



November
2023 Newsletter

Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

Are recorded and are available via our [website](#) on our [Twitter feed](#) and [Facebook page](#). So you can enjoy these services at a time suitable to you, links are sent to our e-mail list. To go on our e-mail list, please contact our [Church Administrator](#).

SERVICES AT ST STEPHEN'S

Following the closure of the Old High Church for Sunday Worship, all Sunday services are now held at St Stephen's Church at 10.30am

CONTACT US

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If you would like us to keep in touch – please send us your up-to-date e-mail and address

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THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

As November rolls round, thoughts often go to remembrance. This year it is 99 years since the start of what was called the war to end all wars. If only it had lived up to its name. World War I was one of the deadliest wars in history, and resulted in an estimated 9 million soldiers dead and 23 million wounded, while 5 million civilians died due to military action, hunger and disease. Millions more died as a result of genocide, and the devastation of the war heavily contributed to the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. The instability after the war certainly would lay the conditions which would give rise to the second world war some years later.

I have always been a bit of an aviation geek, which means I fit right in with my role as chaplain to the Air Cadets. However I am very much aware that many of the things we take for granted in modern aviation have only come about through research that was done in order to aid military aviation. Pressurised cabins, radar, and many other technologies can all trace their origin back to development for military, rather than civil applications. Even our own airport at Inverness, whose runway I ran just a couple of months ago, originated as RAF Dalcross, which was opened in 1940 and which housed a number of training squadrons.

More recently, on a visit to the air museum at Elvington which I visited while down for the Yorkshire Marathon (more on that later), I was struck by the beauty of the aircraft which were designed for the sole purpose of carrying nuclear weapons. And the research that would give rise to the atomic bomb would ultimately bring about nuclear power, and the ability to make nuclear isotopes used in medicine. I have to ask, how well developed would aviation and nuclear medicine (and a whole host of other technologies) be without the investment that was brought about through conflict?

Isaiah 2:4 states

He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

It is a wonderful goal to strive for, however with conflict raging in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as the dozens of other conflicts raging throughout the world, the hope for the swords being turned into ploughshares seems further away than ever. However it is our duty to strive for peace on earth, knowing that at some day, we will all go to the Lords temple where there will be peace.

And I hope that, as you reflect on Remembrance Sunday, you will join me in wishing that the weapons of war will take their final place in the museums of the world.

NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

SALE OF OLD HIGH CHURCH As you are aware the building went on sale around 15 months ago. We have had many viewings and enquiries and there are bids on the

table. The Law Department at 121 in Edinburgh are anxious that we go to a closing date. At the Kirk Session Meeting on Tuesday 3 October the members agreed to set a closing date of Monday 13 November at 12 noon. This is now indicated on the advert on the Church of Scotland website - Properties for Sale.

The Friends of Old High have been working hard to fundraise to retain the building and a fund-raiser is due to take place in the USA, by Outlanders, this month. The Kirk Session were sympathetic to this and hence the November closing date.

I would like to thank Jim Alexander, Donald McLellan and Andrew Stevenson who have been so willing to help with viewings at the church and for their humour and patience when the people don't turn up or thought they should be in Glasgow and not Inverness! This has been extremely stressful to everyone concerned and hopefully there is now light at the end of the tunnel. Let's hope we get a good outcome on the sale. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk.

ADVANCE NOTICE - ST STEPHEN'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL

In mid- November, the Pastoral Care Team will launch their annual Christmas Appeal. We will be supporting three charities this year and we trust that we will get our usual support from the congregation. More information to follow.

SPECIAL SERVICE - SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER The service on Sunday 19 November will be very special. We will be admitting/ordaining two new elders and presenting long service certificates. Please come if you can and support these members.

MEMORABLE MELODIES Do you think you would like to join a sociable group of people who would love to sing together? We, at St Stephen's are planning to start a fortnightly group for everyone who likes singing and music. It will be a happy occasion with memorable melodies and many familiar tunes. If you think you could help, please, get in touch. We plan to have a first session on **Friday 8 December** at 2pm in St Stephen's Hall. Come along and join the fun. Tea and Coffee will be served with Christmas eats. You can bring a friend. All will be made most welcome. Contact Joan Darcy 07765 073583 or Val Cantlay 07801 323049 for further information.



OHSS MUSIC RECITALS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

Saturday 4 November at 7.30pm in Crown Church: Resol String Quartet

Sunday 19 November at 3pm in St Stephen's: Piano and Violin Duo

Friday 1 December at 1pm in St Stephen's: Guitar and Voice Duo

For more details contact: Andrew Stevenson: (01463) 242767 or stevenson.ata@btinternet.com

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY - COMMUNITY CHOIR The Christmas Concert is back on Wednesday and Thursday, 20 and 21 December at 7.30pm. More details in next month's Newsletter



OHSS HARVEST CELEBRATIONS 2023 The 2-day event at St Stephen's Church included children's activities, stalls and the flower festival itself, which was open to the public on Saturday and Sunday afternoon following the morning service. The festival also provided an opportunity to support local people dealing with the cost-of-living crisis, with food donations to Highland Food Bank and the Café 1668 social café in the city centre.

Inspired by the example of locum minister and interim moderator Rev James Bissett, who took part in the 5km Run the Runway at Inverness Airport earlier this summer in aid of Maggie's Highland, money donated at the festival was also collected for the charity which supports people living with cancer. Maggie's Highland is a charity very much cherished by members of our congregation, especially those who have used the facility, and we have raised the excellent sum of £1,811 to date.



The Tea and Coffee Table was popular



Local Produce



The busy baking stall

JAMES' YORKSHIRE MARATHON You will no doubt have noticed from my absence the other week that I was off on another marathon adventure, this time to York, a city that I know and love very well. This was my third marathon, and while I promised this would be my last, our running group have all expressed a desire to do another.

This year I was running in aid of the Scottish Association for Mental Health. SAMH does fantastic work throughout the country, and it's a charity I've supported for a long time. It's as important to look after our mental health as it is our physical.

Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. Some mental health problems are described using words that are in everyday use, for example, 'depression' and 'anxiety'. This can make them seem easier to understand, but can also mean people underestimate how serious they can be.

SAMH operates over 70 services in communities across Scotland, providing mental health social care support, addictions and employment services, among others.

At time of writing, I've raised over £1,600 for SAMH, and I'd like to thank all of you who have donated and wished me well in the run up to this adventure.



Starting Hopefuls



We did it!

PUFFIN HYDROTHERAPY POOL AWARD Malcolm Steven was pleased to attend an Investiture at Windsor Castle with his family recently to accept an MBE from HRH Princess Anne on behalf of the many fundraisers and supporters of the Puffin Hydrotherapy Pool.

Hydrotherapy is recommended by doctors and physiotherapists to speed up rehabilitation after injuries and operations and as part of self-care for painful long-term conditions. Adults and children with arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, stroke, cerebral palsy and other forms

of handicap and disability can benefit. Recovery from accidents or operations can be made easier. The Puffin Pool is designed and built around the needs of its users. With dedicated parking, wheelchair friendly access and warm and accessible changing rooms, the facility is supervised by qualified Supervisors and lifeguards to ensure a warm welcome and enjoyable experience. Users with severe disabilities can attend with carers. We can take users of all ages and all severity of disability.



OTHER NEWS

THANK YOU FROM CAFÉ 1668 I just wanted to send a note to thank your congregation so much for the wonderful donation we received following your Harvest Thanksgiving Service. This is such a massive help to us in the café and is always very much appreciated by both the team here and our customers who benefit directly from this. As you know, the café relies heavily on donations and your continued support is invaluable. Thank you very much indeed. Val Cooper, Café Team Leader 1668 Café.

There will be another opportunity to **contribute** to the work of 1668 café on **Sunday 26 November**. As always, they require tinned meat, tinned ready meals, cleaning materials etc. Please bear in mind that many of their clients have little or no cooking facilities. The café really appreciate the support that we give them each month.

SERVICE OF HOPE Please see below information from our friends at Crown Church regarding a Service of Hope at the Crown Church. Rev Douglas Robertson is planning to hold a Service of Hope at Crown Church on the afternoon of **26 November at 3pm**, with light refreshments afterwards. This service has its origins in two different services that we used to hold, a so-called Blue Christmas service, aimed at people for whom Christmas is a difficult time, and an All Saints Day service, remembering those in our congregation who have died within the last year or so. The focus is now perhaps more on the latter than the former but the service will likely still contain both elements, the Hope element reflecting also the Advent Season.

Crown Worship Team extend an invitation to this service to the OHSS congregation and by extension its bereaved families. It has been a well-received service in the past and seems to meet a need. A warm welcome is extended to anyone wishing to attend. Rev James Bissett is also likely to take part in the service. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

HIGHLAND HOSPITALS CAROL CONCERT

A festive poster for the Highland Hospitals Carol Concert 2023. The background is light blue with white snowflakes and musical notes. At the top, it says 'HIGHLAND HOSPITALS' in white on a teal background. Below that, 'Carol Concert 2023' is written in a large, red, cursive font, decorated with holly leaves and berries. The text continues: 'In aid of Young Lives vs Cancer', 'Sunday, 3rd December 2023 at 3pm', and 'DRUMOSSIE SUITE, DRUMOSSIE HOTEL, INVERNESS IV2 5BE'. The ticket price 'Tickets £15' is written in a large, red, cursive font. Below this, it says 'Tickets available from Visit Scotland iCentre 36 High Street, Inverness. Tel: 01463 252401'. Further down, it mentions 'RAFFLE TICKETS AVAILABLE GRAND PRIZE DRAW ON THE DAY' and 'Parking available at front, at side and behind the hotel.' The poster features two cartoon characters in winter gear holding papers, and a holly branch at the bottom. Logos for 'Highland Hospitals HCH Carol Concert Committee' and 'YOUNG LIVES vs CANCER' are also present.