

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

March 2025



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

From the editor



There's a novel by Anne Tyler (of whom I'm a great fan) in which someone says to an old lady that she's looking *youthful*. She mishears this, and thinks that they've said that she's *useful* – and she's delighted. Because we all like to think we're useful, I suppose. I probably haven't had a *very* useful month. I've spent a lot of time cutting up fabrics to make a quilt for a granddaughter, and then sewing the patches together. Which is *slightly* useful, but she would be kept just as warm with a blanket. I'm doing it for her, but also for fun, so I don't know that this counts.

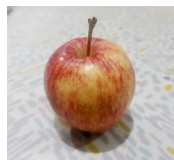
However, other members of the congregation are definitely useful and you can read here about some of their activities. Shahrukh and his many helpers served up a lovely curry dinner in aid of Asha, which raised over £1500 – a magnificent sum. Thanks to all who contributed towards this.

Working away behind the scenes, David and the finance team are absolutely vital to us and keep us straight, financially. Thanks to them too. You can read David's financial report in this edition. The Guild are raising money for their charitable projects on April 12 at their auction, while Michelle is once more organising a holiday club, and asks for help with this.

And there's also news from our Session Clerk, Michael, who does a vast amount for us – many thanks, Michael. You can read in the magazine about the General Trustees Conference at which he represented us.

And then there's Stewart, who tells us that we're all – not just us, but everyone – the apple of God's eyes. (Even if we're not that useful.) What a cheering thought!

Pam Donaldson



From the minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

When I started this epistle, I was sitting in the sanctuary with my laptop on a weekday evening.



Around me there was some rather upbeat marching music and some of the leaders of the Air Training Cadets were thinking through their awards night. It will take place at the beginning of March in the sanctuary and experience suggests that it will be quite an event: drills, bagpipe playing, summary of achievements, etc., etc.

It reminded me of evenings in the sanctuary when the BBs too have had their awards nights.

It's a wonderful opportunity for leaders, boys and carers to gather together and celebrate all that has been accomplished during the course of a year. For it is no small commitment from the carers, leaders and boys to ensure that the different sections can gather together roughly once a week and learn skills, have some fun and grow together. One of my abiding memories is a one-man play put on by one of the BBs who is now a leader: it was one of the most surreal monologues I think I have ever seen. I'm still puzzling over its meaning. If there was one!

And the musing continued as the music played in the sanctuary...

...what about the Guides, Rainbows, Brownies? What about the Jr. Drama Group, the Sunday Stars, the Breakfast Club, Breakfast Club 2.0, Coffee Break, dancing, rugby tots, sing and sign, carers and toddlers?

And so on and so on and so on.

These groups, and others, sit alongside those groups that perhaps appeal to older generations: the Drama Group (which, last I saw, has a huuuuge span of ages!), the Coffee Clubs, the Guild, Probus, the Choir, the Feast of Life Choir.

And so on and so on and so on.

There are the one-off events too. The curry dinner that was held to support the ASHA charity was such a terrific example of people joining together for a good cause. The stories of those willing to reach beyond the boundaries of the caste system in the name of Christ's love were inspiring.

A comment was made by a politician lately that suggested it is OK—and indeed justified—to start by caring for those closest to oneself (family, friends) and then expand outwards. There was a quasi-theological reason given for that. The quasi-theological reason was completely dismantled by those who know a wee bit more about theology and Christian thinking.

It was and is nonsense. Sheer, utter, puerile nonsense. The parable of the Good Samaritan suggests that we should perhaps start precisely with and for those who are most unlike ourselves. Those who are truly hurt and in need of healing and lying wounded, near to dead on the road. 'No, I can't help because I need this time and money for myself and those closest to me. And, actually, my people (my religion... my socio-economic group... etc.) don't like yours.'

I know the feeling all too well: the fear of becoming a burden, the fear of having nothing, the fear of real and limiting restrictions, the fear of misunderstanding, rejection and hurt.

Where there is love, there is no fear.

How fortunate we are to have so much happening in the church complex. Not many of those people involved in our many groups are directly involved with the worship of the church or the faith life of the congregation. Yet, by giving space and support, we are reaching beyond our own confines. By supporting the likes of ASHA, Mary's Meals, Comfort International or Christian Aid, we are reaching out well beyond our little circle to heal and feed and help those in need. And, in turn, we are fed and healed and helped too.

In God, there is no east and west, no male and female, no slave or free.

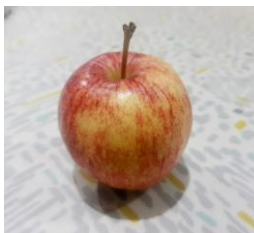
In God, there is no inner circle, no wider circle and nobody beyond the circle.

We are all made in the image of God. God's image is found in each and every person. The centre is, in fact, *everywhere*.

Each and every person is created in and through the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who is the Creator, Liberator and Sustainer, who is the Infinite One, the Immanent One, the Intimate One. We are all enfolded in that perfect relationship of love.

In God, through Christ and with the promptings of the Spirit, all are a part of the household of God, all are invited into the economy of God's grace and we all are the apple of God's joyous eyes, delighted eyes.

Stewart



Worship

Sun. 2 March (Transfiguration Sun.)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective with Communion Informal and interactive Traditional
Sun. 9 March (1st Sun. of Lent)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective Informal and interactive Traditional
Sun. 16 March (2nd Sun. of Lent)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective Informal and interactive Traditional
Sun. 23 March (3rd Sun. of Lent)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective Informal and interactive Traditional followed by Annual Stated Meeting
Sat. 29 March	3.30pm	Messy Church
Sun. 30 March (4th Sun. of Lent)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective Informal and interactive Traditional
Sun. 6 April (5th Sun. of Lent)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective with Communion Informal and interactive Traditional
Sun. 13 April (Palm Sunday)	9.30am 10.30am 11.15am	Quiet and reflective Informal and interactive with Communion Traditional

Thurs. 17 April	8.00am	Maundy Thursday Communion (sanctuary)
Friday 18 April	10.00am	Ecumenical Service at PJPC followed by Procession with Cross to St. John's Brighton Place for an 11.00am (ish) service
Sun. 20 April (Easter)	7.00am	Ecumenical Easter Beach Service (Brunstane Rd. North)
	9.30am	Quiet and reflective
	10.30am	Informal and interactive
	11.15am	Traditional



Legacies and other voluntary giving

On behalf of the Finance team, I'd like to acknowledge with our gratitude the two legacies received in 2024. Legacy offerings such as this play an increasingly important role in enabling the Kingdom work here in Portobello and Joppa.

I'd also like to thank all the many groups who are part of the wider PJPC community and who made a financial contribution towards our upkeep over the past year. These include the following clubs and organisations: Probus Club; Rainbows, Brownies & Guides; Parent & Toddler Group; Monday Coffee Club; Messy Church, Monday Friendship Group; Feast of Life Choir and the Thursday Country Dancers. Not forgetting the ongoing support of The Guild!

Finally, are you aware that it costs us around £250,000 every year to keep things running at PJPC? We are therefore extremely grateful to everyone who makes a financial contribution to our church.

If you've yet to set up a standing order to enable you to give regularly, please do give prayerful consideration to doing so now.

If you wish to set up or increase a standing order or find out more about how a legacy could help with the work of PJPC, then please contact the Church Administrator and Bookkeeper or myself.

David
Honorary Treasurer

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

For the Period to 31 December 2024

	<u>2024(£)</u>	<u>2023(£)</u>
<u>Congregational Fund</u>		
Income	211,003	203,085
Expenditure	<u>(234,885)</u>	<u>(219,359)</u>
Net Expenditure	(23,882)	(16,274)
Drawdown from General Trustees	39,342	31,308
Fundraising	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Income	<u>15,460</u>	<u>15,034</u>
Legacies Received	<u>32,412</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<u>Fabric Fund</u>		
Income	41,580	33,292
Expenditure	<u>(106,843)</u>	<u>(16,775)</u>
Net Income	(65,263)	16,517
Drawdown from General Trustees	<u>68,443</u>	<u>0</u>
Income	<u>3,180</u>	<u>16,517</u>
Legacies Received	<u>10,931</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Giving to Grow</u>		
Giving to Grow Allocation	128,812	146,482
Stipend Fund Allowance	<u>(14,374)</u>	<u>(27,475)</u>
Net Payable by Congregational Fund	<u>114,438</u>	<u>119,007</u>

Honorary Treasurer

If you have any questions please email David at
office@portyjoppachurch.org

General Trustees Conference

Held on 3 and 4 February 2025

Overview

The General Trustees Conference, held on the 3rd and 4th of February 2025, brought together key stakeholders to discuss and deliberate on various topics that are relevant to the national and local church. There were eight topics addressed by the delegates, namely:

- 1. An update on the condition of church manses***
- 2. Right Spaces in the Right Places***
- 3. Progress with Net Zero***
- 4. Challenges facing congregations and how can the GTs assist?***
- 5. Hall Lets Guidance***
- 6. Disposals of churches, halls and manses***
- 7. Signature Churches Network***
- 8. Creative Commerce Collective***

Conclusion

This was a very timely and worthwhile conference, and a number of very useful conversations took place over the course of the two days. The topics covered can be of value and interest to PJPC as we move forward in our ministry and mission to promote Christ's Kingdom among our local community. If you would like to find out more about what was discussed and how it might affect PJPC, please speak to **Isobel** or **Michael**.

Michael

General Trustee

Session Clerk

Portobello & Joppa Parish Church

14 February 2025

Upcoming Sale and Auction:

An opportunity to support Christian Aid and National Guild designated charities

We are pleased to announce two innovative opportunities to support the church's designated charities.

March Silverware Sale

During the rolling café on each Sunday throughout the entire month of March, we will be displaying in the main hall photographs of those items of silverware that are available for purchase by members of the congregation. The items each have a market value but are likely to be primarily of sentimental value to interested parties. We are keen to allow members of the congregation to enjoy them while also supporting the vital work of Christian Aid, which strives to alleviate poverty and provide essential aid to those in need.

Auction on 12 April

Mark your calendars for the highlight of the Guild's fundraising efforts: an auction to be held on 12 April. Monies raised will go to the charities which have been designated by the National Guild. See separate article for details!

How to Stay Informed

Keep an eye on Stewart's e-newsletter. There will also be posters displayed around the church giving more details about the silverware sale and the auction.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our church and the wider community. Together, we can make a positive impact and spread the love and compassion that define our faith.

MDC

GUILD NEWS

The Guild is excited to announce its 2025 fund-raiser – for designated Guild charities.

AN AUCTION

(our own Antiques Brunstane Roadshow)
to be held on the morning of
SATURDAY APRIL 12TH

This will take the form of a live auction, with Rev Neil Buchanan as our auctioneer, and a silent auction when written bids are submitted.

We hope that the whole Congregation will become involved in this fun event!

The remaining Church silverware (see Michael's message elsewhere in the magazine) will be auctioned at this time with proceeds going to Christian Aid.

Tea, coffee and fresh scones will be served.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please think of any suitable item that you may have tucked away at the back of a cupboard or drawer which MIGHT be of value and which you would like to donate to charity. Reserve pricing can be in place. (No furniture, please)

We will start accepting donations at the beginning of April for possible inclusion in this exciting event.

WATCH THIS SPACE!



Diary of a Disciple – Portobello Holiday Club 2025

Our eighth Portobello Holiday Club will take place on 14-18 July 2025 from 9am to 12:30pm here at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and at St Mark's Scottish Episcopal Church. Our theme is Diary of a Disciple and we will be learning more about who Jesus is as we explore the Gospel of Luke with several stories about Jesus. Seven local churches are working together to bring a fun filled week of games, crafts, science, Bible study, music, storytelling, baking and much more for children currently in P1-P7. We have a big team of youth volunteers as well.



We are looking for volunteers for group leaders, group helpers, arts and crafts, outdoor games/garden activities, science, fun with food, snacks, and general help. If you are interested in helping, please speak with Michelle Brown and email portobelloholidayclub@gmail.com to be sent an online form to volunteer. New volunteers will also need two references and to complete a PVG safeguarding application.

Registration will open in mid-March for children currently in P1-P7. Email portobelloholidayclub@gmail.com to be sent an online form to register for holiday club. The cost to attend is £15 per child for the full week or £3 per day per child. If cost is prohibitive, please speak with Michelle as some funded places are available.

We would also love donations of home baking for the volunteers during the week of holiday club. If you are interested in supporting us with baking, please let Michelle know.

Just World Shop

CAN YOU HELP? The Just World Shop in Portobello High Street is looking for new volunteers. The shop sells fairly-traded goods and food from the developing world. It is a non-profit organisation with donations given to developing world charities once all bills and overheads have been met. The shop has been open for around 30 years and is well-loved in Portobello as a place to buy different gifts and to support the work of Fair Trade. We also supply churches around the city with goods to hold stalls, similar to ourselves.



The shop is completely staffed by volunteers and it is open every weekday from 10am to 12 noon and then 2pm to 4pm. We would hope to be able to re-open on a Saturday too.

If you could spare a couple of hours each week or be a stand-by volunteer then we would love to hear from you. The duties are mainly serving customers (including using our till), restocking shelves, pricing new stock, refilling wash-up/laundry liquid and drinking tea! Full training will be given.

If you would like more information, then get in touch with Helen McD or Helen K or any of the other volunteers from the church. Alternatively, pop into the shop and ask for Jim.

We look forward to welcoming you to our shop either as a customer or new volunteer.



The word for today

Learn to work with others

*“Be of one mind, united in thought and purpose” 1
Corinthians 1,10*

There’s a legend about a covey of quail that lived in a forest. The birds were happy there except for their enemy, the quail catcher. He would imitate their call, and then when they gathered together he’d throw a net over them, stuff them in his hunting basket and carry them off to market.

Finally a wise old quail said, “Brothers and sisters, I have a plan. When the quail catcher throws his net over us, we should all put our heads together in a section of the net and start flapping our wings. That way we can lift up the net as one, and fly off with it.”

The birds all agreed, and the next day they did exactly that, making a successful escape.

Paul said, “Live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

So when a mistake is made, let’s refuse to place blame. Let’s be forgiving, and not allow an offence to develop into bitterness. When we work together, there’s no stopping us!

© 2016: This devotional is produced by United Christian Broadcaster, free of charge through the generosity of our supporters. As a gift to the body of Christ, permission is given to Churches and Christian organisations to copy up to a maximum of 52 daily excerpts per year. Excerpts must acknowledge The Word for Today as the source, give the UCB address (see below) and inform that free issues of the daily devotional are available for the UK and Republic of Ireland – .Westport Road, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 4JF

Book group

**A review of *Love Marriage* by
Monica Ali
January 2025**



Published in 2022, *Love Marriage* by Monica Ali explores the complexities of relationships, identity and cultural expectations in 2020s Britain. The central character is Yasmin Ghorami, a junior doctor from a conservative Asian-British family. She is engaged to Joe Sangster, who is also a doctor, but comes from a very different cultural background. Their engagement brings the two families together leading to a series of “interesting” interactions and personal revelations.

The paperback version of the book is almost 500 pages long and therefore gives the author plenty of scope to cover a wide range of themes, including generational conflict, cultural assimilation, and the complexity of human relationships. This is encapsulated in the final page of the book with Yasmin saying (with typical “British” understatement) “*Life is not simple.*”

The book provoked a very stimulating discussion among members of the PJPC book club. There were mixed views about how realistic some of the back stories were; for example, how and why Yasmin’s parents came to be married. Indeed, there was a feeling of “soap opera” in how the novel’s characters were described and interacted with one another. Nevertheless, there were a number of very topical issues that the book raised – including the challenges of integration between natives and immigrants from different cultures; the challenges faced by modern women; the long-term effects that a controlling parent can have on their offspring; and the dangers of “cultural appropriation”.

It was interesting to ponder on the author’s target audience for the book and to what extent the themes explored reflected her own life experiences and realities. Overall, the group felt that it was a well-researched book and, in spite

of its length, a relatively easy read. The topics and issues raised were interesting, albeit at a rather superficial level.

This was the second book read by Monica Ali that the PJPC book club had read – the first being *Brick Lane* in 2006 - and members were happy to have revisited the work of this very successful modern-day author.

The next meeting of the PJPC Book Club will be at 7.30pm on Sunday 30 March when we will discuss *Prophet Song* by Paul Lynch. New members are warmly invited!

MDC

27 January 2025

Drama Group



The Drama Group is presenting “Anything Goes”, full of catchy tunes, from Wednesday 19th to Saturday 22nd March

7.30 Wed-Fri
2.30 on Saturday

For ticket enquiries,
phone 07974 684353.

Don't miss it!

Gardening with George – More plant lore from George, horticulturist and star of the small screen.



It has been a relatively mild winter so far and as we leave February and enter into March, the daylight hours are increasing more rapidly. Plant growth responds to temperature, moisture levels and day length. Seeds only start to germinate when the soil is moist and the temperature has reached a critical level.

Poppy seeds are fascinating. They are shed in the late summer and autumn and a small proportion may germinate immediately and produce seedlings that will survive the vagaries of winter cold and frost; other seeds become buried and excluded from light and even though the soil temperature and moisture are ideal they remain dormant. It is only when the seeds are exposed to light at the same time as the temperature and the moisture are at correct levels that they germinate. Poppy seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 100 years: “In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row”, as John McCrae wrote in his famous poem.

The swelling of buds and emergence of fresh young leaves on trees and shrubs are often triggered by either day length – in the case of beech trees – or by temperature – in the case of horse-chestnut, where the warmth of the spring sunshine softens the coating wax on the bud scales and allows the buds to swell and open.

The beds at the allotment have been cultivated, new blackcurrant bushes planted (to replace the older ones that were suffering from 'Big Bud Disease'), a fresh layer of wood chipping has been added to the paths and all the prunings from the apples and raspberries have been ceremoniously burned. We are good to go. However, it is too early yet to sow or plant.

I normally plant my potatoes at the allotment on or around St Patrick's Day (17th March). However, I have planted some early spuds in potato bags in the cold glasshouse in the hope and expectation that there will be a crop of new potatoes to harvest at the end of May or beginning of June. As a gardener, one has to have a certain degree of faith and hope.



My pots of daffodils and hyacinths in the cold glasshouse are looking reasonably good at the moment. They are being grown for the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Spring Show, which is held at Saughton Gardens and which this year falls on the first week in April. The pots were planted up with bulbs last September and placed in a cool

quiet corner to develop their roots over winter. I lifted the first batch on the 25th January and the second lot on Valentine's Day - two important dates.

With luck they should all be in full bloom by the end of March. Meanwhile I will enjoy the snowdrops, crocus and early iris emerging from their winter's sleep.

Happy Gardening
Enjoy your space and keep smiling.
George



Brain-teaser



This year, Shrove Tuesday is on March 4. Here's a little quiz about it. You may not know many of the answers!

1. What does the "shrove" part mean?
2. What does "Scoring the Hales" consist of, in Alnwick?
3. What is (maybe!) the origin of pancake races?
4. What was "Nicky-Nan-Night" in some parts of England?
5. In what country is Shrove Tuesday known as Sprengidagur (Bursting Day)?



Just in case, by *any* chance, you didn't know the answers to some of these questions, here they are. Maybe. (They mainly came from Wikipedia – so are not guaranteed).

1. "Shrove" means "forgiven one's sins".
2. "Scoring the hales" is a mob football match, played on public roads.
3. According to tradition, in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire, a housewife was so busy making pancakes that she didn't at first hear the church bells, and when she did, she ran down the road to church, tossing her pancake so that it didn't burn.
4. "Nicky-Nan-Night" was a form of trick-or-treat where children would go round to their neighbours asking for scraps of pancake, and if they didn't get these they would perform acts of mischief. In Whitechapel, Lancashire, children still go round the doors asking "Please a pancake" and are given oranges or sweets.
5. Iceland.



Either/or? – Iona. Iona will be 18 this month. She enjoys helping out at Sunday Stars and going to Breakfast Club and Breakfast Club 2.0. Thanks, Iona!

Do you prefer...?

Pizza or pasta?	Pasta
Trains or buses?	Buses
Spring or summer?	Both
Autumn or winter?	Winter
Chocolate or cheese?	Either!
Shower or bath?	Shower
Pen, computer or iPad?	iPad
Art gallery or museum?	Museum
Dogs or cats? (or a different animal?)	Dogs
Fame or fortune?	Neither
Cereal or bacon and eggs?	Bacon and eggs
Music or sport?	Sport
Board games or computer games?	Board games
Beach or countryside?	Both
Oatcakes or croissants?	Croissants
Getting up early or going to bed late?	Going to bed late
Reading or watching YouTube?	Watching YouTube
Crosswords or sudoku?	Neither



LIFE AND WORK March 2024



Served with Soul

A partnership between a West Lothian church and a charity offering companionship and meals to the local community.

Healing Brokenness

The work of mental health charity Kintsugi Hope

Spiritual Journeying

The Church of Scotland and Lent

Drawing People to Faith

Two more of the Church of Scotland's New Worshipping Communities

Shining the Light of God's Love

The story of a life transformed by one of the Church's Priority Area congregations.

Supporting Religious Education

A milestone for a Scottish Christian education charity.

Changing Lives

The work of Comfort International, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

Regulars

The Moderator reflects on how God can be found in unlikely places

The Rev Ruth Kennedy on digital church

Worship column by the Rev Roddy Hamilton

Reflection by the Rev Dr Richard Frazer

Bible study by the Rev Richard Baxter

My Church: Rachel McWilliam, an elder at Edinburgh: Greenbank

Plus: official updates from the Assembly Trustees and Faith Action Programme, readers' pictures, news, letters, reviews and puzzles – all for £3.50. Visit

www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe or speak to your church's Life and Work co-ordinator.

Remembering

31 January 2025

Jackie Paul of Leith



MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES

April 2025

Sunday, 23rd March 2025

May 2025

Sunday, 20th April 2025

June/July/August 2025

Sunday, 18th May 2025

Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728

www.portyjoppachurch.org

Photography by Kim Kjaerside

