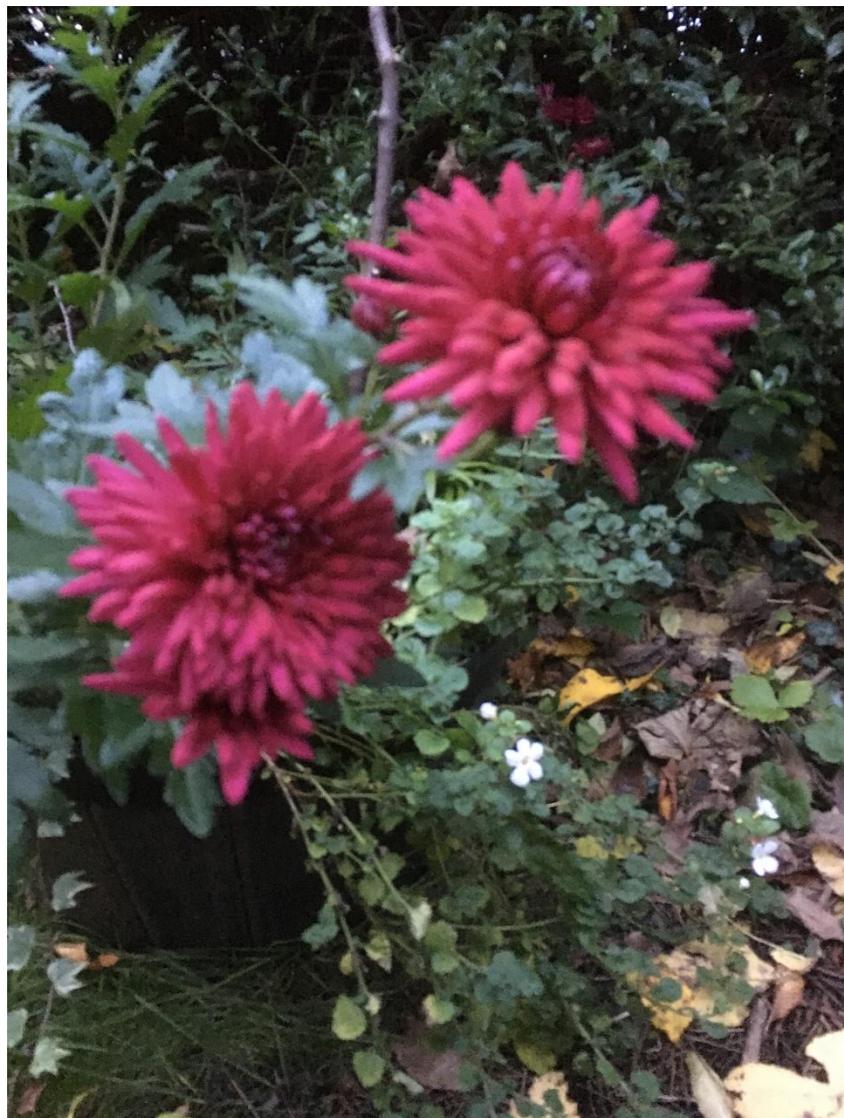




St Martin of Tours

Diocese of Edinburgh Scottish Charity No: 011137

Living our faith in our community
through prayer, reflection and action



December 2021 January 2022

St Martin of Tours Episcopal Church

is part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion

www.stmartinsedinburgh.org.uk

Who are we?

Priest in Charge	John Vincent johnvincent@stmartinsedinburgh.org.uk mobile 07914 762868	374 6365
Organist	Chris Johnson chrisj@epcc.ed.ac.uk	620 2603
Rector's Church Warden	Tom Jamieson tommyjamieson53@gmail.com	07712 470 895
People's Church Warden	Roderick MacKenzie roderick@blueyonder.co.uk	
Vestry Secretary	Roderick MacKenzie roderick@blueyonder.co.uk	449 5465
Treasurer	Lynn Dailly lynndailly@btinternet.com	444 2233
Gift Secretary	Stuart Campbell Campbellzn@hotmail.com	466 8184
Lay Representative	Liz Moir (Miss)	
Alternative Lay Representative	Diana Gilligan	

Message from John Vincent

For those of us of a certain age, Christmas adverts used to be a much simpler affair: in fact one of the adverts doing the rounds on social media is an old one of Woolworths with Anita Harris and The Goodies dancing around advertising everything from screw kits to Music For Pleasure LPs and home brew kits. But in our modern savvy age, adverts have become more conceptual and encourage us to think, not least of all the long awaited John Lewis Christmas Advert.

A strange Alien crash lands their spaceship in woods, and witnessed only by a young lad who shares firstly a mince pie with the alien visitor – they try to eat it with the tin foil on, not understanding fully. As time goes on, the boy and the alien play together until the alien has repaired the spaceship and is ready to leave earth to go back home. The boy presents them with a small musical Christmas tree and the spaceship goes back into the sky to the music *Together in Electric Dreams*, with the lyrics, 'We'll Always be Together, no matter how far it seems' and the strap line 'For a Christmas as magical as your first one.'

Well I am not sure about the strap line because I was too young to remember my first Christmas, but as well as the predictable message about Christmas as a time to connect with friends and family, there are also references to the Christmas story; God being born in flesh, reaching down from heaven at a particular time and place- a remote part of the earth, witnessed by only a handful of people. Strange gifts being given to him – the myrrh symbolising that his Kingship was to end in death and that his earthly life would have to end. The Alien ascends into the sky, in the same way that Christ ascended back into heaven. Yet despite this physical separation, we know that we too will always be together with him, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Whilst not wanting to over egg the comparison, it is nonetheless an advert which reminds us that Christmas is in fact a time of mixed emotions and extremes; for many it is a time to be together with loved ones: and after the last 2 years, we certainly need that. It's a time for giving, receiving, love and laughter. Yet for others, those who live on their own, or live on the streets, or are separated because of work or circumstances, Christmas only highlights loneliness and isolation.

Over the next few weeks, our communities and churches will recall that first Christmas through nativity plays, carols, prayers and events, and we at St Martin's warmly invite you to our services. Within our celebrations, we will remember the reality of that event: No trumpets or fanfare, but a quiet birth, witnessed by some shepherds and almost missed by the rest of the world. But into this comes a message of hope: that relationships, life and the world itself can be a better place, a hope summed up by Jesus years later when he told his followers to love one another as he has loved them.

We look at our world today and maybe we think not a lot has changed with human nature; the world is still divided and torn. But the big changes begin with small acts of love and generosity which are our gift. May the peace we long for each Christmas, begin with our own acts of kindness towards others and the extending of our hospitality to those who are so desperately in need of the love of others. Have a happy, holy and blessed Christmas.

John

Ecumenical Advent Services of Reflection

An Ecumenical Advent Service of Reflection will be run each Wednesday in Advent beginning at 19.30.

01 December: Hope. St Michael's Church

08 December: Waiting. St Martin's Church

15 December: Joy. GDS

22 December: Love. Polwarth Church.

Diana interviews Roderick:

Roderick, as a member of St Martin's have you always been aware of God in your life or did that awareness come to you later on?

Yes, my four school teachers at Balgreen School, namely Miss Busher, Miss Simpson, Miss Johnson and Mr Murphy all started the day with the class saying The Lord's Prayer

Is there someone in your life who has been a great influence on your beliefs?

Yes, my cousin, Sylvia Cooke, Sylvia was 20 years older than me and was my Godmother, sadly she passed away in 2015. Sylvia lived in Plymouth, she was the organist in her local church, St. John the Evangelist, Hooe, Plymouth, I was baptised in St. John's at three months of age (I don't remember it!) Sylvia sent me a birthday card every year up until 2014, we spoke on the phone at least once a month until shortly before her passing.

When you were a child, did you go on a bus trip with the Sunday School in summer? What do you remember about that?

I enrolled at St. Martin's Sunday School in the Autumn of 1958 so my first trip to what was known as the 'Sunday School Picnic' would have taken place in June 1959, in those days we always went to Gullane Sands, the Scout Troop were also in attendance and they provided tents which were used for all practical purposes. There were two bus loads of children and adults singing all the typical songs and full of excitement, we would arrive late morning and after a drink of juice and tea for the adults it was off to the beach. Lunch was sandwiches and home bakes (which the Mother's Union prepared on the Friday Evening) and Scotch Pies which were from a home bakery on Slateford Road opposite the brewery. In those days the working week was 5 and a half days so an afternoon bus left St. Martin's (adults only, mostly men). Later in the afternoon there was the 'races' for all ages from toddlers to senior citizens, I've no idea what the prizes were as I was never a winner! After a traditional Afternoon Tea, we packed up and left the beach as we found it. The journey home was a lot quieter, the buses full of exhausted children and adults. In later years the annual outing was to Burntisland or North Berwick when we used the facilities at the local Episcopalian Church. If you ask around some of the older members you may access a VHS tape or DVD of early Sunday School Trips.

Diana - It's interesting what you say about some of the older members having a VHS tape or DVD of early Sunday School Trips. I wonder if there would be any mileage in having some sort of nostalgic get-together at Church and showing these tapes/DVDs. I'm sure some of the older Church members would enjoy that.

Did your Church have a children's Christmas Party? What do you remember about that?

St. Martin's Sunday School Christmas Party was usually on the first Saturday after New Year, there was two sessions, one for the younger children in the afternoon and one in the early evening for the older children, the format was the same at both, there was the usual party games, dancing and singing, enough food to feed a regiment and of course a visit from Santa Claus!

I recall many years later (1976 I think) when I was a young man, Santa sent a message saying he was unable to attend due to an injury to Rudolph so I was asked to take his place, I was padded out and had a long white beard made of cotton wool to look like the real Santa.

At the start of the pandemic when we were all told to stay at home and only go out if necessary, how did you feel? Were you fearful or optimistic?

I was due to retire from work at the end of May 2020 so the first day of lockdown (23/3/20) turned out to be the start of my retirement, I was on a weeks holiday and received an email that evening telling everyone to stay at home until further notice. I don't think I was either fearful or optimistic, I just followed the guidelines issued by the UK Government.

Were you alone or with family?

I was with my wife Elizabeth

How did you cope with being apart from family?

Elizabeth is my family, St. Martin's is my spiritual family, like everyone else I kept in touch with relatives and friends by telephone and email

(Diana said to Roderick- I'm very much aware of St Martin's congregation being family. Being with them gave me strength when I really needed it and I hope that others feel the same.)

What lifted your spirits?

In the first instance, St. Martin's being able to move forward and prepare for the appointment of a new Priest and latterly the announcement that a successful vaccine had been found for Covid

What did you miss in particular [socially perhaps]?

Seriously, I miss the bus journey to work in the mornings, I travelled with the same group of people for over ten years and I miss the 'banter' we all used to share. On occasions when I am up early (6.40), I will wave to two of them on the bus from the window.

Have you noticed a difference in how we interact with each other since?

Yes, people locally are more outgoing with one another, before Covid locals would always exchange a good morning/afternoon with each other, now we stop and chat, if someone hasn't been seen for a few days an effort is made to track them down.

Thank you for speaking to me, Roderick. It's very much appreciated. Diana

Roderick - thank you for asking me, I have enjoyed taking part.

Eco Group News

Art Exhibition “Our Precious and Precarious World”

St Cuthbert’s Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2EP

Stuart’s exhibit took pride of place in this exhibition being on an easel at the side of the chancel.

The organisers were most impressed by his recycled cardboard picture frame.

COP26 UPDATE - by ADRIAN SHAW 24TH NOVEMBER 2021



Adrian Shaw was COP26 Volunteer for Eco-Congregation Scotland and Interfaith Scotland over the past year. His thoughts below will be published in the January 2022 issue of ‘Life and Work’ and have already been shared by the World Council of Churches:

Impressions of Cop26: from blah blah blah to Geht Doch!

Eighteen months of planning, 54,000 registered attendees and two weeks of crowds, colourful demonstrations, and chaos on the streets of Glasgow. What was that all about and where has it left us?

The Cop was so big, left so many impressions with so many contradictions that it’s almost impossible to summarise quickly. On the one hand its critics, including Greta Thunberg, dismissed it as blah blah blah, a failure and a waste of time. On the other, those who struggled through the torturous negotiations and tried to follow the mind boggling details described it more cautiously as a step in the right direction. No triumph but no disaster.

There were three parallel threads to the Cop. On the inside was the blue zone, a few hectares of ground ceded to the United Nations for a couple of weeks where New York style cops wandered

around with guns in their holsters. Thousands of delegates, lobbyists, observers and the media milling around national displays or swarming through tented corridors on their way to the next meeting, an environment in feeling somewhere between an international airport and a corporate trade fair.

Across the river the green zone, a much more subdued affair run by the UK government giving corporate sponsors a chance to show off their green credentials.

And around all this and more interesting by far, the great city of Glasgow, with churches full of fringe meetings, pilgrims young and old arriving on foot from Cornwall, Germany, Sweden and elsewhere and protesters of every kind bringing light and noise to the streets.

All overlooked by a formidable police presence, lining the streets like so many Daleks on patrol, in their black kit and baseball caps of many colours, black, white or red.

The effect was overwhelming but now the dust has settled what do we take away? Yes, there was a sea of greenwash in the national and corporate pavilions and we learned that the oil industry, while being invisible was there under thin disguise with 500 delegates observing, or quietly seeking to influence. And national delegations did not hesitate to assert national interest over global solutions.

Memorably the Indian delegation insisted on a last minute amendment to the final text to soften criticism of the coal industry on which the Indian economy depends, an interesting display of diplomatic strength from a rising world power. It's just a pity it was negative in intent.

But there were far better things happening in the city where guests from around the world, many representing different faith groups, brought stories of pain or hope to share with their hosts and with the media. Over a thousand people across the city and beyond opened their homes to visitors, church halls hosted pilgrims and new global friendships were formed which could flourish and grow.

Glasgow Churches Together, Interfaith Scotland, Eco Congregation Scotland and others including many congregations rose to the challenge. All can be justifiably proud of their contributions.

There were commitments made on reducing methane emissions, on combatting deforestation, and plans to reduce and ultimately quit the carbon economy of coal, oil and gas. There were profoundly important discussions on providing finance to developing countries to help them deal with loss and damage and to develop low carbon economies.

But there was failure to agree the radical cuts in emissions necessary to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and frustration that financial support to developing countries remains well below expectations. Governments have published 'nationally determined contributions' that set out commitments to reduce national emissions of greenhouse gases. If put into effect these will reduce the threat of global warming from over 4 degrees Celsius ten years ago to about 2.4 degrees Celsius. It's better than before but it's still not enough.

My strongest impression? Walking into Glasgow on a shockingly wet Friday afternoon with pilgrims from Sweden and Germany. We were all 'sair droukit' but were greeted warmly at Glasgow Cathedral with a quiet service of welcome and reflection. The pilgrims left an indelible impression of commitment and clarity of purpose in the minds of those they met.

Their motto was Geht Doch, which in listening to them I came to understand implied 'just get on with it'. And that is now a great motto for the Church to take forward. No more excuses, no more blah blah blah in church or state. Geht doch, just get on with it!

Adrian Shaw was Climate Change Officer for the Church of Scotland from 2007 to 2020. He is now a student at Glasgow University researching towards a thesis on Science, Religion and the Environment in Enlightenment Scotland: the Evidence of the Old Statistical Accounts.

Craft club

Craft club was temporarily suspended at the start of lockdown and opened again briefly

The craft club continues to meet on Zoom on Saturdays at 2.00pm and 3.00pm for 40 minute slots. If anyone wants to drop in just for a wee chat let me know and I'll email the two links to you. You can drop in anytime and if you feel you're having to wait a few minutes it's probably because I'm looking down counting stitches and I need to see you in the "waiting room" to let you in. **Of course I won't actually "see" you, only a blank screen and, in case you're concerned about being seen on Zoom, you can keep it that way and still join in with the conversation. It's up to you whether you're "seen" or not.** We are looking forward to meeting in Church once more - it's been a long time!

Diana

Christmas bake sale

Normally we would hold a bake sale for secma ([links](#)) and st Columba's hospice but have decided not to again this year. If you would like to make a donation towards this please pay directly into st Martin's bank account and mark it secma. I can take your donation if you prefer. I am also taking orders for blackbun and tablet. Please see me if you would like to order these.

Liz

St Martin's Strollers

One stroller's walk on the Sothern Upland way





The walk started at Longformacus walking over marsh land up and down hills through wooded trails only seeing cattle and sheep. I saw Dirrington Great Law in the distance. A peaceful walk seeing magnificent Autumn colours and walking on sphagnum moss. I ran out of time and could not reach Abbey St Bathans as I had to return before sunset.



Zoom and Church Services

Church services are now in Church and on zoom.
A big thank you to Rosie for hosting the Zoom Service.

