



# *The* Cairn



News from St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church in Dunbar

## Rector's Letter

As summer begins and warmer days draw us outdoors, I'm enjoying what it means to live in Sunny Dunny and to have more sunlight than I'm used to. The Bible says, 'Light is sweet, and it pleases the eyes to see the sun' (Ecclesiastes 11:7). Many of us feel brighter on sunny days than under grey, overcast skies, and research suggests that sunshine can lift our mood, improve sleep, and even support our bone health.

When I was recently visiting my family, I heard on the radio about a study suggesting that taking part in the arts regularly can slow the ageing process. People who engage in arts activities more than once a week, like reading, visiting galleries, or listening to music, were found to age 4% more slowly than those who rarely do so. I found this encouraging, as a friend and I were just about to visit some artists participating in the Spring Fling open studios weekend. In one morning, we met a weaver, jewellers, a painter, and a blacksmith, and I could



feel how the combination of sunshine, walking, and enjoying their work boosted my sense of wellbeing.

This made me feel curious about the effects of participating in church worship. Often, I see people leave church services looking lighter, happier and more at peace than when they arrived. With a little research, I discovered evidence that taking part in religious acts is associated with longer life and better physical and mental health. Attending worship services regularly is linked with improved physical ability and participating in prayer, scripture reading, and communal singing helps to lower stress and anxiety.

Perhaps this is no surprise. God the Creator, Source of all being, and Holy Spirit made us in God's image (Genesis 1:27). We are created to be imaginative and to take joy in the creativity of others, often recognising our own experiences and even finding help for our struggles in what they make. Engaging with God's creation can also broaden our perspective and remind us that we do not face our struggles alone.

So, I encourage you to spend some time in the sunshine, giving thanks to God for creation, for the creativity we have been given, and for the gifts we receive through the creativity of others.

God bless you,

Harriet

## Baptism and Fonts

Close to the main door and usually at the western end of a church is the font, baptism being the entry to the Christian life and in former times, entry to heaven for unbaptised babies.

Initially, baptism in a body of water, preferably running, was for adults. This, of course, left concerns about those who died unbaptised, with particular concerns for babies. Death rates throughout much of history were high for both mother and baby. A growing idea of Original Sin, developed by St. Augustine in the 4th century, must have terrified parents. St Augustine held that these infants, tainted by Adam's sin, would go to Hell and should be baptised as soon as possible after birth in order that their sins would be forgiven. Disquiet among theologians with the idea of these newborn being damned if dying before baptism led to the idea of limbo for them and also for the virtuous who had died before Christ's death. For some Christians, this whole issue remains a conundrum.

Climate, convenience, and geography moved the ceremony of baptism indoors, its importance underlined by having separate buildings, baptistries, dedicated for this purpose. A stunning late example can be found in Florence. In humbler buildings, stone and wood fonts began to appear. As infant baptism became common and the fear of early death, and its consequences, continued illiterate midwives were taught the words of baptism to use in emergencies. Even today, anyone can baptise a person who is in extremis and the baptism is accepted as being authentic.

Font covers were necessary and were padlocked to save the sanctified water from dust and from being used for non Christian rituals. This suggests that the water was left in the font between ceremonies and so was ready to be used quickly.

Fonts and their covers provided surfaces for carvings or paintings. Octagonal fonts, such as the one in St Anne's were frequent in the perpendicular period, Jesus' resurrection day being regarded as the eighth day of creation. Images of the seven Catholic sacraments were often carved on the remaining faces. Covers became more elaborate and heavy, necessitating mechanisms to raise them. Some were many feet high with interlocking sections. That in Durham Cathedral, being 40ft high, is an extreme example. The Victorians left us with heavy structures inconvenient for modern worship and difficult to move!



Baptism within one Christian tradition is accepted as valid by most of the others, and the ceremony is not repeated. However, the Mandeans, a Gnostic group, have frequent re-baptism, thus maintaining spiritual purity. They believe John the Baptist to be the final prophet and Jesus to have falsified John's teaching.

Within the Anglican Communion baptism is accepted as a once for ever event : those who ask to repeat the experience may be offered the opportunity to re affirm their baptism promises with an immersion of sorts in water . This is often requested by those who were baptised as an infant and come to a living faith later in their lives. The more usual arrangement is the ceremony of confirmation in which the baptised confirm their baptism promises.

**Tony**

## To make you smile and think

The little boy was saying his go-to-bed prayers in a very low voice. "I can't hear you, dear," his mother whispered. "Wasn't talking to you," said the small one firmly.

**Lost Husband:** Where are we now? **Wife:** Halfway between Paris and Marseilles, dear **Husband:** Don't bother me with details. What country are we in?

## A few of the great questions of life

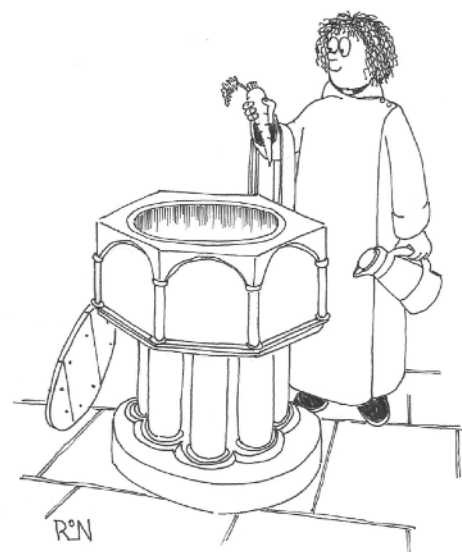
Why is abbreviated such a long word?

Why is it that when you tell a man there are 400 billion stars he will believe you, but when you tell him there's wet paint, he has to touch it?

Do you find it unnerving that what doctors do is called 'practice'?



*...well you cannot fault the efficacy of the new 'Planned Giving' scheme...*



*The plug was stolen in 1548*

## Early Christian Mosaics in Ravenna, Italy

In 402AD the capital of the Western Roman Empire was moved from Milan to Ravenna because Ravenna's geographical position made it much safer from attack. The sea on one side and the surrounding marshy land provided a natural fortification against attacking Germanic tribes. Over the next 3 centuries Ravenna acquired the splendour of an imperial city with the building of many magnificent churches and buildings whose modest brick exteriors gave no hint of the wealth and beauty of the decoration inside. The mosaics which covered the walls and cupolas inside were created using techniques and materials (mostly glass but also enamel and marble) which caused the maximum reflection of light falling on them producing a wonderful scintillating effect.

Some buildings and mosaics have inevitably been lost with the passing of time but there are still many structures which retain their original decorations. In 1996 UNESCO gave 8 of the surviving buildings world heritage status in recognition of their cultural importance.

Mike and I recently spent some time exploring these mosaics and what follows is a very small selection of some of our favourite scenes. We had a wonderful visit to Ravenna and feel very fortunate to have been able to visit these unique sites.

Please note, the photos on the following pages were taken on our phones and as the mosaics are all high up the photos do not do justice to the extraordinary art work.



*The Good Shepherd*

This is probably the oldest mosaic work dating from the early 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Found in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

The next two photos were taken at the Basilica di San Vitale



*Moses removing his sandals as instructed by God at the burning bush. (Exodus 3:5)*



*The sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22)*

Found in the Basilica San Apollinare Nuovo



*The Three Kings (Matthew 2)*

Also in the Basilica Nuovo, very high up just under the roof is a series of small mosaics showing scenes from the life of Christ. We loved these scenes. Here are 2 of them:



*Jesus heals a paralytic in Capernaum who is let down from the roof (Mark 2:4)*



*Jesus cast out demons from a possessed man and the demons enter some swine who rush into the sea. (Mark 5)*

**Rosemary**

## The Girl from the North Isles

(A tribute from Rab Shields to Robert Zimmerman)

If you ever sail from the mainland past the Old Man, swaying on the Pentland's restless swell to the North Isle.

Take a message from me to the one who lives there still, to the one who was a true love of mine, and tell her she is still in my heart.

I saw her last, through the morning haar as I sailed away, her hair tied back, blowing in the wind, that's the way I remember her best

We were young, with different paths to follow, mine in Auld Reekie, deals to make, ambitions to fulfil, hers, much simpler, to love the land where she was born.

We promised to write, and we did at first, letters crossed, mine with the scent of whisky and coal smoke, telling of the bustle and noise of the capital, where no one knows your name.

Hers of the peat and the heather, with tales of the long summer evenings where the dark never comes and the friends who asked when I'd return. I'd answer soon. Always soon.

But life got in the way, days to weeks and weeks to months, though memories never faded.

Then the postman stopped calling and ten years passed.

Life went on, ambitions fulfilled but an emptiness remained till I couldn't resist.

So now I'm sailing across the firth, with a coat so warm, to keep her from the howlin' winds

I hope her hair still hangs long, 'cause that's the way I remember her best

I wonder if she remembers me at all.

I walked onto the pier, I hoped to see her there.

I entered the pub, still the same,

I asked the barmaid, "Is she's still here?", whispering her name.

While muttering a silent prayer.

She looked at me for a long moment, "Aye, she said at last. "She's here, still in her mother's house.

I walked that familiar path slowly, each step heavy with the fear of all the silent years between then and now.

When I reached the door, I hesitated.

How could I explain the silence, the life lived elsewhere?

I knocked. It took a long moment, movement inside, the soft shuffle of feet, the pounding of my heart, then the door opened.

She stood there, older, eyes lined with sadness, her hair now streaked with grey, but still hanging long.

For a long moment, neither of us spoke.

"Aye," she said at last, "I wondered if ye might come back one day."

"Sorry, I'm late," I stumbled. She gave the faintest of smiles, sadness disappearing .

She stepped aside then, "Well," she added, "are ye coming in, or are ye just going to stand there like a stranger?"

I stepped over the threshold, and for the first time in longer than I could remember, I felt as though I'd come home to the true love of mine.

**Rab**

## By Meister Eckhart

What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself?

And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to a Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture?

This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of God is begotten in us. In this birth you will discover all blessing. But neglect this birth and you neglect all blessing. Tend only to this birth in you and you will find there all goodness and all consolation, all delight, all being and all truth.

Amen

### **From Noreen**

*Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1328) was a German Dominican theologian. He believed in a direct personal experience of the divine, teaching that the human soul shares a spark of the divine and can achieve total oneness with God through inner emptiness, detachment and letting go of all worldly desires. His most famous quote is:*

*"The eye through which I see God is the same eye through which God sees me: my eye and God's eye are one eye, one seeing, one knowing, one love"*

# What's on at St Anne's

## Silent Reflective Mornings in 2026

Monthly on Saturdays at  
10.30am for an hour

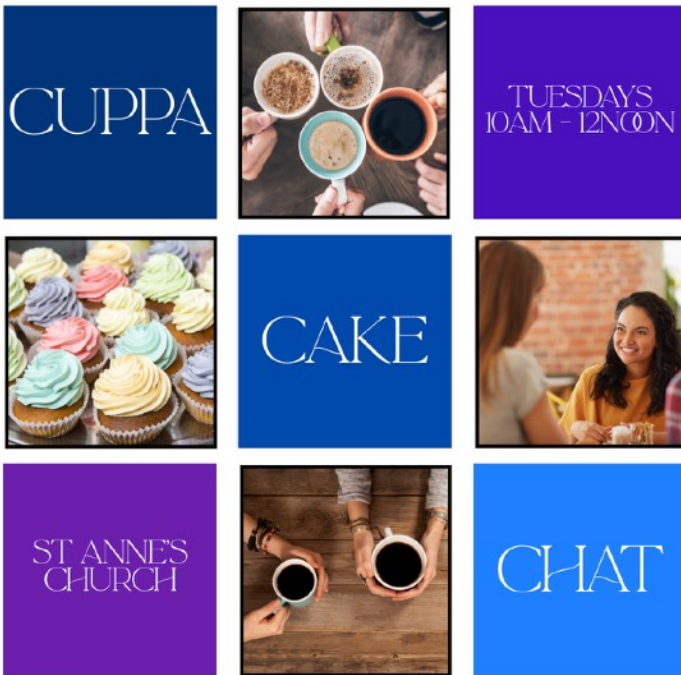
- 2 May
- 6 June
- 4 July – *extended session for Summer Silence*
- 1 August
- 5 September
- 3 October
- 7 November
- 5 December – *extended session for Advent*



*Do reserve the dates in your diary – and step aside from the busyness of life for time and space for quiet reflection. Each session is followed by coffee & conversation.*

The series starts again in May because special services will be happening during April for Easter

CONTACT FOR QUERIES: Sharon Morgan 01368 864582 [sharon@eh42.scot](mailto:sharon@eh42.scot)




Come on in, the kettle's hot!  
Take what you need  
Give what you can  
Everyone is welcome  
[www.stannesdunbar.org.uk](http://www.stannesdunbar.org.uk)

*Thursdays*  
at St Anne's Church

**10.30 am**  
Quiet Communion Service  
followed by discussion about faith and life

**12.00 midday**  
Prayers for peace - gather at the Peace Pole



[www.stannesdunbar.org.uk](http://www.stannesdunbar.org.uk)

# Readings and Rotas

## **Sunday June 7th**

Romans 4:13-25, Matthew 9: 9-13, 18-26

Readings: Caitriona

Intercessions: Noreen

Chalice: Stuart

Organ: Diana

## **Sunday June 14th**

Romans 5: 1-8, Matthew 9: 35-10: 23

Readings: David

Intercessions: Sharon

Chalice: Sharon

Organ: Brian

## **Sunday June 21st**

Romans 6: 1-11, Matthew 10: 24-39

Readings: Alasdair

Intercessions: Robert

Chalice: Robert

Organ: George

## **Sunday June 28th**

Romans 6: 12-23, Matthew 10: 40-42

Readings: Chris

Intercessions: Mark

Chalice: Mark

Organ: Brian

All readings use the  
New Revised  
Standard Version of  
the Bible

# Services at St. Anne's

## Sunday

10.30am - Holy Communion

*Young Church every 1st and 3rd Sunday*

## Thursday

10.30am - Holy Communion followed by coffee and chat

12.00pm - Prayers at the Peace Pole



## Rector: Revd. Harriet Johnston

email: [rector@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:rector@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

*Rest days Friday & Saturday*

## Useful Contacts

**Vestry Secretary** Pam Shields: [secretary@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:secretary@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

**Treasurer** Rab Shields: [treasurer@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

**PVG Coordinator** Rev'd Geoff Shutt:

[safeguarding@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stannesdunbar.org.uk) / 07485 238663

**Young Church** Diana Greene:

[youngchurch@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:youngchurch@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

**Event Bookings** David Robins: [events@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:events@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

**Organ Enquiries** Brian Dale: [organist@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:organist@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

**Magazine (subscriptions and contributions) and Social Media**  
[comms@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:comms@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

*Please send Cairn contributions by the last Sunday of the month*

**Website Enquiries** David Robertson:

[webmaster@stannes.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@stannes.org.uk)

## Pastoral Care Enquiries

[pastoralsupport@stannesdunbar.org.uk](mailto:pastoralsupport@stannesdunbar.org.uk)

Sharon Morgan 01368 864582 / Harriet Johnston 07511 876294

Find us on 

[www.stannesdunbar.org.uk](http://www.stannesdunbar.org.uk)

St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church, Dunbar is a Scottish Charity, SC010950, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)