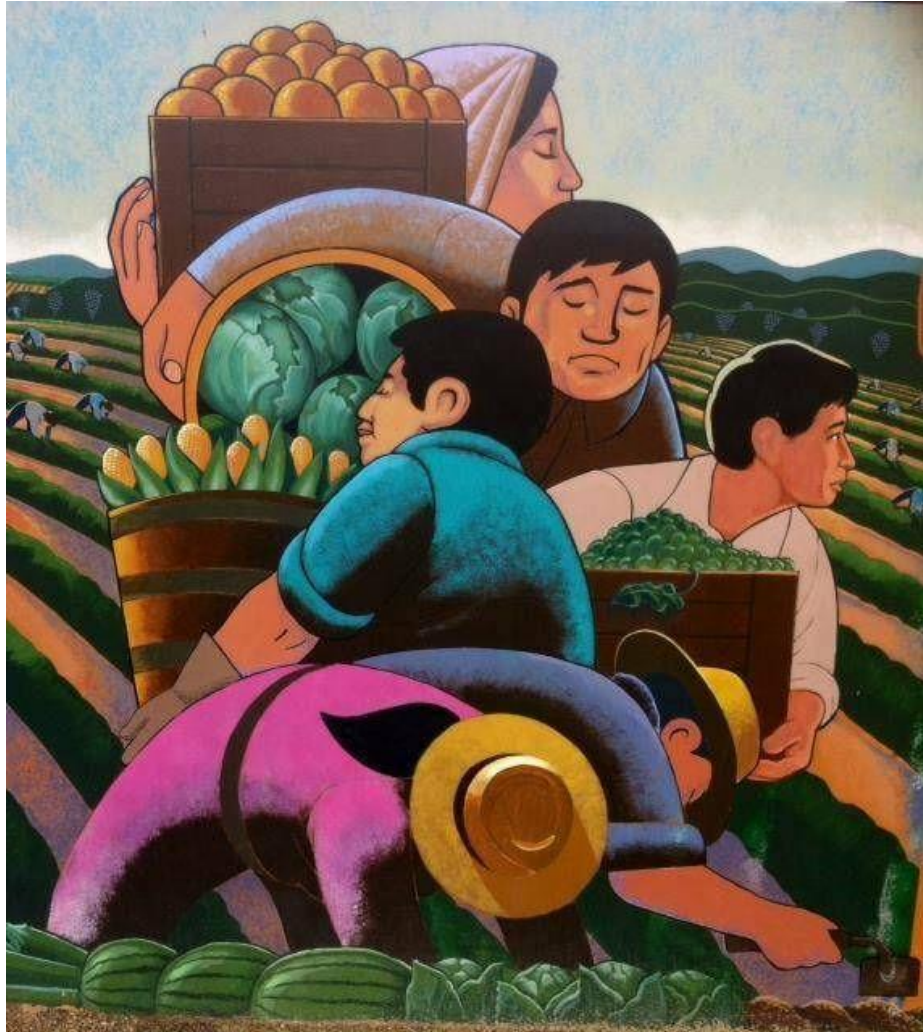


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The Magazine of Inverurie West
Parish Church

OCTOBER 2024



Artist – Ignacio Gomez



Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

This reflective prayer describes not only the beauty of these changes but the opportunity for us to change, for our lives to be transformed by the rhythm of God's spirit.



Burnished orange and shimmering gold.
Gilded moon and rain-washed sun.
The crackle of crisp leaves and air's brittle bite.

A season is in motion and winter hovers in the wings.
Earth is transformed at the touch of your hand, creator God.
Autumn is ablaze with your glory,
and we watch amazed as you unfurl your latest canvas.

As the days loosen their grip on what has passed,
change us, living, moving God,
That we may be transformed by the rhythm of your Spirit
as she weaves her way through the landscape of our lives.

Change us, daring, dream-shaping, God,
that lives may be turned by the yet-to-come here and now.

Change us today, tomorrow, and forever.
Amen

*This prayer was first published in Life and Work magazine.
Author unknown.*

From the West Manse



At our last Encounter meeting we spent a few minutes, as you do, trying to remember who had sung “*ch..ch..changes*”. The answer, of course, is David Bowie.

Unsurprisingly, it was the changeability of the weather which had prompted the song memory. I am currently grateful for the wee bit of almost-summer which is still lingering as I write. But it has also given me wardrobe whiplash. Today I am in a dress and sandals. Five days ago I was in tights, trousers, boots, long sleeve shirt, jumper, and wrist warmers. I had also filled the hot water bottle and tossed a throw over my knees.

Sometimes it is hard to remember what it was like to grow up in a country where it was actually worth putting away your summer and/or winter clothing for a few months of the year.

Having said that, the blazing colours of a Canadian ‘fall’ were always a reminder that everything changes. Part of the beauty of autumn - and its melancholy - comes from the awareness that it is temporary. All seasons are, of course, but autumn wears its lack of permanence boldly.

There’s a boldness in Bowie’s lyrics, too, which I’d never noticed. After resorting to Google to confirm that he had indeed sung ‘*Changes*’ I discovered that I’d been misremembering a key line in the chorus. I’d always sung “*turn and face the change, ch..ch..changes*”. However, the lyrics are actually, “turn and face the strange.”

“*Turn and face the strange*” is a very striking line. It reminds me that what we tend not to like about change is that it is unfamiliar. We’re okay, generally, with changes of season, or weather, or wardrobe because they have some predictability. We may not

know exactly what the Scottish weather is going to do on any given day, but it still usually operates within a range we recognise. Similarly, in any given year, autumn, winter, spring or summer may feel longer or shorter, but one does always follow the other. We also have the good fortune to live in a country where even if some harvests may be better than others, there always is a harvest to gather.

Changes which don't fit the patterns we are used to can feel more threatening. It's one of the reasons the pandemic was so devastating. That particular '*strange*' upended so many of our interactions and institutions that we are still feeling the effects in education, in health care, in so many aspects of our lives.

Churches too have been facing big changes. Sometimes this has meant having to make decisions which may feel uncomfortable as they herald a break from the past and an unfamiliar way of doing things. For us this currently includes deciding how to dispose of our church hall, as detailed later in the magazine. Do we shy away from this change or do we do what Bowie recommends and "*turn and face the strange*"?

Bowie was singing about artistic reinvention and of the clash between generations, but that willingness to "*turn and face the strange*" can also be relevant to churches.

The church's ability to hold onto and treasure the past; to provide stability in a unstable world; to be faithful and true; still matters. But we mustn't let that stop us facing the future with boldness and courage. As God says to Israel, in Isaiah 43, "***Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?***"

God is with us - in the boldness of autumn, the stillness of winter and all the strange unknown seasons ahead.

Every blessing

Rhona



THE GUILD

Our grateful thanks go to Rhona for introducing us to the theme at our first meeting of the session. A fitting, thought-provoking and inspiring talk was enjoyed by all who joined us.

We are now back to our usual pattern of Monday afternoons at 2.00 pm in the Acorn Centre and look forward to our next meeting on Monday 14 October to hear about “Barbara’s Basket O’ Blethers”. Following that our annual “West Fest” fundraiser stall will be available after church on Sunday 20 October when jams, jellies, chutneys, cakes, bakes and more will be on offer to tempt you. Remember to bring your purse!



Dates for your diary:

Monday 14 October

“Barbara’s Basket o’ Blethers” with Barbara Forbes.

Sunday 20 October

“West Fest” stall after church – home bakes and tasty treats.

Monday 11 November

“My Life as a Midwife” with Janice Paton.

Monday 9 December

Christmas Celebration with Chris Gardner and friends.

Note: Subs are now due and should be paid by the November meeting.

SESSION CLERKS

There are many reasons I consider myself fortunate to minister here at Inverurie West Church, but certainly one of the main reasons is the people who surround me. Not least of these have been our wonderful session clerks, Mark and Gillian Paterson. I have been truly, deeply grateful for their support, kindness, friendship and efficiency since I began here.

However, as I said in this month's opening letter, change is inevitable and we need to be willing to face it when it comes. This includes allowing people to retire or step down from their roles. By next year Mark and Gillian will have served ten years of what was originally envisioned as a five year stint. A few months ago they gave the session a year's notice, so that we might find a replacement. Fortunately, they aren't going anywhere and they will still be offering their time and gifts to us in many ways. As someone quipped on Sunday when eating one of Gillian's delicious Fairtrade bakes, *'Gillian will have time to do even more baking!'* Joking aside, among other roles, Gillian and Mark will continue to look after Ubuntu.

There will be time and opportunity for a proper tribute and thanks to Mark and Gillian between now and their official finish at the end of March. For now, I am delighted to share with the congregation that Morag Mitchell has agreed to be our new session clerk. Morag is going to be shadowing Mark and Gillian for the next six months as she learns the ropes. I'm sure, like me, she will be grateful for Mark's comprehensive church knowledge and his phenomenal ability to come up with a name for someone - along with relevant details - after only a few words of description!

Morag will bring her own knowledge, abilities and unique gifts to the role. We have benefitted from advice and guidance from several previous session clerks, which is a tribute to the community relationships here at the West and your willingness to serve.

I thank you all and am sure you will join me in supporting Morag, Mark, Gillian, and the session as we transition through change together.

Rhona

DUNCAN MACLELLAN'S RSABI CHALLENGES. UPDATE.



After raising almost **£5000** over the summer, Duncan heard last week that he is being awarded the Huxtable trophy for outstanding support of RSABI. This is very special, since this trophy was presented to the charity by Sharon and family in memory of our very own Richard Huxtable. The RSABI had no idea of the connection.

Richard had known Duncan since he was born and I hope he'd be as delighted as we are that Duncan is this year's recipient.

Isla (a very proud mum)



SOCIAL/FUNDRAISING TEAM UPDATES



Have you any unwanted/pre-loved baubles and other Christmas decorations languishing in your loft or cupboards?



If you are happy to donate them, we'd like to reuse/recycle them! We will sort them out and prepare them for selling in the Acorn Centre.

From late November we will have a table set up with Christmas items which you can pick up for a donation to church funds. Items can be dropped off at church on Sundays after 27 October or at the Acorn Centre from Tuesday 29 October. If you need items collected, please let us know.



Thanks in anticipation!

Joyce Petrie



ANOTHER REMINDER - Fundraising/Stewardship

EVERY LITTLE HELPS

Registering with the 'EasyFundraising' website is an easy way to use your online shopping to raise a little money for the Church. The site is partnered with over 4000 retailers including big names like Amazon, Tesco and Argos. You can begin by following this link: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/Inverurie-west-parish-church> or click here



COMMUNITY GARDEN OPEN DAY

Thank you to everyone who popped into the garden for our open evening.



The evening sun was warm - so much so that someone commented that with our newly painted furniture (turquoise) and whitewashed walls all that was required in the Hospitality Area was some pink bougainvillea for it to feel that we were in the Mediterranean! 😊



Thanks too to Dorothy, Laura and Kenneth for some lovely home bakes which always go down well!



Remember it doesn't have to be advertised as an 'open' session for you to pop by.

At the moment our lovely volunteers from *'Inspire'* are there on a Wednesday morning for a cuppa and to tend to their raised beds, which this year have produced radishes, lettuce, rocket and some very pretty flowers.

Biff Barrow



Mainly Music - "the highlight of my week!"

Mainly Music (MM) runs every Tuesday morning and has done so for **12 years!** This is a group for pre-nursery children and their parents/carers to enjoy songs,



rhymes, socialising and snacks, all within a Christian context. Several members of our congregation volunteer to run these sessions, and they have as much fun as the children!

A typical session includes songs and rhymes, usually involving actions, percussion and props. Jane Fraser leads the session and everyone - young, old, parents,



grannies, carers, volunteers - joins in. "Woke up this morning with Dancing Feet" is a favourite as is "Five hats on my head". This section concludes with two charming, gentle songs - "God made me" and "Goodbye, everyone".





Then comes snack time, delivered to children and parents by our volunteers, after which these fine folk get involved in actively playing with the wee ones, allowing the adults to have 20 minutes of socialising; a feature much appreciated by busy parents. The adults

are also served tea or coffee and a delicious *fine piece* from our own Acorn Centre.



We asked the parents and children how they regarded MM. Here are some responses:

Fraser loved the music and the dancing; Orlagh (15 months) would say snack time and playing with the toys.

I came initially on the recommendation of a friend who had been with her three children; now I come with my two.

The best aspects for me are meeting other parents, and also seeing the children's confidence grow.

I moved to the area and wanted a group which catered for a one year old and a three year old. This group is very welcoming and has a wide variety of toys and music, while the structure of the session is good and keeps the attention of the children.

I am now attending with my fourth child. I can confidently say that MM is the best group. The warm welcome from the team and from other parents is the highlight of my week. Everyone is so friendly and caring. MM strikes the perfect balance between group activity and opportunities for kids to play independently while parents can catch up. Some of the friends I made when I first joined MM have become some of my closest companions.



All of my four kids have loved MM, and the current ones eagerly anticipate Tuesday mornings. The older ones cherish the occasional School In Service Day visit, seeing it as a special treat.

They still sing "God made me" as a bedtime lullaby!



Thus every Tuesday morning our Sanctuary is full of toys and noise, craic and cake, and is thus regarded as a special place to be.

Margaret Hearne

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

The celebration of the harvest has been happening around the world for thousands of years. In Britain it is celebrated after the harvest has been gathered in to show that people are grateful for the food that has been grown. The term itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for autumn – *'haerfest'*.

The tradition was essentially a pagan festival with pagan customs. For example, the final handful of corn stalks would have been woven into a *'corn dolly'*. This represented the spirit of the corn and was kept until the following spring to ensure a good harvest next year.

In Britain, harvest celebrations happen in September or early October. Celebration of the Harvest Festival in churches began relatively recently and is generally dated from the 1840's in Cornwall. During Victorian times harvest hymns such as *'All things bright and beautiful'* were written. In addition, Dutch and German harvest hymns in translation (for example, *We plough the fields and scatter*) helped popularise this idea of a harvest festival, and spread the annual custom of decorating churches with home-grown produce for the Harvest Festival service.



Thanksgiving for harvest happens all over the world and in many religions: e.g. Judaism (Sukkot), Hinduism (Holi) and Sikhism (Baisakhi).

The history of Thanksgiving in the United States, Canada, Australia and other parts of what was then the 'British Empire' is generally linked with the celebration of settlers in the early colonies for the first harvests which sustained them throughout the difficult winters during the early years of establishing settlements.

While the celebrations are traditionally seen as thanking God for providing a bountiful harvest, they should also be seen as a time to thank farmers throughout the world for the part they play in ensuring we all benefit from the fruits of their labours. In doing so we should acknowledge that their task is arduous – particularly in developing countries. There is considerably more work involved than scattering '*the good seed on the land*' and leaving it to be '*fed and watered by God's almighty hand*' - work which is exacerbated by climate change which disproportionately affects farmers in the poorest parts of the world.

The cover to this month's Encounter graphically displays this. In a famous Gospel hymn we sing '*We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves*' - but it is not rejoicing we see when looking at the expressions on the faces of the farmers in the picture.

This is the second week of Fair Trade fortnight so it's an appropriate time to be reminded of the need to support farmers in the developing world to ensure that they are rewarded for their part in providing bountiful harvests which all benefit from.



CHURCH CALENDAR/WAYS OF CONNECTING – OCTOBER 2024

Sunday services are at the usual time of 11 am. If you are worshipping from home, you can connect as usual via the West church website and youtube channels.



Sunday 6 Oct	11 am Harvest Sunday Worship Hospitality time after the service
Sunday 13 Oct	11 am Morning Worship Hospitality time after the service
Thursday 10 Oct	7.30 pm Kirk session meeting
Wednesdays	7.30 pm Zoom Bible Study All welcome. Contact Rhona for the link
Sunday 20 Oct	11 am Morning Worship Hospitality time after the service
Sunday 27 Oct	11 am Communion service 3pm family communion (informal service, all ages welcome)
Encounter	If you have any material for Encounter please email encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by Monday 21st October.

Children are welcome at all services. Most weeks we offer Junior Church for children who wish to go downstairs part-way through the service. Please note that there is usually no junior church during the school holidays. Activities and toys can also be found in our 'play as you worship' box in the sanctuary.

The prayer group continues to meet regularly on a Thursday morning. Prayer requests can be sent to olive.duncan@hotmail.co.uk or duncan.linda1@btinternet.com

Our contact email address for those looking for help with collection/delivery of supplies or medication is help@inveruriewestchurch.org

HALL REPORT

It's often said that things in the church move slowly and this is certainly true when it comes to the question of the future of our West Church Hall.

Deciding how to '*dispose*' of it (as agreed by our Inverurie grouping and in accordance with the Presbytery plan) continues to be a challenge and occupied a fair chunk of our last session meeting. The word '*disposal*', in the language of presbytery planning, means making arrangements so that the church will no longer have responsibility for the building. This often involves a sale, or sometimes demolition.

In our case, selling is not an easy option. If the hall was sold, it would block access to our flagship community/kitchen garden and would drastically reduce what is already very limited parking. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the council would grant planning permission to a developer due to the volume of both vehicle and foot traffic already clogging the church lane. Not only does the lane provide access to our church and café, which is busy seven days a week, it is also used as the main foot passage to the town by scores of Academy students.

After considering the implications of a sale, and seeking the advice of the law department at the Church of Scotland's head office regarding how to proceed with the rather complicated title documents, the session agreed at our meeting on the 10th September that our preferred option would be to demolish the hall. This would free up the space to further develop our garden partnerships and projects, opening up new possibilities for local

mission, while eliminating the burden of future maintenance and repair costs. It could also improve parking access for the congregation. The decision has not been taken lightly, but it feels like a positive way forward.

There is a lot of work to be done, and there will be costs involved, even to establish the feasibility of demolition. It's possible it will turn out to be impractical and we will once again be considering other types of '*disposal*'. However the Kirk session feels it is important to begin to take some concrete steps. The advice of head office was that the first step was for the Kirk Session to make a decision. Having done so, we want to ensure that the congregation, neighbours and community are kept appropriately informed of any developments.

In the meantime we continue to be grateful for the congregation's patience with the process. *As intimated on Sundays, we would very much appreciate any recommendations of architects with whom to have initial discussions. If you have any connections or recommendations, please do let Rhona or one of the session know.*

CHRISTIAN AID CHARITY GIFTS



Start your Christmas shopping with a difference. Gifts that make the impossible possible. Fancy sending a pair of chickens or sending a child to school? These are just two of the gifts in the Christian Aid Charity gifts.



To find out more and shop now click the link below:



Save the Date



UBUNTU

**Christmas Open Evening
Monday, 4 November 2024
6.30 - 8.00 pm**



Make a difference this Christmas by choosing ethical gifts that support farmers and their families around the world. By choosing Fairtrade you are sharing good tidings, fairer prices and better terms of trade with the producers who play a huge, yet overlooked, role in our lives and celebrations.



WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Session Clerks	Mark and Gillian Paterson sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org	625675
Church and Acorn Centre Administration	Judith Will admin@inveruriewestchurch.org	670850
Church Officer	A team approach will be implemented.	
Rollkeeper	Chris Gardner rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org	07791 630495
Life & Work	Irene Jamieson irenejamieson@live.co.uk	
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	Valerie Napier Gail Buchan	623279 622145
Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	622586
Acorn Centre Management Team	Laura Gray lauragray25@btinternet.com	620658
Environmental Matters Team	Joy Doorghen doorghens@hotmail.com	620823
Fabric Team	Jim Lyle jimlyle@hotmail.co.uk	624159
Finance Team	Alan Sharp sharp3@btinternet.com	
Treasurer	Alison Blair treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org	620677
Committed Giving Envelopes	Cindy Farquhar Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com	
Gift Aid	Mandy Aitken mandyaitken@sky.com	07532 487788
Junior Church Team	Biff Barrow biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk	623096
Pastoral Care Team	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

Admission through Profession of Faith:

Annemarie Maclachlan (District 44)

1 September 2024

Weddings:

Chantelle Clarke and Daniel Hernandez

29 August 2024

Change of Address:

Mrs Kathleen Proctor (District 19) to (Postal)

Please advise the Roll Keeper of any change of address:
rollkeeper@inveruriwestchurch.org

FLOWER CALENDAR – OCTOBER

CONVENER - Linda Duncan

Oct 6th Carol and Fred Barber

Oct 13th Mark and Gillian Paterson

Oct 20th Fran Nice

Oct 27th Laura and Kenneth Gray



ENCOUNTER ONLINE – Currently we are producing and distributing Encounter online and in print. If you have not already provided details of your e-mail and would like to ensure you receive the online version, please contact the Session Clerk (01467 625675).

