



A Pilgrimage of the Soul

Minister's Message

The long winter nights are over once more, though perhaps we should not move on so quickly. I am reminded of the beautiful 16th century poem by the Spanish mystic, St John of the Cross: "Dark Night of the Soul". It describes the soul's journey in evocative language through the dark straits.



*In that happy night,
In secret, seen of none.
Seeing nought myself,
Without other light or guide
Save that which in my heart was burning.*

Who among us has not known those dark moments when certainty was fleeting? When what had once seemed

concrete and real, crumbles at our grasp?

The poem was written from the perspective of the soul enlightened, looking back on its arduous journey, but never minimising the importance of that journey. As our nights lighten and we come closer to the celebration in the church of Easter morning, with all its bright colours, flowers and joyful singing, we do not let go so quickly of the dark night of the soul that Jesus experienced.

Have you ever pondered the sheer folly and ridiculousness of the primary Christian symbol: the Cross? It is so ubiquitous now that we may be vaccinated from its ability to shock.

The cross was an instrument of torture and execution. It was a political tool to display the power of Empire to all those tempted to question the authority and decisions of their leaders. Roads and hillsides were littered with these grim reminders.

It was on a cross that a Palestinian Jew renowned for his marriage of story and action met his end, crying out from his own dark night of the soul: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

During Advent in the church we created a huge banner that culminated in a celebration of what is called the 'incarnation': that we believe God was present with us in Jesus' life. God came to live in our neighbourhood.

Yet he came not just to live among us. He came to live in wanton abundance: not an abundance of material things—though he knew how to keep a

party going when the wine stopped flowing—but to show us how to really live: what it means to be gracious and to serve each other. This was not a sign of weakness, rather it was the ultimate sign of grace: that the most powerful was willing to stoop down to wash the feet of his followers, to spend time with the forgotten, to heal the outcast and to restore community.

This was not the way of the little man with big hammers, asserting dominance by stoking violence and fear, revealing his inherent weakness. This was the way of the big hearted purveyor of hope, and Jesus was killed for it. He entered into the dark night as the worst of humanity tried to snuff out that hope. But he emerged from the dark night, stronger than ever.

We will be following that journey this Easter-tide as we follow the Passion story in John's gospel. You are welcome to join us on that pilgrimage of the soul.

Peter Johnson



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Church News

Welcome To Julie

We have a new Church Administrator at Ferryhill with the appointment of Julie Thompson. Julie lives locally and while originally from Ayrshire, she and her husband have been in Ferryhill for more than fifteen years. Julie says, "We love the friendliness and sense of community. This has become more apparent already in my short time at the church as everyone has been so welcoming."

If you are needing to get in touch with the church for any reason, Julie will be an excellent first contact point. You will find contact information on the back page of this issue for the office along with the hours when the office is open.



City-Wide Prayer Gatherings

Over the last few years, and particularly in response to the arrival of refugees from Syria—new Syrian Scots, monthly prayer gatherings have taken place with folks from across the city coming together to think about and pray for the city.

Locally, Ferryhill Kirk will be hosting one of these gatherings on Friday 20 April and South Holburn Church will host on Friday 20 July, 7:30–9 p.m.



Sleep in the Park

What a night it was on 9 December when five valiant souls from South Holburn and Ferryhill youth groups joined 8,000 others in Edinburgh. The temperature dipped to a very frosty –6 Celsius overnight giving a real experience of how hard it is to be sleeping rough on the streets in Scotland.

Due to the generosity of many Ferryburn Fellowship far exceeded it's ambition to raise £600 to support the event with £1,366 donated to the Social Bite Fund to help work towards ending homelessness in Scotland. £3.5 million pounds was raised through this event in total, and around 500 homes committed by councils to help house people as they progress back into society. Andrew Johnstone from South Holburn Church said, "If this event can even just kick-start the movement that ends homelessness in Scotland, it will have been a massive achievement."

You can read more about this experience on Peter's blog on the church website.

Lent Study Group

The season of Lent is traditionally a time of preparation before Easter. It is a time to think about what is going on in our lives and in the world as we get closer to remembering both Jesus'

death at the hands of a lynch mob aided by the power of the State, and the hope of new life we celebrate on Easter Day.

To help us do that we are running a series of evenings at which we will look at some of the Passion story telling of Jesus' last days, and talk about what this still has to say to us today. This is open to everyone and you are welcome to come to all or dip in as you can. We will meet in the church foyer at 7 p.m. on:

- Tuesday 20 February
- Tuesday 27 February
- Thursday 8 March
- Wednesday 14 March
- Tuesday 20 March

Christmas Offerings

What a brilliant effort! Thanks are due to everyone who contributed to our Christmas Offerings to support both the local charity, The Living Well Project, and the international charity, the Vine Trust. They will benefit equally from the magnificent total of £1,529.75 raised at the Christingle, Watchnight and Christmas Day Services along with the Ferryhill Primary School end of term service. Thank you again. We will keep you up to date with further information on the Living Well Project as it develops.



Fundraising Team

A huge thank you to all who donated, helped or attended the Church Christmas Fair in early December. The atmosphere was wonderful. Gifts, decorations and treats were bought and families, friends and neighbours paused for a catch up while enjoying a delicious cream tea. A total of £1,715 was raised in the two hours.

Another great success was our recent Burns Supper. Hilarious and enlightening speeches, wonderful singing and excellent food were enjoyed while £509 was raised through ticket sales and the raffle.



Our next fund raising event is another very popular Table Sale where you can hire a table for £10 then sell all your unwanted goods for your own profit. It will take place on Saturday 3 March 2018 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. To book a table or find out more, phone or text

Fiona on 07759 929172. The church has its own home bakes, book and bric a brac stalls so donations are very welcome for those stalls.

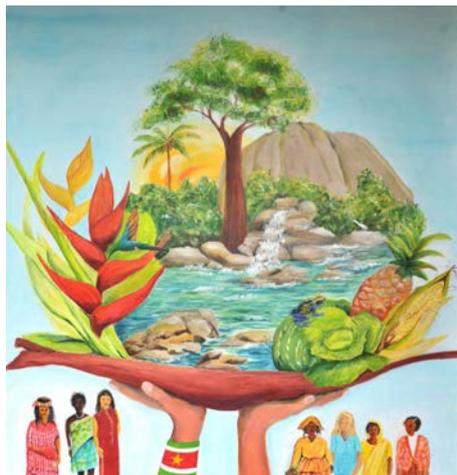
You do not need to have things to sell, just come along and enjoy the hustle and bustle of the hall full of stalls then relax in the coffee shop with a bacon softie and a coffee.

Another Quiz Night is planned for the evening of Friday 1 June 2018. Tickets will be on sale in May, look out for the posters!

World Day of Prayer

Each year local churches gather together to participate in the World Day of Prayer. Ferryhill Kirk will be hosting this year's service on Friday 2 March at 7 p.m.

The service will be led by members from Torry St Fittick's, Kincorth St Nicholas and Ferryhill churches based on material written by women in Suriname, South America, with a focus on our good stewardship and care for God's creation.



Diary

March Services

Sunday 4 March 2018

- 11:00 Worship for all ages
"Jesus Denied"
with Holy Communion
Sunday Club
- 18:00 Café Connect in the Foyer

Wednesday 7 March

- 11:00 Service at Cowdray Club
Care Home

Sunday 11 March

- 11:00 Worship for all ages
"Jesus and Pilate"
Fairtrade Fortnight
Sunday Club
- 18:30 Ferryburn Fellowship
Youth Group

Sunday 18 March

- 11:00 Worship for all ages
"Jesus Condemned"
Sunday Club
- 18:00 Evening Service in the
Memorial Chapel with
Holy Communion

Sunday 25 March (Palm/Passion)

- 11:00 Worship for all ages
"Jesus, Crucified Messiah"
Sunday Club
- 18:30 Ferryburn Fellowship
Youth Group at the manse

Thursday 29 March

- 19:00 Maundy Thursday
"Jesus' Last Words"
with Lord's Supper

Friday 30 March

- 18:00- Good Friday
- 21:00 "Jesus is Dead"
A journey through the final
hours. Drop in at any point
during this time to travel
through the labyrinth and
hear the reflections of those
who were with Jesus, to the
end.

Getting To Know You...

How well do you know the folk at Ferryhill Church? Over the next few editions of Parish News, the editor will interview different people about their life and faith.

Our first interviewee is Mary Notman, one of our elders. Mary has attended Ferryhill Church for more years than she cares to remember during the time of three different ministers.



How did you become a member at Ferryhill?

Well, it's my local church and for my husband and me, with a young family at the time, it made sense to walk up the hill to our local church rather than trail further afield across the town. And I have to say that we liked it from our very first visit.

What difference does your faith make to your life?

I cannot imagine how I would cope without it. At difficult times in my life—and let's face it, we all have those—my faith has grown stronger and I have experienced the comfort and strength it gives me.

Finding God: wham bang wallop or slow and steady?

I can't remember a time when I didn't believe in God. But I do remember that as a teenager I decided that I didn't want to go to Sunday School any longer as I was too old for that. My dad persuaded me that it was my privilege to be there, so I went back and never regretted it.

What hymns make your skin tingle?

My favourite hymn is "As the deer pants o'er the water" (CH4 550). Both the words and the music give me such a sense of peace. But I love lots of hymns.

We are so lucky at Ferryhill to have such a brilliant Musical Director

in Kevin Haggart. Not only is he an accomplished organist but he manages to get the best from the Ferryhill Singers, who delight us from time to time with all kinds of different songs and anthems. I love listening to them. Our minister, Peter, is also very musical and he ensures that on Sundays we sing a mix of traditional hymns and more modern songs, some of which he has written himself.

What are your interests?

Well, I love to read and I always have a book on the go. I also like to do Sudoku to keep my brain active. But I have to confess that I love my soaps. I know they are mostly rubbish and I remember when my mother used to watch Coronation Street and I didn't think that I would ever do that. So I guess that's my guilty pleasure.

If you could ask God two questions, what would they be?

Why do some good people die young? Why can't some people accept that we have more similarities than differences regardless of race, colour, gender, culture or religion?

What could the Church of Scotland do better?

I think the church does a lot of really good stuff which maybe folk outside the church are not aware of. For example, every year the Ferryhill Guild takes part in the national Guild projects and we are always well supported by the congregation. The Guild projects are amazing and we don't shy away from difficult topics such as drug addiction, HIV, sexual exploitation or FGM (Female Genital Mutilation).

These projects make a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable people here in Scotland and overseas. But there is always room for improvement. Maybe we need to publicise the work of the church more.

What would you say to someone who was thinking of coming to Ferryhill Church for the first time?

Well, I would say that it might not be as they imagined—in a good way. I think people often have the wrong idea about what churches are all about, especially if they haven't been to one very often.

Our Sunday services are great. The congregation is always involved—children and adults alike—and we have lots of fun. Peter is a great preacher with an amazing ability to make his messages interesting, enjoyable, challenging and accessible to all. I love listening to him.

Anyone coming to our kirk can be assured of a warm welcome and folk to speak to. We have coffee after the service and that is a time for chatting and getting to know other folk.

During the week, we have the coffee shop every morning and lots of activities for children and adults alike. So if you are thinking of coming along, don't hesitate.

ONLINE SERVICE STREAMING

Ferryhill Kirk routinely streams its morning services online via YouTube. These can be linked to via the Webcast page on the church website, facebook or just subscribe to the Ferryhill Parish Church YouTube channel.

With folks joining us live (or later) from as far afield as the USA and Portugal it is a way to keep in touch with Ferryhill and to join us wherever you are or indeed if you are not able to join us in person. It also means if we are in the middle of a series of services you can catch up later if you happen to miss one.



CHRISTIAN AID



christian
aid
week

13-19 MAY

For more than 60 years, thousands of churches in Britain and Ireland have come together to support Christian Aid Week and to fight for equality, dignity and freedom for all.

We are motivated by our faith in Christ and a deeply held conviction that each and every person on earth is a treasured child of God with infinite worth. By holding a church collection during Christian Aid Week, we can support our sisters and brothers around the world, reflecting God's unconditional love and his great mercy. People like Marcelin, who still hasn't recovered from Hurricane Matthew, which hit Haiti in September 2016, destroying his home, possessions and livestock.

"I lost pigs, goats, everything in the house. I have nothing left," he says.

He now lives in an old concrete shower block, a tiny space he shares with his three teenage daughters. There are no windows or doors, and the only furniture is a single bed that the girls sleep on.

"If another hurricane came through, we'd just die."

Marcelin has fought hard to raise his children alone but can no longer afford to send them all to school. He gets up

at dawn each day to work the land, but the changing weather frequently destroys the food he grows and the family often go hungry.

Marcelin fears his daughters' hunger could lead them to be exploited by predatory men in exchange for food.

With the help of their partners in Haiti, Christian Aid is helping families like Marcelin's to prepare for disasters. Ahead of Hurricane Matthew, they warned communities, helping evacuate around 5,000 families, potentially saving many lives. They then gave out much-needed shelter kits, hygiene kits, food seeds and cash transfers.

They are also building disaster-resistant homes to give people safe, secure places to live. Of the dozens of new houses they built before the hurricane hit, only one lost its roof in the disaster.

But there are still lots of people Christian Aid has not yet reached, and they need our help. Could you donate to help people like Marcelin? A gift from you could help families like his to thrive. During Christian Aid week envelopes will be available in the church for your donations.

You can also contribute directly at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>.

Diary

April Services

Sunday 1 April 2018

- 07:30 Easter Dawn Service in Duthie Park followed by breakfast in the Church Hall
- 09:30 Holy Communion in the Memorial Chapel
- 11:00 Worship for all ages "Jesus Resurrected"

Wednesday 4 April

- 11:00 Service at Cowdray Club Care Home

Sunday 8 April

- 11:00 Worship for all ages "Jesus and Thomas"

Sunday 15 April

- 11:00 Worship for all ages "Jesus and Paul"

Sunday 22 April

- 11:00 Worship for all ages "Paul and Silas" Sunday Club
- 18:30 Ferryburn Fellowship Youth Group

Sunday 29 April

- 11:00 Worship for all ages "Paul's Sermon in Athens" Sunday Club
- 18:00 Evening Service in the Memorial Chapel with Holy Communion

Hall Lets

Ferryhill Parish Church has an extensive suite of rooms and halls available for let. If you would like to enquire about a hall let please contact the office or email bookings@ferryhillparishchurch.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS

New Tennis Courts

Albury Outdoor Sports Centre now has one of the best tennis courts in Aberdeen following complete levelling and resurfacing at the end of last year!

The final coloured surface will be applied as soon as weather conditions allow but the courts are playable until then with temporary lines. Players of all levels are encouraged to come and experience the superb new playing surface. Pay & Play and Annual Memberships will be available at the start of the season in April.

Albury offers tennis coaching programmes for children and adults plus the chance to play in the NESLTA league. See www.alburysportscentre.org for further details.

In addition to tennis, Albury also offers lawn bowls and an 18 hole putting course. Croquet is also available courtesy of Aberdeen & Crathes Croquet Club.

Albury Outdoor Sports Centre is a working partnership between Sport Aberdeen and local residents and is run by volunteers. New volunteers are essential to keep this community facility open. No experience is required and new volunteers are always welcome. For further information contact volunteers@alburysportscentre.org

Ferryhill Community Centre

Hello from Ferryhill Community Centre, soon to be renamed Ferryhill Community & Business Association. The Committee have recently signed a new lease with Aberdeen City Council to rent the building and, in doing so, enable the staff to serve the Community for several more years.

Have you visited recently? We have had a face lift so, if not, why not take the time to pop in and have a coffee,



a light lunch or just to say hello to the staff and pick up a programme? You will be most welcome.

On a more serious note, we desperately require Committee members to enable us to continue the service. If you have a little time to spare, please contact us by phone 01224 584118 or email office@ferryhillcommunitycentre.org.uk.

Groovy Growits



Once a month during term time the Royal Horticulture Society of Aberdeen hold a garden workshop for children in the David Welch Winter Gardens. These are aimed at 8-15 year olds, but younger children can attend if accompanied by an adult. A small charge of £1 per session (plus one off £1.50 membership of RHSA is requested). Upcoming workshops:

- 29 April 2018, 1:30-2:30 p.m., "Sowing Seeds for a Wildflower Garden" in the Education Glasshouse.
- 27 May 2018, 1:30-2:30 p.m., "Plant out a hanging basket or container to take home" in the Education Glasshouse.

2018 Gardening Workshops

The Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen will be hosting a series of workshops at Duthie Park in 2018. These are aimed at the amateur

or beginner gardeners and will provide tips on different aspects of gardening. Upcoming workshops:

- 18 March 2018, 1:30-3:30 p.m., "Lawn Care and Planning Your Garden" in the Community Garden/Pavilion.
- 8 April 2018, 1:30-3:30 p.m., "Pots & Bags, Indoor Planting & Sowing" in the Education Glasshouse.
- 6 May 2018, 1:30-3:30 p.m., "Planting up Hanging Baskets and Containers" in the Education Glasshouse.
- 20 May 2018, 1:30-3:30 p.m., "Planting Vegetable Plots and Rockery Plants" in the Community Garden/Pavilion.

Concordia String Orchestra

Concordia String Orchestra are excited to be celebrating their

20th Anniversary. As part of these celebrations, their main concert takes place in Ferryhill Parish Church on Sunday 25 March 2018.

It is planned that the orchestra will unveil their latest CD, which we will be recording in the church throughout the season. In the concert material from the CD will be performed, as well as, in the second half, well-known works by Holst and Elgar: replicating the second half from their concert 20 years ago!

MT4yoga Make Time For Yoga

Learn to breathe, stretch and relax with Hatha Yoga in this nice friendly group, suitable for all, meeting on Thursdays 6:30-7:45 p.m. in the Large Hall at Ferryhill Church.

For more details contact Mhairi Thomson on 07714 104907 or atmt4yoga@yahoo.com.

Phoenix Youth Theatre

The team at Phoenix Youth Theatre is busy working with the children and young people in advance of their performance of Lerner & Loewe's "My Fair Lady" in Aberdeen Arts Centre 19-23 May 2018.

This provides exceptional training in theatre skills right on your doorstep. Weekly theatre and dance classes for children aged 4-18 years of age are held at Ferryhill Church with some places still available for this term. The next enrolment will be in August 2018.

More information is available at www.phoenixaberdeen.co.uk or via 01224 863946.



PILATES TOGETHER in ABERDEEN

New Pilates Class

New classes have started at Ferryhill Parish Church.

Pilates will improve your strength, mobility and posture and you will be taught to the highest standard by Caroline, a fully qualified level 3 matwork Pilates teacher. Every class will be kept small and carefully planned to ensure you get the most out of your exercise.

A maximum of twelve spaces are available per hour, beginners-to-intermediate.

Class times are:

- Monday 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
- Tuesday 6:30 p.m. and 7:45 p.m.
- Thursday 6:00 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.

Please contact Caroline if you want to reserve a place at one of these classes: caroline@pilatestogether.co.uk.

Fiddlers Return

Saturday 28 April 2018 will see the return of Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society to Ferryhill Church. After a very successful evening of Traditional Scottish Music last year, the society aim to make Ferryhill their home for the annual concert. With its intimate surrounds and excellent acoustics, it makes the perfect venue. Why not come along and enjoy the music played by both the senior and junior orchestras?



Aberdeen Strathspey & Reel Society
traditional Scottish music orchestras

We are celebrating our 90th year and the content of the programme will consist of selections played at our first concert in 1926 and also favourite selections over the years. Musical director Ronnie Gibson will once again host the evening with Sheila Reid conducting the junior orchestra.

The evening starts at 7:30 p.m. and tickets (£5.00) can be purchased in advance by phoning Graham on 01224 318834 or at the door on the evening. Teas will be available at the interval with a small donation for church funds being much appreciated.

Diary

May Services

Wednesday 2 May 2018

11:00 Service at Cowdray Club Care Home

Sunday 6 May

11:00 Worship for all ages
"Partnership in the Gospel"
Sunday Club
19:00 Café Connect in the Foyer

Sunday 13 May

11:00 Worship for all ages
"The Christ Hymn"
Christian Aid Week
Sunday Club
18:30 Ferryburn Fellowship Youth Group

Sunday 20 May (Pentecost)

11:00 Worship for all ages
"Rejoice in the Lord"
Sunday Club
18:00 Evening Service in the Memorial Chapel with Holy Communion

Sunday 27 May

11:00 Worship for all ages
Sunday Club
18:30 Ferryburn Fellowship Youth Group

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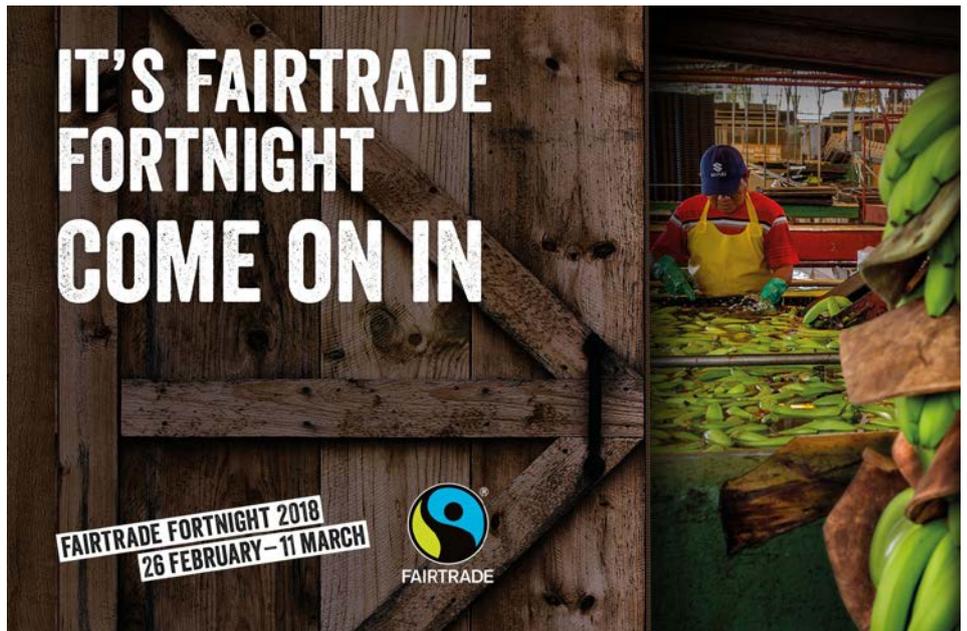
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Fairtrade Fortnight 2018

This year, the theme of Fairtrade Fortnight is “Come on in to Fairtrade” and meet your neighbours—the farmers who grow and produce the food we eat each day. This theme gives us the opportunity to celebrate God’s welcome for all, and consider how as Christians we can be good neighbours to others. We live in very close relationship to millions of farmers and workers who live in developing countries all around the world. They grow the food on which we depend, and they depend on the income from trading with us. But many live in poverty, struggling to provide for their families or experiencing serious human rights abuses. They are our neighbours, our sisters and our brothers, equally loved by God. How can we all be better neighbours?

They are neighbours like Florentina Beitia, a Fairtrade banana producer in Panama.



“Before joining Fairtrade, the situation was very difficult. As there was only one company we could sell our bananas to, we had no say over the price, and it wasn’t enough to cover our costs. I did not earn enough to be able to give my children everything that was necessary. There were times when we did not have enough to eat. The majority of the houses here were small, cramped and lacked privacy and security. Many families would share one room to sleep, cook and live in, and had to share toilets outside.

“But since we began selling as Fairtrade, things have improved. Many people have been able to improve their homes so that they are more comfortable, safe and clean. Thanks to Fairtrade I have been able to educate my children. We are working, fighting for our

children to have a better future so that they can have a different life to what I had and to how I suffered. Because working on a banana farm is hard.”

We can all choose to be a good neighbour at home. And we can choose to be a good neighbour to Florentina and those like her by buying Fairtrade so that she and her family get a fair price for their bananas, by speaking out about unfair trade and by praying and asking that God will “come on in” and help us make a fairer world.

