresa of Avila said:

Christ has no body now but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes through which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.  
Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes,  
you are his body.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

During this season Lent, as we journey with Christ to the cross, we reflect again on what it means to walk in his footsteps. During his fasting in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted with earthly power, as we read in the gospel of Matthew 4:8 *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him: 'all these will I give you, if you fall down and worship me'.*

Jesus resists, knowing that the kingdom of God will not be established through earthly power, military might or violence; but through self-giving love. A love that reaches out and embraces the other, calling us to love our enemies, across the barriers, walls and divisions that scar our world. In the emptiness and loneliness of the wilderness, Jesus refuses to accept that our world needs to remain as it is. He calls us as his church, to do the same.

Theologian Walter Brueggemann says that *imagination is the capacity to picture the world out beyond what we take as established given. He says that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (...) constitute an act of immense imagination that intends to subvert all settled social arrangements and power structures* (Disruptive Grace: Reflections on God, Scripture & the Church, Norwich: SCM Press, 2011).

RHR, together with other Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian and internationals, have not settled for the world to remain as it is. Instead they seek to re-imagine a different world; and they do so by boldly standing up against injustice and engaging in acts of compassion; something we are all called to do, wherever we find ourselves.

Contributed by Eamonn Rogers

Right: a modern sculpture outside the Chiesa di Santa Lucia “al Sepolcro” in Siracusa, Sicily. Photo: David Pritchard





## *Lay Officers*

Lay Representative	Thomas Baylis
Alternate Lay Rep	Vivian Davey
Regional Council Rep	Joyce Maxwell
Rector's Warden	Liz Booth
People's Warden	Vacant
Vestry Secretary	Irene Nairn
Vestry Treasurer	Vivian Davey
PVG Officer	Rosemary Anwar
Property Convener	Vacant

## *The Vestry*

The Rector, Liz Booth, Irene Nairn, Vivian Davey, Angela Forrest , Thomas Baylis, Catherine Cumming, David Spottiswoode, Nancy Bain, David Pritchard, Rosemary Anwar, Alison Gifford, Jim Whannel

If you need to contact any members of the Vestry please email or telephone the Rector paul.romano@btinternet.com 0141 423 1247

All general enquiries to [info@stninianglasgow.org.uk](mailto:info@stninianglasgow.org.uk)

## *The Church*

At St. Ninian's, as in nearly all Episcopal Churches in Scotland, we reserve the sacrament of the Eucharist. From this reserved sacrament Holy Communion is given to the aged, sick or infirm at home, in hospital or in hospice to assure them of Christ's love and presence and to enfold them in the communion and fellowship of the church. The sacrament is also reserved to assure us all of Christ's constant presence with his people.

For baptism, visitation of the sick, funerals, marriages and confession, please speak to the Rector.

At St. Ninian's, we meet our needs largely through planned giving envelopes. Every member of the church is urged to pledge a definite amount and, if possible, to Gift Aid their offering. Please apply for information and envelopes through either the Recorder or the Treasurer.

The Vestry has reluctantly decided that it is unwise to keep the church open on weekdays. If you need access at times other than the services and events posted on the notice board please phone the Vestry Secretary.

*During the Covid-19 pandemic all church buildings have been closed. Regular updates continue to be posted on our website [www.stniniansglasgow.org.uk](http://www.stniniansglasgow.org.uk) and Facebook page.*



## Life at St. Ninian's

General enquiries to [info@stininiansglasgow.org.uk](mailto:info@stininiansglasgow.org.uk)

Organisation	Contact
Bible Reading Fellowship Choir	Rosemary Anwar
Christian Aid	David Spottiswoode <a href="mailto:choir@stininiansglasgow.org.uk">choir@stininiansglasgow.org.uk</a>
Coffee Convenor	Rosemary Anwar
Flower Guild	Yvonne Grieve
Hall Convenor	Sandra Whitton
Library	Joyce Maxwell <a href="mailto:hallbooking@stininiansglasgow.org.uk">hallbooking@stininiansglasgow.org.uk</a>
Magazine	David Pritchard, Isabel Stainsby
	The Rector (Editor) <a href="mailto:rector@stininiansglasgow.org.uk">rector@stininiansglasgow.org.uk</a>
	Joyce Sinclair (Sec & Treasurer)
	Isabel Stainsby (Copy Editor)
Mothers' Union	Lesley Lucas (Branch Leader)
Paperback Book Club	Rosemary Anwar
Pew Sheet	Valerie Rodgers
Pollokshields Churches Together	Vivian Davey
Prayer List	Alva Caldwell
Recorder	Sandra Whitton
Sacristy Guild	Christine Shearer
Sanctuary Guild	Sandra Whitton
Servers' Guild	Paul Whitton
Traidcraft	Catherine Cumming
Web Page	Susan Walker <a href="mailto:info@stininiansglasgow.org.uk">info@stininiansglasgow.org.uk</a>

If you need to contact any of the above, please email or telephone the Rector [paul.romano@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.romano@btinternet.com) 0141 423 1247

*St Ninian's Episcopal Church, Glasgow, is a charity registered under no. SC010966*

