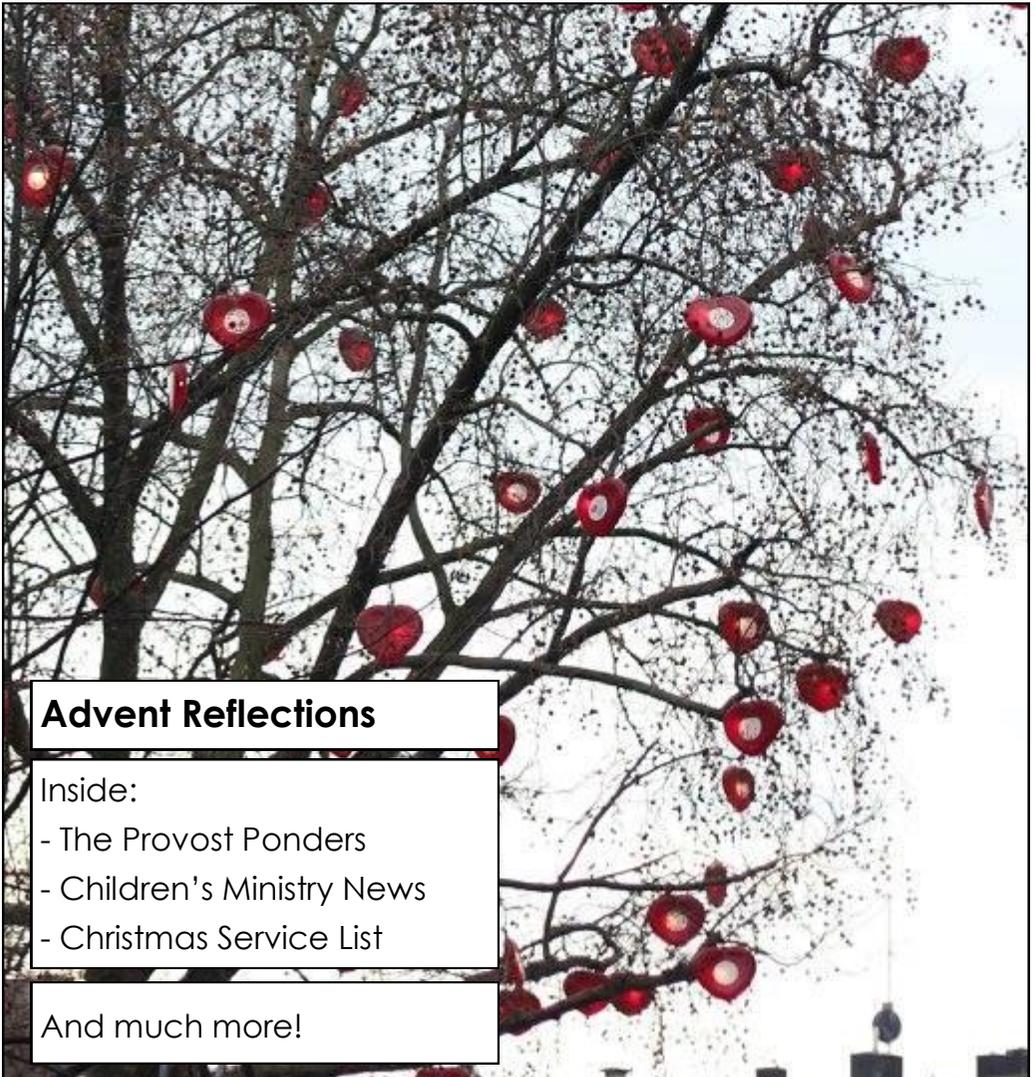


FOCUS



On St. Andrew's Cathedral
December 2016 / January 2017



Advent Reflections

Inside:

- The Provost Ponders
- Children's Ministry News
- Christmas Service List

And much more!

The Provost Ponders

By The Very Rev'd Dr Isaac Poobalan

Advent, Nativity & Epiphany
2016-17

The joy of waiting in Advent

The Advent Carol Service in the Cathedral on Advent Sunday 2016 ended with these words 'Yea, amen! let all adore thee, high on thine eternal throne; Saviour, take the power and glory, claim the kingdom as thine own: O come quickly! O come quickly! O come quickly! Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.' The Choir standing in the 'Chapel of the Passion of our Lord' at this point in the service and the congregation joined in, singing out with utter conviction and joy, that the words they were singing sounded more than hope. The Lady Chapel, as we know it, has the Passion of our Lord on the reredos screen by Sir Robert Lorimer (1910). It was an ultimate declaration of our Faith, for the Choir to stand and sing in the chapel of the Passion on Advent Sunday that the one who suffered on the cross will be seated on the throne forever. The words of the hymn have their own story.

The version we sang on Advent Sunday was revised by Charles Wesley, the Methodist Hymn writer. But the original is by John Cennick, Anglican by birth and aligned himself to the Moravian Church, while working closely with the Wesley brothers. His version is, 'View Him smiling, now determined, Every evil to destroy! All the nations now shall sing Him, Songs of everlasting joy! O come quickly! Allelujah! come Lord, come!' The imagery in the two versions may appear diverse but the ultimate truth remains unchanged, that what was accomplished in Christ Jesus on the Cross will find its way into all of God's creation, destroying all that is evil with the Risen Lord seated high on 'eternal throne.'

It is with that hope we wait, praying for the Kingdom of God to come on earth in every little way possible. In that journey of waiting is hope and with that hope we labour with patience and diligence and see a glimpse of God's kingdom coming in our worship

The Provost Ponders

By The Very Rev'd Dr Isaac Poobalan

and our service in the world. It came once in the form of a little child. It comes in a stranger. We will indeed see a glimpse of 'God's reign of earth' at the service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday the 18th of December 2016 at 6.30pm when we celebrate the collaboration of the Church and City in Aberdeen.

The Cathedral has been hosting English lessons and cultural orientation to the New Scots who have come recently to Aberdeen from Syria. During Lent we hosted a welcome event and since September this year, two groups of women have been gathering in the John Skinner Centre. However, in November when the venue was double booked, they met once in the Cathedral and ever since they wished to meet there as it provided a sense of Sacred Sanctuary. They meet in the South aisle and between those two paintings of 'Hope' and 'Peace'. This was made possible through a partnership between the Aberdeen City Council and the Churches in

Aberdeen. The stories of Aberdonian hospitality to refugees are numerous and remarkable. And it is something worth celebrating.

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, therefore, will be a celebration of partnership between the City and the Church. City Council staff who were part of this partnership and volunteers from the Churches will gather with all those who normally attend the annual Choral event. The Lord Provost Councillor George Adam on behalf of the Council and Revd Hugh Wallace on behalf of the Church will reflect briefly on the journey acknowledging the blessings of this partnership. Please make every possible effort to be part of this celebration and extend an invitation to all who share the hope we have.

May God grant you the blessings of Christmas and a blessed year to come.

As ever, Isaac

Cathedral Development Programme

by the Provost

Cathedral Development Programme – Next Steps

It was wonderful to gather over 150 people on Advent Sunday when we as the Cathedral Community committed ourselves to this journey called the Cathedral Development Project 2020. It was good to have the Project brochure launched at the service by Prof Ferdinand von Prondzynski, Principal and Vice Chancellor of Robert Gordon University.

The event was a grand success, thanks to the loving labour of many, both within the Cathedral community and from around the diocese and the city. The worship and the do afterwards was very well received. Here are some comments from various people:

“Sandy and I went along last night and oh what a treat. So lovely to step off the busy street, through that unassuming little door into a magnificent building. Amazing choral singing, such a joy to be part of it. Please send on our thanks to all involved.”

“Thank you for the warm welcome we received at the Cathedral yesterday evening and a big thank you to all who worked hard in preparation for the event. We particularly enjoyed the congregational Advent hymns and, of course, the generous hospitality afterwards.”

“beauty and the depth of the choral works and movements transported me to another dimension”

The next day morning someone arrived at the Cathedral to thank personally for the wonderful experience of worship and hospitality. The visitor also asked how to donate for the Cathedral Development Project. She was advised that Pledge Forms along with Gift Aid Forms will be sent to the Cathedral Community and their networks in time for the Epiphany on Sunday the 8th of January 2017 so that people who wish to pledge may do so, like the Magi at the Epiphany of our Lord. In our case, like the Magi

Cathedral Development Programme

by the Provost

who brought Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, all who wish to be part of the organised giving can give a 'Cathedra' in Silver, Gold and Platinum.

The three options will have various forms of giving. A Silver Cathedra can be bought for £5 a week for over three years. This would work out at £260 a year and if you are Tax payer it will become £325 and over three years it will be £975. A final instalment with £25 would make it £1,000. A Gold Cathedral would be the double of it at £10 a week with similar final instalment would make it £2,000 in total. And a Platinum would be the 2+1 i.e. two Gold and a Silver i.e. £25 a week which should be £5,000. Those who are not Tax payers could give through a member of the family who is. All the three variants can be bought as one off bulk payment.

The first person who wanted to give after the Advent Carol Service wanted a Platinum Cathedra for a single payment.



The target for the Cathedral Community and the Diocese would be 250 Silver Cathedras or a rich variant of 150 Silvers, 100 Golds and 50 Platins which would far exceed our target. We will then approach those have good will towards the life and work Cathedral in the City and beyond.

It is a time of waiting. Please stop and consider how you intend to give. You may commit yourself to one of the many

Cathedral Development Programme

By the Provost

options and raise funds by organising a tea party in your house, make things and sell and invite a member of the family to support your efforts.

The Advent Sunday Stall raised about £800 in one hour. Gift Aid added to it will make it £1,000. The principle on which we work is that of St Andrew. Take the little that you find to Jesus and see the miracle happen. You have to take that silly little step and watch it turn into a blessing.

Please commit this in prayer to God and follow the instructions! God bless you.

SILVER

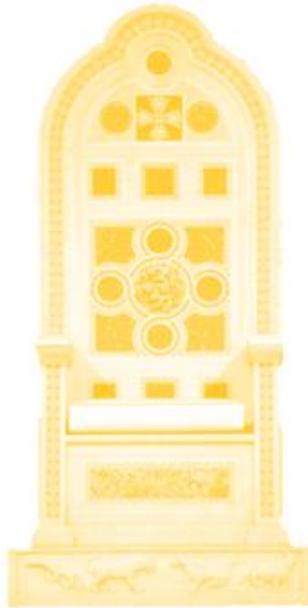
GOLD

PLATINUM



£5 a week

£1,000



£10 a week

£2,000



£20 a week

£5,000

Wardens' Corner

By Mark Edwards

And so the countdown begins!

After the generous comments I received following my personal reflection for Harvest, I was encouraged to share my thoughts on this wonderful season of Advent. I am aware that this issue of Focus takes us through Christmastide, and probably into Epiphany, but for now I will focus on what for me is the most significant and moving of our Festivals, Advent.

I am sure that each of us has our own special celebration or time in the Christian year, but I know that having spoken with many leading up to, and on Advent Sunday itself, that many also count this season as their "favourite".

My first "Advent" was experienced, as many of you will have guessed, as a Chorister; I was just 8 years old! And, I had a hands-on role! [Clearly a sign of things to come]. As a Probationer I was not part of the full choir for significant

services; instead, on this occasion, I was in control of the lighting panel hidden away at the back of the Choir Stalls! With strict instructions for which pillars to illuminate as the Choir and Clergy moved through the Minster, woe-betide me if I got it wrong!!! After all, you can hardly hide the fact that lights are going on in a Transept when the choir is at the West Door can you?!

And so, the following year I finally got to sing and move through the Minster. I had to master the art of processing with a candle. For a 9-year old to walk, sing, breath, count—oh and not set light to the lad in front of me was no mean feat! Indeed, as I'm often told that men cannot multi-task, I think I did quite well!!

I do know, and remember very clearly that I was struck by how special this Service was. Maybe at the age of 9 I didn't understand the significance of what we were doing, but something about the whole event moved me, and

Wardens' Corner

By Mark Edwards

continues to move me to this day. A sentiment shared I know by another "retired" Chorister with whom I have discussed my thoughts.

So what is it that makes Advent so special? Well I really do not know. The dimming of the lights in the Cathedral brings a hush and a tangible expectation, waiting for those first notes of the Responsory to fill the place with music, as if from the Angels—"I look from afar, and lo, I see the power of God coming". The procession of light moving slowly through the gathered faithful; the almost imperceptible growing of light in the Cathedral. In fact one lady, for whom this year's service was her first Advent, commented to me that this is what moved her the most. And then of course, for me as a "retired" Chorister and Lay-Clerk there is the music, much of it only sung once a year in this Season; maybe that's what makes it so special.

And maybe... if you would

permit me just one more thought? With the commercialisation of Christmas being foisted upon the general public from early in November [indeed I wonder just how many people actually know what the word "Advent" means on their chocolate Advent Calendar] Advent Sunday remains for me the point at which I can start looking forward towards Christmas.

As I reflect, it does not really matter to me "why?" It just is; and I'm content with that. If I may take the liberty to misquote from the words of Jesus, which for me it says it all:

"The Spirit moveth us in sundry places..."

My best wishes to you all for a special and peaceful Advent, Christmas and Epiphany!

Mark Edwards
People's Warden



Advent to Christmas

By F .B. Cal-Anglia

Advent to Christmas

Advent shows the way
Nearer to Christmas day
Spiritually bringing
A new beginning
Babe in a manger born

Christ the Saviour bring
Born to be a King
God's love is here
On earth everywhere
Rejoice on Christmas morn.



Advent Sunday

By Sylvia Simpson

Did I enjoy the Advent Carol Service this past Sunday? I sure did! The candlelit Cathedral had great atmosphere and with so many people in the congregation it certainly made one feel "the coming" of Christ was being celebrated. Added to that was without a doubt the music. When Palestrina's "Matin Responsory" was sung at the beginning of

the service, I had my usual "shivers down the spine". Every year it has that same reaction, perhaps a feeling of anticipation as many like me may experience. When Lewa sang the solo in Stanford in G Magnificat, I produced a tear or two, she rendered it beautifully and it brought back a memory of 30+ years ago when my "little boy" sang the same treble solo. Andrew thank you for your work in producing such a delightful musical service. Furthermore thank you Bill, Kevin and no doubt Claire, the Choristers, Choral Scholars and Lay Clerks for their valuable contributions without which the service would not have been so effective.

It was good to see Bishop Mark from our neighbouring diocese of Moray. He was saying how odd (even STRANGE) it felt to be back in his home church again. Along with Provost Isaac and other clergy present, plus Margaret, Athol and other servers (Kathy and the ladies on catering) the entire occasion was a most pleasant experience.

Children's Ministry

By Moira and Christine

The children will be singing "This Little light of Mine" at the lighting of the Advent Candles on Advent 3 and Advent 4 (11th and 18th December). Could parents please take their children into the Cathedral promptly for a 10.45am start. We would like them to bring torches if possible. There will be a rehearsal on Sunday 4th December in the JSC.

We would also be grateful for the names and ages of any child attending the Advent 4 Service (18th December) as we are expecting a visitor from Lapland. Could you let myself or Christine know the names and ages of any children who are going to be there as soon as possible please as S**** needs time to prepare.

There will be no Crèche or Godly Play on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

Children's Christmas Party!

Sunday 18th December
following a special family service.

Please keep this date free. Further details TBC.

Please let Moira or Christine know if your children are going to be there in order that our annual visitor can come prepared!!

Advent Stall

By Amudha Poobalan



The community that gathers at our Cathedral Church along with generous friends from around the diocese, made Christmas cards, Advent wreaths, Christmas tree decorations and home bakes for sale. The stall was set up on the South Isle of the Cathedral with the young cathedral Choristers behind the counters. After the moving Advent Carol Service, the gathered congregation from around the city and diocese browsed over a glass of wine or a cuppa and bought things from the stall for generous donations.

We are grateful to a number of people who made it possible. Lorraine Reid and her able team at the Cathedral made Advent wreaths and Christmas tree decorations; Louise Leiper, a daughter of the Cathedral (baptised at St Andrew's) made Christmas cards, Thelma, a friend of the Cathedral made 101 Cup cakes, Collie Begum, a year three student and a friend of our Chorister painted one of the Christmas cards and Catherine Young from St John's made more home bakes. A number of Cathedral church

Advent Stall

By Amudha Poobalan

people made marmalade and home bakes. It was truly a cathedral family which includes the diocese and the city. The evening was a fore-taste of things to come and we pray God will bless and prosper our efforts. The evening raised nearly £800 pounds, still more coming and with Gift Aid added to this amount, we would have gone beyond our target of £1,000.

Thank you for making this possible and watch the space for the next event.



Stewards Needed

We are looking for people to help steward at events and concerts in the Cathedral. This is a great way to meet people, help the Cathedral earn much-needed income and, of course, hear performances for free! Training will be provided and you will usually be stewarding with someone more experienced. If you can spare the odd evening or Sunday afternoon, please contact the Cathedral Office or speak to Regina.

Christmas Card Stand

By Jackie Hughes

Instead of giving individual cards to your Cathedral friends I suggest you put 1 card on the stand for them all and donate the money saved to the Cathedral. If you are able to Gift Aid that will be appreciated.

The stand will be in the porch of the John Skinner Centre.



Informal Summary of Trustees Meeting: 16 Nov 2016

By Michael Stone

1) *Update on roof repairs:*

In terms of our actions and reports from last month, we are now simply waiting for some feedback on how effective the repairs have been. We've had little rain in the last few weeks to test the repairs. We now have regular inspections via our contractor Cheyne's to follow-up on any issues.

2) *General Maintenance:*

The Trustees have sourced a list of suitable local trades who can provide quotes to undertake the backlog of general building repairs. Our last contractor was not really performing or completing jobs. We expect to receive quotes soon to allow us to expedite things.

3) *HSE Portfolio:*

Mark Edwards has kindly accepted this important portfolio activity. This is a key role within the management of the Cathedral affairs, especially as we approach a period of modifications and upgrade to the

building's fabric.

4) *Update to the Cathedral Constitution:*

The proposed changes to the Constitution were discussed prior to the AGM, to be held on the following Sunday. The changes will be required to be agreed at the AGM and then ratified at a further EGM. Bishop Mark Strange will be a final approver during our interregnum period.

5) *Communications Activity:*

The job role description for a Communication and Social Media Administrator was confirmed and the search for a suitable candidate was agreed.

We will be advertising for the role via the normal Cathedral routes, the Diocese and also the University. If anyone knows of someone who may be interested then please get in touch for more details.

Informal Summary of Trustees Meeting: 16 Nov 2016

By Michael Stone

6) Trustees:

The Trustees thanked Sylvia, Victoria and Derek for all their work and support over the time of their tenure on the Board, this being their last meeting prior to the AGM

7) Forthcoming cathedral events:

27th November: It has been decided to use the Advent Carol Service to mark a start of the CDP 2020. We have invited Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski to give a short explanation of the project. A brochure outlining the project will be distributed to attendees and we will have a number of fundraising stalls and post-service refreshments organised.

Planning for a further Showcase event, early in the New Year with the Project Team, local Dignitaries and supporters and the wider diocesan family attending, is being formulated.

8) CDP 2020:

The plans for the Merchant's House and JSC adaptation have been submitted to the Aberdeen Council Planning Department.

As always, if you have any questions about items in the regular reports, please feel free to contact any of the Trustees - details at the back of Focus

The date of the next Trustees' Meeting is Wednesday, 11 January 2017.



Christmas Services

at St Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen



Sunday, 18 December

Festival of
Nine Lessons and Carols
at 6.30 pm

Saturday, 24 December

Carols around the Crib
at 2 pm

Christmas Eve

Midnight Sung Eucharist
at 11.30 pm

Sunday, 25 December

Christmas Day
Family Sung Eucharist
at 10.30 am

Sunday, 8 January

Epiphany Carol Service
at 6.30 pm

Handel's

MESSIAH

Aberdeen Choral Society

Tuesday, 13th December 2016 at 7.15 pm

St Andrew's Cathedral

Tickets: £15

Available from Aberdeen Box Office

Tel: (01224) 641122

or

Key Moves, 14 Chapel Street

Tel: (01224) 251100

or

Choral Society Members

Aberdeen Vellore Exchange (AVE) Dinner

Friends of Vellore, Scotland



In aid of **Christian Medical College
Hospital** in Vellore, South India

7.00pm Friday the 30th of December 2016

St John's Church, Crown Terrace, Aberdeen AB11 6HE

The evening begins in the church with a short Service
of Thanksgiving followed by an Indian Meal and
Scottish Music

Donation: £12 (BYOB)

RSVP: Dr A Poobalan 01224 594746 or
a.poobalan@abdn.ac.uk

December/January Diary

Weekly Services

Wednesdays at 10.00 am	Holy Communion
Sundays at 8.00 am	Holy Communion (1970 Liturgy)
Sundays at 10.45 am	Sung Eucharist (1982 Liturgy) followed by coffee in the JSC
Sundays at 10.45 am	Crèche available in the JSC
Sundays at 6.30 pm	Said Evening Prayer

Weekly Events

Tuesdays at 6.00 pm	Fellowship, JSC
Fridays 10.00 am to 12 noon	Cathedral Coffee Shop (Teas/ Coffees, and a whole range of homebaking, as well as sandwiches available)
Saturdays at 12 noon	Cathedral at Noon (30 minute recital followed by refreshments)

Cathedral at Noon - December/January

10 Dec	Chris Black <i>Organ Music</i>
17 Dec	Schola Sancti Andreae <i>Choral Christmas Music</i>
24 Dec	Andrew Morrisson and Cathedral Trebles <i>Christmas Carols and Organ Music</i>
31 Dec	Tamsin Raitt <i>Music for Soprano Voice</i>
7 Jan	Bill Henderson <i>Organ Music</i>
14 Jan	Alasdair Leeson-Payne <i>Music for Bass Voice</i>
21 Jan	Aberdeen City Music School Vocal Pupils <i>Music for Voice</i>

December/January Focus Deadline



**The deadline for the joint
February
issue of the Focus
magazine will be the 2nd of
February.**

Please send your articles
to Amber at
a.shadle.07@aberdeen.ac.uk.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to make this
issue of the Focus Magazine possible!

Cover photo: Christmas Tree, by Simon Jackson

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