

The Bulletin

Winter 2024-2025



*The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2)*

Cruden Parish Church

MUSINGS FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends

At the time of writing, we are witnessing a considerable influx of winter visitors. These include Greylag and Pink Footed geese. The most common locally are the Pink Footed. Their migration from their summer breeding grounds in Spitsbergen, Iceland and Greenland reminds us that winter has arrived! There is estimated to be some 500,000 over-wintering in the UK, with the Loch of Strathbeg, near Peterhead being home to several thousand. In contrast the Greylag population is a mixture of resident birds and winter migrants. The birds can be difficult to tell apart as they have similar plumage, with the Greylag being the larger of the species.

Recently, a Greylag Goose was featured in a short video produced by New Arc Wildlife Rescue. The unfortunate creature had been rescued and once ready for release was taken to Pitfour Lake. The goose needed no encouragement to leave its cage. It caught sight of a flock of other Greylags and flew off to join them.

There are some interesting questions here. What is it that makes geese (of all varieties) hard wired to be part of a community – a flock – which moves together in a specific formation and direction. And how did this Greylag goose know which flock to join? I am sure an ornithologist could provide a fascinating explanation; obviously they have a strong instinct hard-wired within them. Personally, I never ceased to be amazed by the natural world.

As I watched the video, it reminded me of a verse in the prologue of John's Gospel 1: 11-13

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

It is my conviction that we humans also have an instinct hard-wired deep within us. We are obviously far more complex than the local transient goose population! You could say that our inner instinct or yearning is for things like acceptance, intimacy and community. And we are hard-wired for God and spirituality. Whilst our materialistic and secular culture is convinced that there is no need for such things, a yearning for 'something greater than ourselves' remains at the core of our being.

Those few verses from John's Gospel challenge us to reflect on the direction of our lives. The injured Greylag goose did not have to make a choice or consider its course of action. It is a simple creature driven by its instinct. But we humans

do have a choice. We have intellect, intuition and free will. May God grant us the grace to use these qualities wisely!

Wishing you all peace and joy at Christmas.

Sean

2024 CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS



Saturday 30th November,

Saturday@TheKirk! Preparing for Advent and Christmas, 10.00 am to 11.45 am Advent and Christmas themed crafts, Lego, nice things to eat and drink. This is a family friendly event, and everybody is welcome.

Sunday 1st December, First Sunday of Advent

10.00 am Morning Service – the Christmas invasion! Everybody welcome.

Sunday 8th December, Second Sunday of Advent

10.00 am Morning Service – Reflections on The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C S Lewis.

Saturday 14 December

3.00 pm **Christmas Concert by The Ythan Singers**, Hatton Public Hall – an afternoon of carols and festive tunes organised by HARA (Hatton Area Residents Association)

Sunday 15th December, Third Sunday of Advent

10.00 am Morning Service – The light shines in the darkness

Saturday 21st December

2.00 pm Carol Service at Bay View Nursing Home

2.00 pm to 4.00 pm Community Café with Carols, St James' Church

Sunday 22nd December, Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.00 am Morning Service – Christmas Angels

6.00 pm, Family Carol Service with Christingles (child friendly service)

Tuesday 24th December, Christmas Eve

9.30 pm, First Eucharist of the Nativity at St James' Church

11.30 pm to 12.05 pm, Christmas Eve Watchnight Service

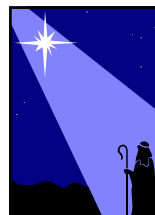
Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.30 am, Christmas Eucharist at St James' Church

Sunday 29th December – Christmas Sunday

10.00 am Service of Lessons and Carols

Everyone welcome!



PRESBYTERY ELDER

by Katherine Hyman

I have been the Presbytery Elder for our church since 2019, first as part of Buchan Presbytery which met in New Deer at the St Kane's Church Centre. There were approximately 60 people in attendance at these meetings. My first impression was of the openness and friendliness of the members who were willing to help a first-time member. The opening hymn singing was wonderful, especially with so many male voices. The strong singing voices makes you feel that God is so much closer

I served on the Mission Committee and was part of an on-line Bible study course with folks from New Deer, Maud, Fraserburgh and one lady from England. It was a very positive endeavour, and I was able to report back to the committee what a success it had been. Once Covid hit, sadly the meetings were all via Zoom.

2023 brought a change and we are now members of the Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles. There are over 300 members. We have a couple of in-person meetings a year in Aberdeen. Most members try to attend where possible in person on these days, but many use Zoom which is how our regular meetings are held. During the normal Zoom meeting there is a period when we meet in small groups and discuss a given topic with a random selection of members, so we are getting to know some folk. We still have a period of worship, but singing a hymn on your own in your own house isn't quite the same as being surrounded by real people and the vibrations of sound.

I am lucky enough to have Maureen and Robert as travel companions when we venture to Aberdeen meetings, and it is always nice to see my son James either in person or on the Zoom screen. He is the Administration Officer for the Presbytery

I am on the TADMAM Committee (Training and Development for Ministry and Mission Committee) and its Training and Recruitment sub-committee.

Currently I am also on an Advisory Committee for a vacancy in Orkney with Maureen Esson and our one-time interim moderator, Bob Fowlie from Longside. The Orkney folk are lovely to hear and very fine folk to speak with.

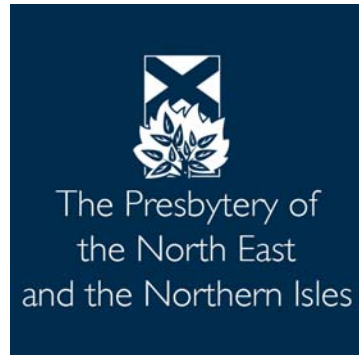
It is very interesting being a Presbytery Elder. Since the amalgamation of all the smaller presbyteries it has changed, but we will adjust.

I will leave you with a thought by the Rev Shuna Dicks who is the current Moderator of Presbytery. She has pointed out to us that as the church is going through a time of huge change, for some it is an exciting time, for others it is a time of sadness as beloved church buildings close. She takes great comfort from

knowing that God is in the midst of all the changes and that God has our back. “Whenever I am struggling,” she says, “I turn to the Scriptures and in particular to Psalm 139. Reading the words of reassurance about God’s presence in all times always helps”.

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.*

(New Revised Standard Version)



2025 LONDON MARATHON

I have secured a place on the 2025 London Marathon, where I plan to improve on last year’s performance!

I will be fundraising for two charities.

1. Cruden Parish Church Property Fund.

We are fortunate to have a lovely historic building in remarkably good condition – most of it due to diligence and regular maintenance. Keeping the building (along with the church hall and manse) in good condition requires money. 75% of all fundraising will go to the church.

2. Sikhs In The City (SITC), A London based running project. It has been described as the most diverse running club in the world. One of the founder members is the world's oldest marathon runner, Fauja Singh who ran his last marathon aged 101! The club engages with those who are inactive, disabled or in poor health, seeking to promote racial and religious harmony through sport. 25% of any money raised will go to this very worthy cause.

More details in the New Year!

Sean



CHANGING SEASONS

Rev Tommy MacNeil, Convenor of the Faith Action Team, has sent the following letter to ministers, members and friends of the Church of Scotland. In the letter, Tommy is seeking to encourage congregations in the midst of the many struggles we are facing at the present time.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

(Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Changing seasons are a reality of life. There will be aspects of the different seasons that appeal to us. Many enjoy the warmth of the summer sun, whilst others enjoy kicking leaves in autumn. We're not so keen on winter but love the increasing light and expectation of spring. As in life, so it can be in the life of the church. Different seasons, things we like and dislike, looking forward to better and brighter days.

Author Catherine McNiel writes about the spiritual value to be found in every season of life, including seasons of dormancy. She writes that in God's creation "nothing is wasted. Fruits and vegetables may be harvested to provide life for another creature, but even if left to rot on the vine or in the field, they will fall and feed the soil, the worms and fungus recycling them back into the ground, readying them to spring forth into new life. Nothing is ever wasted or destroyed: only transformed. If this is the way God acts throughout creation, mightn't we expect him to work this way in our spirits (and in the church) as well? All our efforts, disappointments, victories, and failures, in his Kingdom, nothing is wasted. He is taking it all, shaping it, forming us, steadfastly working toward his own harvest festival in a world made new. ... Is this why he exhorts us to rejoice 'in all circumstances?' ... Because he is always, always making things new."

Journeying around the different Presbyteries that make up our church, we are hearing a common theme. People are struggling as it appears we're living through an extended period of winter. There's much to challenge us, frustrate us, and even anger us. As we've listened to where people are at and the challenges they're facing locally, we've looked to sow some seeds of hope for a different future.

I am absolutely convinced that the prolonged autumn and winter we've been experiencing as a church is soon going to make way for the new. New season, new hope, new beginnings, new life, new focus on the work God is doing. As we hold the tension between the now and the not yet, may you be comforted and strengthened by the fact that with God nothing is wasted, and that His desire and

heart is to make all things new for you, your church, your community, and our nation. *See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.* (Isaiah 43:19)

Whatever season you may be in right now, please be assured that I thank God for you, and I pray His richest blessings upon you.

Tommy MacNeil

SHOE BOX APPEAL

A magnificent effort again this year. 133 boxes were picked up on the 4th of November. People in several eastern European countries including Ukraine will have a happier Christmas thanks to your generosity. Special thanks to the craft group. Without their year long efforts making hats, scarfs and gloves we would not be able to send so many boxes. Diane's help covering boxes was much appreciated. Not my favourite job. I have begun knitting for next year and I already have items for the boxes handed in. Well done everyone and thanks again.

Rosemary



REFLECTIONS ON ST OLAF

Last September I was invited to attend a Conference hosted by Norwich Cathedral to explore the spiritual and cultural heritage of St Olaf and how this could be developed in the UK. I am not easily impressed, but I was blown away by the interest in this former Viking who became one of the most important Christian figures in Northern Europe and I was surprised to hear Cruden talked about, as we are the only site in mainland Scotland connected to the saint.

I plan to set up a small group to explore how we can develop this aspect of our heritage. We might create information panels about St Olaf, or develop a walk, from the church to St Olaf's well on the Golf Course (with full consultation of course!). At the last meeting of the Kirk Session there was an initial discussion about incorporating the name of the saint in the title of our church.

If you would like to be part of the St Olaf Heritage group, please get in touch.

Sean.

MAF AIRCRAFT HELP YOUNG BELIEVERS REACH BIBLE CAMP

Thanks to MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) members of a Biblical Youth Camp were able to reach their destination safely.

The Evangelical Protestant Church of Guinea's Bible camp exists to equip Christian youth. Now in its ninth year, the camp's leaders addressed the issue of leadership and responsibility - the aim being to instil Christian culture in young people to help develop the spirit of Christ in our workplaces and communities.'

Some 600 people travelled to Boké, a 300 km journey from the capital, Conakry. David Kamano, Administrator at the Sacred Heart paediatric health centre, was one of eight fortunate young Christians able to reach Boké by plane rather than having to use the country's notorious roads.

The smooth, 40-minute flight saved the believers a gruelling, 6-hour journey overland.

'We thank God,' says David, 'for all that is happening and pray for MAF's team so other opportunities can be offered to serve the people of Guinea well. Our roads aren't even roads, they're craters! So, when you take the roads here, they are really catastrophic.'

Pilot Brad Ballin agrees, saying, 'The flight we did was important because it demonstrated MAF's commitment to supporting the growing Church by providing safe and efficient access to regions of the country that would otherwise be difficult to access

'I was encouraged by the great number of youths attending this event and knowing that the future of the Church in this country is very much in their hands. To see the joy on their faces was exciting and encouraging.

'As a MAF pilot, it's these sorts of things that make us realise the value of what we do.'

Civil Administrator, Isaac Keita remarked, 'Our roads are really degraded, so when the rainy season comes, it's even worse. There is real suffering on the road.'

Speaking about the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of the young Christians attending the camp, Isaac added, 'We felt the love they have for Christ.'



'KINTSUGI' - A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

From within the ancient longing
may we hear the more ancient cry:
“Prepare...”

In the long promise hurtling towards us
may we hear the longer echo:
“Emmanuel...”

From the old distance of the prophets
may we hear the yet older poem:
“Magnificat...”

Ancient God,
may you gather together the Good News:
the shards of promise;
the slivers of story;
the scraps of song;
scattered across our faith,
and culture,
and denominations,
and fit them together
anew into this fresh moment
of holy retelling,
of sacred Kintsugi*,
of golden joinery,
bringing the pieces together
and finding incarnation
where the edges touch:
Gabriel to Mary,
hope to promise,
silence to song,
waiting to wonder,
angel to shepherds,
manger to world.
The pieces of nativity
falling into place,
reformed and reimagined
for today.

Through the brokenness of the world
may we find your Advent resin: “Peace...”

Kintsugi



** Kintsugi is the ancient Japanese art of repairing broken bowls with gold. The cracks are still there but more beautiful in being so.*

PARISH REGISTER

We remember the deaths of these church members

Mrs Kathleen Gerrard, 160 Prunier Drive, Peterhead

Mrs Sheila Crighton, Sunnybank, Hatton

Audrey Hailwood, 17 Silver Pit Gardens, Peterhead

CRUDEN CHURCH PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The Pastoral Care team of Cruden Parish Church is set up to help and to listen in your time of need or maybe for just a friendly chat. If you would like a visit or know of anyone who would benefit from a visit or a listening ear, be it at home or by telephone please let a member of the team know. We also visit Care Homes and Hospitals. Please be assured that anything that is said between yourself and the pastoral care team is confidential.

Contact numbers for the Pastoral Care team:

Rev Sean Swindells (0779 155976)

Maureen Esson (07949 792233)

Kathleen Craig (01779 841221)

Jean Campbell (07716 399011)

Robert Petticrew (01771 624280)



Communion Serving Elders

26th January

Kathleen Craig, Betty Forrester, Jim MacDonald, Peter Slamaker

30th March

Katherine Hyman, Shonah Taylor, Kate Clark, Rosemary Pittendrigh

25th May

Robert Esson,
Maureen
Esson, Irene
Will,
Joyce Willox



WELCOME

5 January	Robert Petticrew	Peter Slamaker
12 January	Shona Taylor	Irene Will
19 January	Bob & Norma Forman	
26 January	Kevin & Janie Smith	
2 February	Kathleen Craig	Joyce Willox
9 February	Kate Clark	Maureen Esson
16 February	Jim MacDonald	Betty Forrester
23 February	Margaret Adams	Rosemary Reid
2 March	Ken Bruce	Adelaide Duncan
9 March	Robert Petticrew	Peter Slamaker
16 March	Shona Taylor	Irene Will
23 March	Kevin & Janie Smith	
30 March	Bob & Norma Forman	
6 April	Kathleen Craig	Joyce Willox

TEA DUTY

5 January	Shona Taylor	June Morrison
12 January	Bob & Norma Forman	
19 January	Kevin & Janie Smith	
26 January	Maureen Esson	Irene Durno
2 Februray	Margaret Adams	Rosemary Reid
9 February	Shona Taylor	June Morrison
16 February	Bob & Norma Forman	
23 February	Kevin & Janie Smith	
2 March	Maureen Esson	Irene Durno
9 March	Margaret Adams	Rosemary Reid
16 March	Shona Taylor	June Morrison
23 March	Bob & Norma Forman	
30 March	Kevin & Janie Smith	
6 April	Maureen Esson	Irene Durno

Minister: Rev Sean Swindells
SSwindells@churchofscotland.org.uk
Mobile: **07791 755976**

Session Clerk	Robert Esson	
Treasurer	Rosemary Pittendrigh	
Contact Elders	Betty Forrester	Hatton
	Joyce Willox	Hatton
	Robert Petticrew	Rural
	Robert Esson	Peterhead
	Maureen Esson	Cruden Bay
	Kate Clark	Cruden Bay
	Kathleen Craig	Cruden Bay
Gift Aid Treasurer	Maureen Esson	
Bulletin	Fred Coutts	
	bulletin@crudenchurch.org.uk	
Christian Aid	Rosemary Pittendrigh	
Cleaning	Rosemary Pittendrigh	
Communion	Joyce Willox	
Flowers	Betty Forrester	
Organist	Stephen Calder	
Pastoral Care	Maureen Esson	
Presbytery Elder	Katherine Hyman	
Press Officer	Mary Bratton	
Roll Keeper	Mary McNaughtan	
Safeguarding	Kathleen Craig	
Transport	Robert Esson	Hatton
	Rosemary Pittendrigh	Cruden Bay
Walks	Maureen Esson	
WFO Treasurer	Joyce Willox	

Committee Conveners

Education & Worship	Katherine Hyman
Finance	Rosemary Pittendrigh
Membership and Outreach	Kathleen Craig
Property	Peter Slamaker
Social	Betty Forrester
