

**United Diocese of Moray, Ross  
& Caithness**  
**Diocesan Newsletter No 11**  
**April & May 2020**



Dear Friends,

I am writing this to you from my office at Arpafeelie, the place that now functions as my Provincial office as well. We are in very difficult times and I want to thank the people of this diocese for the gentle and careful way they have put the new guidelines from the Bishops in place. I am aware that some felt we were going too far but as we now know we might not yet have gone far enough.

I don't want to simply repeat all the things about this virus that you can pick up on the news and elsewhere, I want rather to offer a little lesson from history. This little church of ours, with its distinctive story, has a past that is full of isolation and separation, people unable to worship together, unable to share in the sacrament. This history of the time when we were a persecuted church is one that many hold up as the time of growing strength and resilience, families read the offices together, prayed together and held firmly to their faith. When the days of freedom came again the church grew and developed quicker than many had ever dreamt of.

Now I am not suggesting that this is the same situation but it might require the same resilience, saying the daily offices together at the same time from our own homes, sharing the Sunday readings, phoning and checking up on people. It might just be that we come out of this stronger in faith and stronger in fellowship, who knows, well I suspect God does.

**Blessings**

**+Mark**



**With the new guidelines sent out from the College of Bishops and the Governments all church services, public worship and gatherings and opening of Church buildings have been suspended for the time being.**



Bishop Mark praying the Lord's Prayer out over the diocese as Christians across the world prayed together at 11.00am on 25<sup>th</sup> March. This was in response to an invitation from Pope Francis sent to all Christian leaders in which he asked that we invoke "together the graces from heaven" and ask "for the end of this pandemic".

# News from around the Diocese

## **Bishop Lent Appeal**

This year the Bishop Lent Appeal will be for Street Pastors. This wonderful ministry takes place in many parts of our diocese reaching out to those most vulnerable in society, being a listening ear and ensuring that people get home safely after a night hour. Living out the Gospel message on our streets not just in words but in action, showing Christ's love to all through their actions.

If you wish to donate to the appeal please send donations to the Diocesan Treasurer, St Duthac's Centre, Arpafeelie, North Kessock, IV1 3XD. Cheques should be made payable to Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness.

We are delighted to have been informed that our Chancellor, Dr Joseph J Morrow CBE QC, has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. We congratulate him on this wonderful honour.

Rev Katrina O'Neill has been appointed the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) Diocesan Ambassador for Moray, Ross and Caithness Diocese. This will involve her promoting the work of SEI in our Diocese and ensuring that their monthly newsletter is sent out, so everyone is aware of what is happening within the SEI community.

# Saint of the Month

By Revd Canon Mel Langille

(Priest of Black Isle Charges and Canon of Inverness Cathedral)

## SAINT GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR : 23 APRIL



Among the Saints we commemorate in April is George. Saint George, Patron of England. Saint George, Patron of Greece, Palestinians and a whole assortment of other places, peoples and causes. Saint George, the greatly venerated by Christians of the East and West, but especially of the East. Saint George, the greatly venerated by our Islamic sisters and brothers!

Little is solid fact about him, and many are the legends...often very fanciful. But I believe, for him to have such a strong following in Christian and Muslim circles over all these years, there is no doubt that he lived and had a huge impact on the people and church of his day. I have pulled together some of his story here – with a bit of an Easter flavour – but there is much, much more to be found.

The Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer, as he is called in the East, was a native of Cappadocia (a district in Asia Minor), and he grew up in a deeply believing Christian family. His father was martyred for Christ when George was still a child. His mother, owning lands in Palestine, moved there with her son and raised him in strict piety.

Reaching adulthood, Saint George entered into the service of the Roman army. He was handsome, brave and valiant in battle, and he came to the notice of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) and joined the imperial guard with the rank of comites, or military commander.

Diocletian, despised Christians, and intensified his persecution against them in the final years of his reign. Saint George, aware of the emperor's intent, distributed all his wealth to the poor, freed his servants, and then appeared in the Senate. He spoke out openly against the emperor's designs. He confessed himself a Christian, and appealed to all to acknowledge Christ: "I am a servant of Christ, my God, and trusting in Him, I have come among you

voluntarily, to bear witness concerning the Truth.” “What is Truth?” one of the dignitaries asked, echoing the question of Pontius Pilate. The saint replied, “Christ Himself, Whom you persecuted, is Truth.”

Saint George refused to renounce his faith and was put through a series of terrible tortures...none of which had any effect on him. When the emperor asked what sort of power was helping him, Saint George said, “Do not imagine that it is any human learning which keeps me from being harmed by these torments. I am saved only by calling upon Christ and His Power. Whoever believes in Him has no regard for tortures and is able to do the things that Christ did” (John 14:12). Diocletian asked what sort of things Christ had done. The Martyr replied, “He gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the lame, gave hearing to the deaf, cast out demons, and raised the dead.”

Knowing that they had never been able to resurrect the dead through sorcery, nor by any of the gods known to him, and wanting to test the Saint, the emperor commanded him to raise up a dead person before his eyes. The Saint retorted, “You wish to tempt me, but my God will work this sign for the salvation of the people who shall see the power of Christ.” When they led Saint George down to the graveyard, he cried out, “O Lord! Show to those here present, that You are the only God in all the world. Let them know You as the Almighty Lord.” Then the earth quaked, a grave opened, the dead one emerged from it alive. Having seen with their own eyes the Power of Christ, the people wept and glorified the true God. The sorcerer Athanasius, falling down at the feet of Saint George, confessed Christ as the All-Powerful God and asked forgiveness for his sins, committed in ignorance. Like pharaoh of old, the emperor’s heart was hardened and he stepped up his persecution of the church, especially, those recently converted and Saint George was sent back to prison. The people, however, weighed down with their infirmities, began to visit the prison and they there received healing and help from the saint

As the Saint neared the day of his martyrdom, in a vision the Saviour placed a crown on Saint George’s head and said, “Fear not, but have courage, and you will soon come to me and receive what has been prepared for you.” Calmly and bravely, the holy Great Martyr George bent his neck beneath the sword, receiving the crown of martyrdom on April 23, 303.

Perhaps the favourite image of Saint George is of him on his steed and slaying the dragon to protect a young lass. I doubt there was a dragon...perhaps not even a lass. Perhaps, in the assorted stories we are presented with an image of a man who stood against tyranny to defend the Church? Regardless, Saint George and his stories remind us of our Lord’s charge at his Ascension when he said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Greek word for “witness” is “μάρτυρας” from which we get the English word “martyr”. We are not all called to the shedding of our blood for Christ, but we are all called to lay down our lives in his service, always living out his love and compassion in our day to day lives as we pray at every Eucharist, “...and we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.” and “Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ’s Body to live and work to your praise and glory; may we grow together in unity and love...”

(I have included my favourite image of Saint George...a gift to the UN from the people of Greece...the Saint slaying a very modern day dragon...a very real one...nuclear warheads.)

# Inverness Cathedral

[www.invernesscathedral.org](http://www.invernesscathedral.org)

As we journey through these uncertain times and are unable to join together in person for worship please note that the Cathedral Clergy are continuing to offer prayer and services behind closed and locked doors. This takes place at 5.30pm each day and 10 am on Sundays and are live streamed to our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/invernesscathedral/> Please do join with them from the comfort of your own home.

Daily Prayer resources can be found daily on the Scottish Episcopal Church website: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/prayer>

The order of service for the Sunday will be made available online so you can join in from home



### To Light A Candle at the Cathedral:

Text LIGHTACANDLE to 70085 to donate  
£1

Texts cost £1 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS.

If you'd like to give £1 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text LIGHTACANDLENOINFO to 70085.

### Dates for your diary:

Please note that on the following Sundays the morning service will be held at  
10am

30<sup>th</sup> August

8<sup>th</sup> November ( Remembrance Sunday)

29<sup>th</sup> November

## The Inverness Julian meeting

Once a month, at 3pm on the first Wednesday, a group of people meets in St Andrew's Cathedral, Inverness, the Inverness Julian meeting, one of a number of groups across the UK and in other countries around the world, who meet regularly with a focus on prayer and meditation in the Christian tradition.

The Julian movement began in the 1970s, at a time when there was a revival of interest in the United Kingdom, North America and elsewhere in mysticism and meditation, including the Christian tradition of contemplative prayer. Hilary Wakeman, (an [Anglican](#) who in 1994 became one of the first female priests in the [Church of England](#)) wrote a letter published in Christian newspapers in the United Kingdom asking if some readers might like to meet together for Christian meditation. This led to the formation of the first local groups. About a year later the name 'The Julian Meetings' was adopted, after [Julian of Norwich](#). Dame Julian, or Mother Julian, was a fourteenth century anchorite who wrote the earliest surviving book in the English language to be written by a woman, Revelations of Divine Love.



Each Julian meeting is open, ecumenical and not associated with any Christian denomination. Those who attend are not required to hold any particular set of beliefs but are expected to respect the Christian ethos. No one method of meditation is taught. All are encouraged to find the method that is right for them. It is expected that the main content of the meeting will be 30 minutes of silent contemplative prayer. Generally, we gather round a table with a candle, flowers or other objects of beauty, to help us focus. The loose structure of each meeting is that there is first a time of quiet, sometimes called 'stilling', where we move together into a receptive quiet state. There is then a short reading, or music, which leads us into our time of silent contemplation. Subsequently there is time for sharing, if anyone wishes; afterwards we keep a period of fellowship in which we are blessed by the hospitality of Andrea and her colleagues at the Cathedral café.

There are no formal rules for our meeting or indeed for the wider organisation, but there is a loose UK wide network which sustains communication and enables the sharing of ideas and practice. The focus of the whole movement is on waiting on God in the silence. More information, including details of regular online meetings, can be found at <https://thejulianmeetings.wildapricot.org/>

Our local meeting is open to anyone who wishes to join in. Of course during the current crisis, we cannot meet in person but will all be spending the hour between 3 and 4pm on April 01 (and subsequent dates if needs be) in prayer and contemplation. If you wish to take part, please email [julianinverness@gmail.com](mailto:julianinverness@gmail.com) and you will be sent the reading and details of further meetings.

*Waiting upon God; listening for God; opening ourselves to God; responding to the invitation to meet God in silent awareness. Perhaps the best description is prayer of the heart. In contemplative prayer we seek to be aware of the presence of God and to remain silently and attentively in that presence, completely open to God.*

Pat Ellison

**St Michael and All Angels, Abban Street, Inverness  
and St John the Evangelist, Southside Road, Inverness**

[www.stmichaelschurcheinverness.org](http://www.stmichaelschurcheinverness.org) and [www.stjohnschurcheinverness.org](http://www.stjohnschurcheinverness.org)

or contact Canon John Cuthbert on 01463 233797 or [john2cuthbert@gmail.com](mailto:john2cuthbert@gmail.com)

## **ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE CLOSURE**

**St Michael's:** Clergy will celebrate Mass at 9.45am on Sunday and 10.00am on Tuesday

**St John's:** Clergy will celebrate the Eucharist at 11.15am on Sunday and 11.00am on Wednesday

These services cannot be open to others, but we invite you, wherever you are, to link your prayers with ours at these times. The readings, devotional materials and recorded services will be posted on our websites regularly. Please send any prayer requests to the clergy by email or telephone.

## **PAST EVENTS**

**Burns Lunch:** On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January, a joint Burns Lunch was held which was well-attended by members of both congregations. The piper was Ryan MacDonald and the address to the Haggis was given by Tom Walker. After an excellent meal, entertainment was provided by Fr John and Mairi with guitar and song, Gillian Stevenson on fiddle and Ryan on pipes.

**Shrove Tuesday:** all tables were full for our pancake party and angel drive (like a beetle drive but drawing angels) – a good time was had by all.



The first Messy Church at St John's took place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, attended by 10 children and 12 adults. The theme of the session was 'Jesus, the Good Shepherd'.

After gathering together, helped by some colouring sheets or a word search for those who wished, and a brief introduction, participants enjoyed various activities, all on a 'sheep' theme: decorating sheep biscuits, painting and collage of sheep in the fields, making and decorating a sheep pen, and making cotton wool sheep badges. During these activities, we thought a little about the things that sheep need in their lives and how a shepherd cares for the sheep.

The activity time was followed by 'celebration' – a time of worship, when we thought about why Jesus is the Good Shepherd, how he knows us each by name, cares and provides for us and protects us in times of danger and giving his life for us. Several of the children helped out by being the flock of sheep, herded into the sheep pen that had been made, and two of the older ones were the fierce wolves attacking. We finished with a song led by Fr John on guitar and a prayer.

Then it was time to eat together – what else but shepherd's pie!

A great time was had by all and everyone is looking forward to the next one. Unfortunately plans for this have had to be put on hold.

## **East Sutherland And Tain Churches**

Palm Sunday 5th April – Revd James will read the Passion of Our Lord at 3pm on our facebook page and also via a post on our Web Site.

\* Wednesday of Holy Week 8th April – Stations of the Cross at 7pm on our facebook page and also via a post on our Web Site.

\* Good Friday 10th April – Revd Simon will offer a Reflection for Good Friday at 2pm on our facebook page and also via a post on our Web Site.

\* Daily – Jamie Campbell is saying the Morning and Evening Offices on our facebook page.

Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/episcopaldornochtain/>

Web site - <https://episcopaldornochtain.org>

## **St John the Evangelist, Forres**

During the period when we are unable to gather together for worship due to coronavirus control measures video recorded services are available through our YouTube Channel. To access these, please visit:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCen5D7qCRumTHUpwznalJOW?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCen5D7qCRumTHUpwznalJOW?view_as=subscriber)

## **Scottish Episcopal Church Provincial Online Service**

As part of the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) will begin broadcasting video coverage of Eucharistic services via its website, social media channels and YouTube channel. The broadcast will be available for all to access on YouTube and Facebook, from 11am on Sunday.

The web page for the broadcast is located at [www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship](http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship)

The website will also contain a downloadable video and audio format of the service. A new service will be broadcast every Sunday on the SEC website, to allow all congregations to worship. We are aware that some congregations will offer their own version of online worship, but others will not have the means or resource to attempt this, hence this province-wide broadcast.

In advance of the broadcast of each provincial service, the Liturgy will be available to download from the SEC website. We encourage people to distribute the video/audio recordings and the Liturgy widely within their own personal networks. In households with no internet or playback capacity at all, if people are simply given the opportunity to read the words of the Liturgy to themselves close to the appointed time, they will be praising God along with others in the Church.

## **Caithness Street Pastors**

*By Rev Ellie Charman*

The fledgling initiative of Caithness Street Pastors was launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It has taken a small group of us five months to get this far. Two of the group who were street pastors in Inverness and Aberdeen contacted church leaders across Caithness and with the guidance of Ascension Trust Scotland, were able to put into place the necessary connections with church leaders from a variety of denominations, Highland Council, Police Scotland, and local councillors.

The launch was held in St Peter & the Holy Rood, in Thurso. The initiative in Caithness was endorsed by Insp. Alistair Goskirk and Cllr. Matthew Reiss and Rev Ellie Charman. Two potential street pastors came forward and explained why they want to be part of this initiative.

The next steps for Caithness Street Pastors include gathering enough people who wish to train with us before being commissioned and sent into the community. Street Pastors have to be a member of a church but we are not allowed to preach while on patrol, it is simply about being caring and compassionate to those who need help. However, it is not enough to simply be a member of a church. Each potential applicant needs to have been a member for twelve months, to receive a positive reference from their minister, to receive PVG clearance, as well as a short interview with at least two members of the Board of Caithness Street Pastors. At that point each potential street pastor will join with others going forward as a cohort and undergo 50 hours of training. This covers a wide range of topics to ensure that when we go out on patrol, the public can expect a respectful and professional manner from us.

We envisage that we will patrol in Wick on Friday evenings, and around Thurso on Saturday evenings. However, we also wish to input wherever the local community think that Street Pastors may be required, such as Pulteneytown or the County Show, or galas or the various Highland Games' in the region.

We sought and were successful in our bid through 'Your cash, Your Caithness' for some funding and are seeking further funding from Windfarm Community Funds. Like any charity, we will be dependent on donations and will be seeking regular donations from individuals as well as organisations.

We're looking for people to come forward and find out more. Potential applicants need to be a member of a church and be over 18. There is no upper age limit. Please contact our local coordinator at [caithness@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:caithness@streetpastors.org.uk) for further information or connect through Caithness Street Pastors on FaceBook (@CaithnessSP) or in the Twittersphere (@CaithnessSPs).

The photo is of Sandy Scrimgeour of the Ascension Trust, Scotland addressing the public at the launch.



This article was originally written for the Thurso Community Development Trust and since then the corona virus has overtaken everything in our lives. However, the work of developing and ensuring the viability of Caithness Street Pastors is still going on, albeit in the background. We are still inviting people to come forward – not only as Street Pastors but also as Prayer Pastors. Their applications will still be processed and when the time comes that we can begin to gather in groups, training will begin.



# Pilgrimage to Iona 2021

Monday 15th March to Friday 19th  
March 2021

2021 is the Year of Pilgrimage in the life of the  
Scottish Episcopal Church.

There will be many pilgrimages taking place across  
the Province, including this Pilgrimage from the  
Cathedral to Bishop's House in Iona.

All are welcome!

Bishop's House can accommodate 23 people. Located  
on the island of Iona, with the opportunity to retreat,  
relax, walk, read and to visit Iona Abbey.



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