

Saint Barnabas' Scottish Episcopal Church

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Magazine Spring 2025

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The Summer 2025 edition of the St Barnabas' magazine will be issued in June.

Contributions should be given or sent by the end of May 2025 to the editor, Philip Sawyer (philipsawyer@cantab.net).

Rector's letter

During Lent 2024 we studied the diocesan booklet entitled *The Emotions of Jesus*; it seemed to be very well received by those who used it and resonated with people's own experiences and emotions.

Although one of the emotions studied was compassion, one that was not studied was love - an emotion that is linked with compassion but that usually also includes some action that stems from the emotion.

As most of you know, on the 5th Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday) we still follow the old tradition of reading the whole Passion narrative from one of the Gospels on a 4-year cycle; this is in place of a sermon. If this were not done, and we relied only on the Sunday Gospel readings, the whole narrative would never be heard. Our faith is founded on the belief that Jesus Christ suffered and died for us to take away our sins, to allow us to be completely forgiven and completely unburdened by the wrongs of the past; and that on the third day he was raised from the dead to prove that God has the power over death and can bring us with Jesus to share eternal life in Heaven.

In all of this we should come to realise that the unfathomable depth of the love that Jesus has for each one of us led him to endure the agony on the Cross. Our response should be to try to love and serve him in this life by showing his love to others that they might come to faith.

This year the Lent study booklet is entitled *Christ has no body now but yours*. We shall look at how we use various parts of our body - hands, eyes, feet, voice, ears - and how we might use them in God's service and to benefit others.

We plan to meet on five Wednesday afternoons beginning on 12th March, from 1.30 pm until about 2.45 pm. There will be another group at the Tron Kirk, using the same material, beginning on Monday 10th March at 11.00 am; this will be led by Rev'd Janet Mackenzie. Please let me know if you would like to attend either of these groups.

During Lent, including Holy Week, our Wednesday 12.30 pm service will be Holy Communion. All are welcome to attend and to receive Communion. Anyone who is unable to get to church during that time or during the Easter season should contact me or Rev'd Alice Anderson to arrange for a home visit.

May the hope and joy of eternal life fill your hearts with the love of God during this Holy season.

Your friend and Priest,
David



Special dates and times for your diary

(in St. Barnabas' unless **indicated otherwise**)

See the back page of this magazine for normal service times

| | |
|---|---|
| March | |
| Wednesday 5 th Ash Wednesday | 12.30 pm: Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes, followed by a Social Group shared lunch and a talk by the Rector: "The Biblical bases of the Liturgy." |
| Friday 7 th | 2.00 pm: World Day of Prayer service at Liberton Kirk. |
| Sunday 9 th Lent 1 | Vestry meeting after the 10.30 am service of Holy Communion. |
| Wednesday 12 th | 1.30 pm: first of 5 Lent groups. |
| Wednesday 19 th | 2.00 pm: Gilmerton Care Home service. |
| Thursday 20 th | 2.00 pm: Erskine Home service. |
| Friday 28 th | 2.00 pm: Messy Church at Millerhill. |
| Sunday 30 th Lent 4 Mothering Sunday | British Summer Time begins 10.30 am: Holy Communion, followed by a Social Group shared lunch and "Come plant a flower" with Lily Johnston. |
| April | |
| Sunday 6 th Passion Sunday | 2.30 pm: Holy Communion |
| Sunday 13 th Palm Sunday | 10.30 am: Holy Communion with distribution of Palm Crosses. |
| Monday 14 th | 7.00 pm: Passover Meal at Liberton Kirk (ticket required). |

| | |
|--|--|
| Wednesday 16 th | 7.00 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross at St Gregory's. |
| Thursday 17 th Maundy Thursday | 7.30 pm: joint service of Holy Communion with the Tron Kirk (venue t.b.c.) |
| Friday 18 th Good Friday | 10.15 am: meet outside the Primary School and walk to Morrisons. 11.00 am: SEECAT service at Morrisons. 3.00 pm: SEECAT service at Gracemount High School. |
| Sunday 20 th Easter Day | 10.30 am: Holy Communion |
| Friday 25 th | 2.00 pm: Messy Church at Millerhill. |
| May | |
| Wednesday 7 th | Holy Communion at 12.30 pm, followed by a Social Group shared lunch and a talk by Deryck Collingwood: "Turkey: the cradle of Christianity" |
| Sunday 11 th | 2.30 pm: SEECAT a.g.m. at St. Barnabas'. |
| Tuesday 20 th | 7.30 pm: Area Council meeting at Old St. Paul's. |
| Thursday 29 th Ascension Day | 7.30 pm: Holy Communion. |
| Friday 30 th | 2.00 pm: Messy Church at Millerhill. |
| June | |
| Sunday 8 th Pentecost | 10.30 am: Holy Communion |



The poster features a circular logo at the top right containing a bishop's mitre and a shield with a white cross on a blue background. Below the logo is a circular inset photo of a young boy in a blue hoodie giving a thumbs-up. At the bottom right is a larger circular inset photo of a woman in a purple hijab and glasses looking at a young boy who is holding a small object. On the left side, there are two QR codes with yellow arrows pointing to them from the right. The top left has a grey brushstroke graphic.

BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL 2025

Abraham's Children in Crisis is a small charity working in the Holy Land, seeking to care for the education, health and welfare of children who find themselves in present crisis and to help them to achieve their full potential.



DONATE



**LEARN
MORE**

Continues overleaf.....



A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JOHN

For the second year running, I invite the diocese to concentrate its Lenten giving on the Holy Land. The needs are vast and seemingly intractable, but Abraham's Children in Crisis, is a small charity which has the potential to make a big difference in the lives of children desperately in need of hope and a future. It is a charity with links to members of this diocese and it seeks to serve children from diverse backgrounds. Please give generously.

John

**PLEASE NOTE
WE ARE
UNABLE TO
ACCEPT
DONATIONS
FROM
INDIVIDUALS
VIA THE
DIOCESAN
OFFICE**

**DONATIONS
SHOULD BE
MADE VIA YOUR
LOCAL CHURCH**

**IF YOU ARE
ELIGIBLE
FOR GIFT AID
CONTACT YOUR
TREASURER TO
MAXIMISE
YOUR
DONATION OR
VISIT THE
STEWARDSHIP
LINK VIA THE
QR CODE**

The Rector's sermon on Advent Sunday

1st December 2024

Readings: Jeremiah 33: 14-16.

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-end. Luke 21: 25-36.

Advent is sometimes thought of as a journey towards and a time of preparation for the great celebration of Christmas, although nowadays a very large proportion of the festivities take place in Advent, before Christmas Day itself. But it is also, and in some ways more importantly, a journey towards the Kingdom of Heaven, which will be revealed at the end of time as we know it. This aspect of Advent has all but been forgotten in the frantic pre-Christmas preparation and festivities.

Today's Collect, post-Communion prayer and Gospel are very challenging, and not at all as appealing as enjoying the festivities. Who really wants both to consider how the world as we know it will end, and to be alert to the fact that this scary occurrence could happen at any time? Yet for us as Christians this end of world event is part of our faith: Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. There is hope for us that this event will be a time of great deliverance for the faithful; as Jesus tells us in the Gospel, it will be a time for us to stand and raise our heads because our redemption is happening, not a time to cower in fear and trembling or

to hide away. The post-Communion prayer gives us the recipe whereby we can survive this event: we are not to be wasting our earthly lives in selfishness, greed, immorality, addiction to drink of drugs, all of which affect our thoughts and actions; we should, on the contrary, be active in the work of God in serving those less fortunate than ourselves, in spending time in prayer, and in praising God. That, in a nutshell, is the mission of the Church: it is all about God and people, not buildings, rules and regulations. It is about praising God and serving others in need; the more we do that, the more we will find true peace and joy in our hearts, and a real sense of God being with us in what we are doing.

One of the names by which Jesus was to be known when he came into the world was Emmanuel, which means "God with us." If we can hold that in our hearts and minds then whatever may befall us - even the catastrophic end of the world - we will be safe. Each one of us is a precious child of God whom he will not lose; we are safe in union with Him.

Jesus prayed for this on the night before he died: "Father may they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you." As we take communion again today take to heart that this really is the sacrament of our union with Jesus. Further on in that great prayer in John 17 Jesus says: "Father, you have given them to me, and I want them to be with me where I am so that they may see my glory."

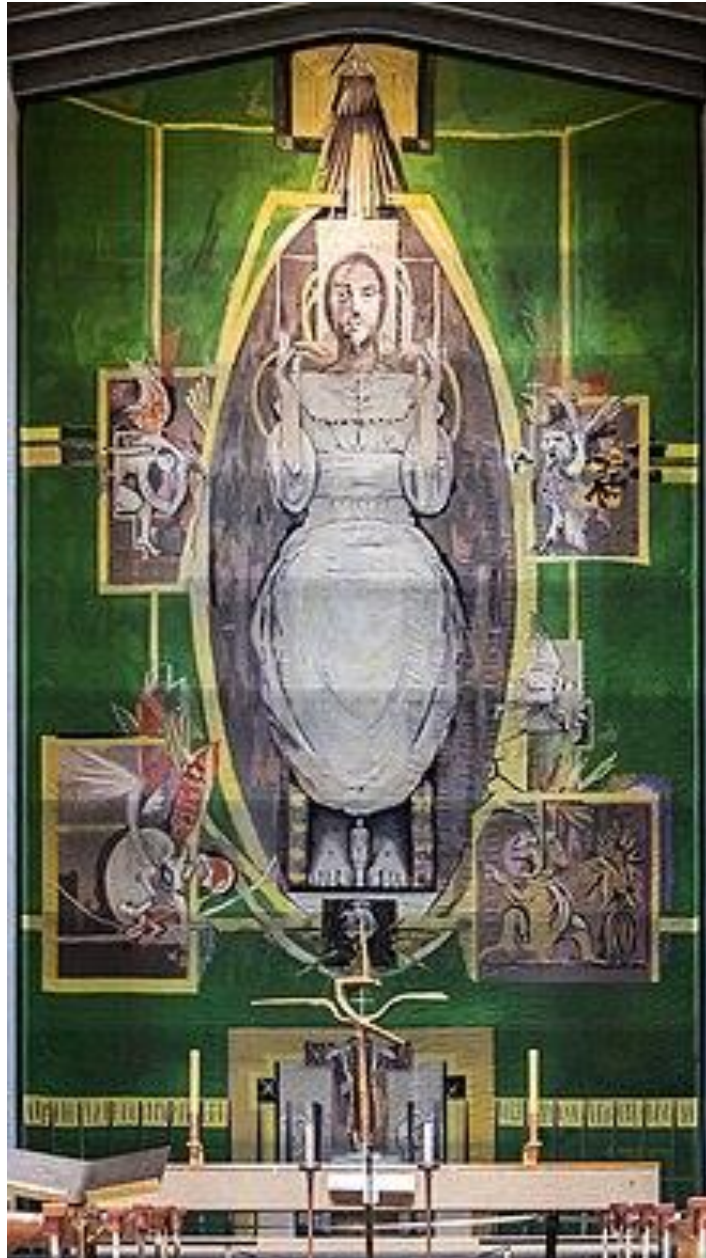
Jesus wants each one of us to share eternity with him in the kingdom of heaven; but before that

everlasting kingdom can be established, the old order of the worldly kingdoms torn apart by dissension and strife must come to an end. While we who believe may have a firm hope that we will pass over to the glorious kingdom of heaven, we cannot be complacent; we are to call out the wrongs and injustices of the present age, the lack of peace, the pursuit of wealth and possessions while millions face starvation and homelessness, and the lack of belief in that child who came into this world that first Christmas to be a great example to us all by taking on utter humility and loving service. He was born in a messy stable and rested in a feeding-trough for animals; he and his parents fled to Egypt as refugees to avoid an early death, wandering around the countryside with no fixed abode for three years. He would then die the most cruel and painful death (invented by the Romans) to deliver the world and open for us a way to eternal life if only people would believe and trust in him and follow his ways of love, joy and peace.

Let us keep alive this hope and work as best we can to bring more people to believe in Jesus Christ as their saviour who wants to be with them now and to all eternity, come what may, come whatever may occur - even the end of the world as we know it.

In the gospels of Matthew and Mark Jesus is quoted as saying that no-one - not even Jesus - knows when the end of world will happen; only God the Father knows. We must therefore be alert but not worried because that day will herald the end of our journey in this world and the beginning of our life in that glorious

new heaven and new earth promised in the revelation given to St. John in the last book of the Bible. For any who have died or will die before it occurs will be there already.



“Christ in Glory” a tapestry by Graham Sutherland, installed behind the high altar of Coventry Cathedral. The tapestry was begun in the Dovecote Gallery in Edinburgh and completed in Bayeux, France.

Charities supported by St. Barnabas' Church

Bethany Christian Trust

Ending homelessness in Scotland...one person at a time. That's what we're all about. Every year, thanks to people like you, we are supporting nearly 7,000 people in Scotland.

We work with individuals and local communities across Scotland to prevent and end homelessness. We support families, young people, rough sleepers and people recovering from addiction. The need for our services is growing and your support is vital.

Web-site: <https://www.bethanychristiantrust.com>

South-east Edinburgh Foodbank

At St. Barnabas', donations in kind can be left in the box that is beneath the table just inside the church door.

The following are always needed: cereal, soup, pasta, rice, tinned tomatoes/pasta sauce, lentils, beans and pulses, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tea/coffee, tinned fruit, biscuits, UHT milk, fruit juice.

When possible, the foodbank will also provide essential non-food items such as toiletries and hygiene products.

It is possible to support the foodbank financially; details are on the web-site:

<https://www.edinburghse.foodbank.org.uk>

Please note that if you donate on line to the foodbank, you will receive an e-mail acknowledgement from Blythswood Care. If you wish your donation to go to the south-east Edinburgh foodbank rather than to the wider

work of Blythswood Care, you should make that clear in an e-mail reply.

Mercy Ships

Worldwide, 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable, timely surgery. Many of them live in developing countries where healthcare infrastructure is limited or non-existent, or where there's a shortage of trained healthcare providers.

Mercy Ships uses modern hospital ships to bring world-class volunteer medical professionals directly to the places they're needed most. Our ships are the most efficient way to bring a state-of-the-art hospital to regions where clean water, electricity, and medical facilities and personnel are limited or non-existent. Instead of trying to build the facilities, we need to bring life-changing surgeries to ports around the world.

We train local healthcare providers and improve medical infrastructure; we stock our ships with a supply of vehicles so we can reach remote areas!

Web-site: <https://www.mercyships.org.uk>

Médecins sans Frontières

MSF is an international humanitarian organisation providing medical care in more than 70 countries. Since 1971, we have been treating people caught in complex crises and chronic healthcare emergencies around the world.

From our paediatric nurses to our off-road drivers, we are experts at working in fast-moving and highly-insecure environments. So, whether it's launching a rapid response or delivering community care, we go wherever we are needed most.

In 2023, we admitted more than 1.3 million people to our hospitals and held more than 16.4 million consultations, including at mobile clinics and in refugee camps.

Our vital work often hits the headlines when there's an emergency such as an earthquake, war or disease outbreak.

However, our teams are also running long-term medical programmes for vulnerable groups cut off from care, or speaking out about unseen suffering and the policies that cause it.

Around the world, 365 days a year, we are there even when the cameras are not.

Web-site: <https://msf.org.uk/>

UNHCR

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.

We lead international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

Our vision is a world where every person forced to flee can build a better future.

Formally known as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the aftermath of the Second World War to help the millions of people who had lost their homes.

Today, UNHCR works in 136 countries. We provide life-saving assistance, including shelter, food, water and medical care for people forced to flee conflict and persecution, many of whom have nobody left to turn to.

We defend their right to reach safety and help them find a place to call home so they can rebuild their lives. Long term, we work with countries to improve and monitor refugee and asylum laws and policies, ensuring human rights are upheld.

In everything we do, UNHCR considers refugees and those forced to flee as partners, putting those most affected at the centre of planning and decision-making.

Web-site

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/>



Rev'd Deryck Collingwood's Epiphany sermon on Sunday 5th January 2025

Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

At this turning of the year, what lies in store? We never know... we may wonder and speculate, but we never know. It is, however, a time for turning. And turning is very much the theme of our Epiphany Gospel passage, as we hear of the Magi coming to Herod and then on to the infant Jesus.

Herod was *not* a nice man. He was a clever man, a great builder; an astute diplomat, who readily turned from one ally to another, whoever was getting the upper hand in the internal squabbles of Rome, in order to secure power for himself. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

That meant, of course, Herod often turning away from the interests of his own people, but if it meant his own survival, that didn't seem to bother him. In later life, he became so paranoid, he even murdered his own wife and three of his sons, in order to keep control. He was not a nice man.

So no wonder he used his guile to try to manipulate the wise men to come back and tell him where to find this new born king of the Jews... so that he too could go and 'worship' – only for him, 'worship' meant soldiers and swords and the massacre of any infant within a likely age group. In that sense Herod was *not* for turning, however much he changed his tune to those in power, for his own interests. No, Herod was not a nice man.

The wise men, by contrast, appear somewhat gullible, even naïve. They may have been used to dealing with royalty. Herod was a puppet king, there by the grace of Rome because it suited their purposes too. So Herod was the obvious person to go to on their quest. Naïve, but open-hearted and faithful for all that.

They come to worship and offer gifts - gifts worthy of royalty. And when they eventually find this child born in such humble circumstances, they are sufficiently open-minded to see that he is indeed worthy of their gifts.

They come as Gentiles bearing gifts before the king of the Jews. In being received, they also open a door, giving hope to *all* gentiles, ourselves included, that we too are called to be part of this alternative world into which the Christ child is born, in which he witnesses to a different kind of power from that of Herod.

But something else happens with the wise men's visit. Unwittingly - and not so wisely - they open another door. Initially it appears they assume that Herod is to be trusted. Yet, despite that warning in a dream, they open the way for Herod to come in a back door and cause mayhem in the ensuing slaughter of innocent children. The infant Jesus escapes, Joseph himself being warned in a dream to flee to Egypt, but the consequence of their visit is utterly disastrous for other families who have to pay the price of their naivety.

Human 'wisdom' in that sense is always limited and somewhat ambiguous. If word of the horrendous consequences should have reached these sages on their way home by that other route, they would doubtless have struggled to find a way to live with it.

But their quest reveals to us and to all nations the source of true wisdom, bathed in the light of that star. True wisdom lies there in the vulnerability of the infant Jesus, found in the most unlikely place and in the most unlikely of ways.

Then alongside the turning of Herod in his trickery and the turning of the wise men in their naïve but open-hearted quest to adore a true King, we find both a diplomatic and a wise turning point in the story of the infant Jesus, where his parents take him away to protect him, into exile in Egypt and then, when they think it safe to return after the death of Herod, into the obscurity of Nazareth.

The infant Jesus had little going for him. But he returned in adulthood to confront those who abuse positions of power, whether secular or religious, with simple words of truth; and to proclaim a *new* Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, to *all* people who are willing to turn and follow... both Jew and Gentile, who repent of the past and find forgiveness as the key to a new life of the future. It's not just a turning of the year, but of the age... to the ages of ages.

Now we, like the wise men, are given gifts to bring. Sometimes we are not so sure what we have. We may not have gold, or expensive incense and perfume – but all we hear about any of that later in the Gospel story is of Jesus having spices laid in anointment on his body in death. The Kingdom of God does not require gold or incense to burn at the altar to cover the smell of rotting carcasses - gifts which are symbols of royal priesthood.

We nonetheless do have gifts, as hidden as that manger, even if they look like straw to us. God's true gift is one of vulnerability and truth to be found in the

forgiveness that this child brings. The contrast with Herod's world of power and ambition and the rule of fear could not be greater.

We may see only straw around us; hopefully some hay too, which brings nourishment. We are given gifts of bread and wine, the unlikely gifts in which he comes to us, hidden in humility. As it happens, in our liturgy we have ancient links to the East in our prayer for the Spirit to be sent upon *us* as well as the bread and the wine.

That prayer of God's overshadowing that we call Epiclesis, links our Scottish tradition to the ancient traditions of the Eastern churches, "that we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your kingdom."

But the greatest gift that lies within that manger, the gift of Christ's own self, in loving forgiveness, making himself vulnerable. As every new-born child has the power to turn people's hearts, so our hearts are turned in meeting him there.

What can we give him, poor in body and spirit that we are? I suspect he might say,

"Give me that which burdens you! Lay aside that which holds you back, drags you down, the heavy weight which prevents you from being the person I created you to be.

"In the darkness of this turning of the year, find a turning of the ages in your own life; in the recesses of your soul, wherever there is fear, give it to me; wherever there are memories that cause hurt, give them to me. Wherever there are unfulfilled dreams and longings, give them to me.

"And I will give you rest in your soul. I will give you freedom to grow into the person I planted within

the depth of your soul; free to be true to God's goodness, free in God's love to offer your heart as I so readily give you my own."



The flight Into Egypt

Painted by Jacopo Bassano 1538

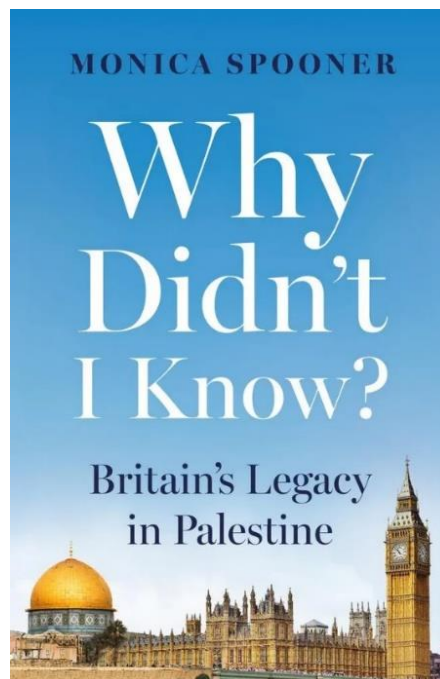
Books

Why didn't I know? Britain's legacy in Palestine

by Monica Spooner

Troubador Publishing 2024

Paperback 230 pages



A unique, factual and evocative narrative that raises awareness of Britain's historic responsibility and role in the Israel Palestine conflict.

In 2008 two ordinary people were invited to Jordan; they decided to visit Israel/Palestine as well. Their trip had anything but ordinary consequences. Knowing very little about the history and politics of Israel and Palestine, Monica and Roger found themselves face to face with the realities of the legacy of Britain's colonial rule.

This book charts their journey of discovery on five visits to Israel and Palestine and tells the stories of the people they met along the way and of the mission they embarked on when they returned home to Edinburgh. It describes how they developed the Balfour Project to enlighten the British people about the impact of our colonial duplicity in the Middle East, and to ask if there is any solution to this entrenched injustice. Is there anything Britain can do now to make amends for its legacy of deceit? An effective solution has never been more urgent.

This is an eye opening, moving and personal story that encourages readers to believe that they too can find a meaningful purpose which gives hope in a world so short of hope.



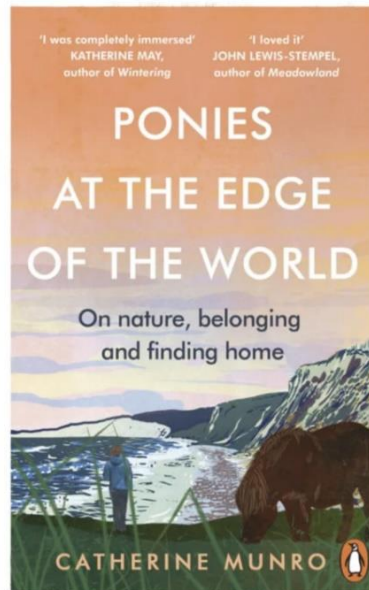
Palestinians make their way past the rubble of destroyed houses and buildings, following a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, 21st January 2025.

Ponies at the edge of the world
On nature, belonging and finding home

by Catherine Munro

Penguin books, 2022

Paperback, 288 pages



Catherine Munro transforms her life when she moves to Shetland to study the hardy ponies who call this archipelago home.

Over the course of her first year, she is welcomed into the rhythms and routines that characterise life at the edge of the world. When faced with personal loss, Catherine finds comfort and connection in the shared lives of the people, animals and wild landscapes of Shetland.

Ponies at the Edge of the World is a heartfelt love letter to the beauty and resilience of these magical ponies and their native land.

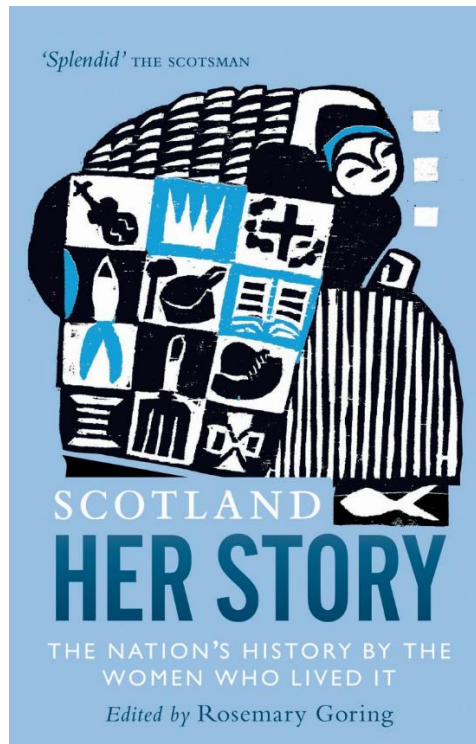
Scotland: Her Story

The nation's history by the women who lived it

edited by Rosemary Goring

Birlinn, Edinburgh 2020 (reprinted 2023)

Paperback, 415 pages



Scotland's history has been told many times, but never exclusively by its women. This book takes a unique look at dramatic national events as well as ordinary life, as experienced by women down the centuries. From the saintly but severe medieval Queen Margaret to today's first minister Nicola Sturgeon, it encompasses women from all stations of class and fame and notoriety, offering a tantalising view of what happened to them, and how they felt.

Drawing on court and kirk records, exchequer rolls and treasurer's accounts, diaries and memoirs, chap

books and newspapers, government reports and eye-witness statements, *Scotland: Her Story* brings to life the half of history that has for too long been hidden or ignored.

Authors include: Princess Matilda, St Margaret, Margaret Tudor, Mary - Queen of Scots, Lady Grizel Baillie, Elsie Inglis, Mary Slessor, Jane Carlyle, Marie Stopes, Nan Shepherd, Leila Aboulela, Winnie Ewing, Muriel Spark, Liz Lochhead, Jackie Kay, Ali Smith, Nicola Sturgeon.



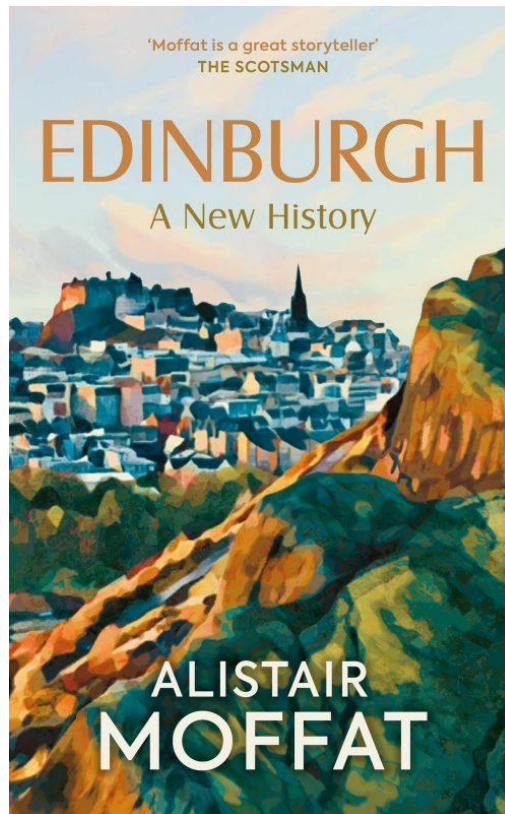
St. Margaret of Scotland
depicted in stained glass at Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh: A New History

by Alistair Moffat

Birlinn, Edinburgh 2024

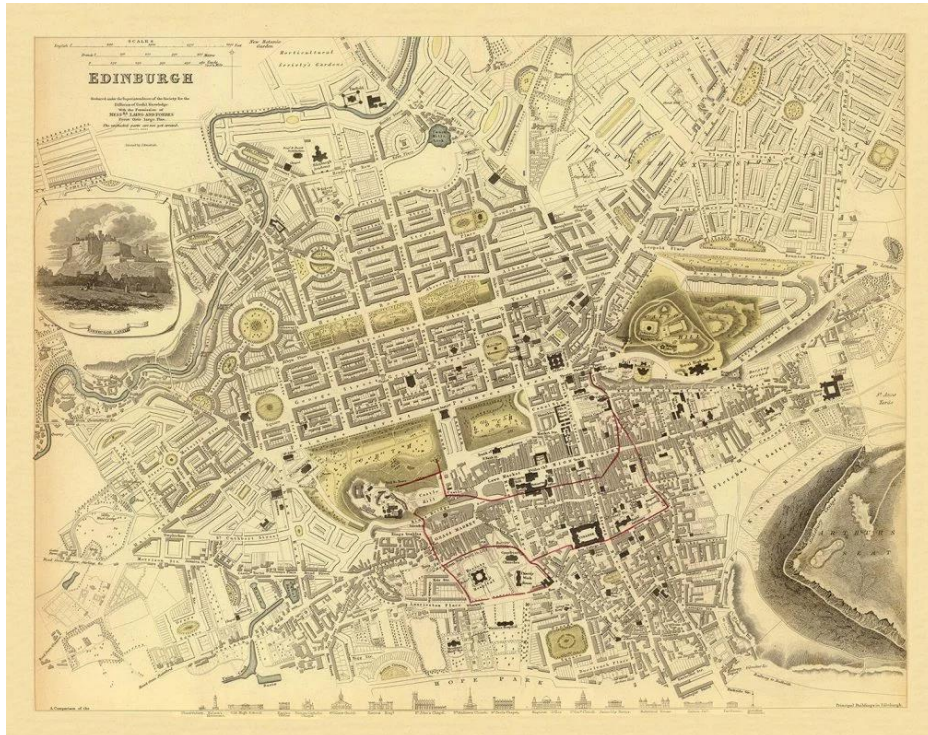
Hardback, 220 pages



From prehistory to the present day, the story of Edinburgh is packed with incident and drama. As Scotland's capital since 1437, the city has witnessed many of the key events which have shaped the nation.

But Edinburgh has always been much more than just a political centre. During the Enlightenment, it was one the intellectual powerhouses of Europe, and in the twentieth century it became the arts capital of the world with the founding of its many festivals. Finance, religion, education and industry are also important parts of the story.

Alistair Moffat explores these themes and many more, showing how the city has grown, changed and adapted over the centuries. He introduces Edinburgh's famous places and people - including monarchs, murderers, writers and philosophers - as well as the ordinary citizens who have contributed so much to the life of one of the world's best-known and most beautiful cities.



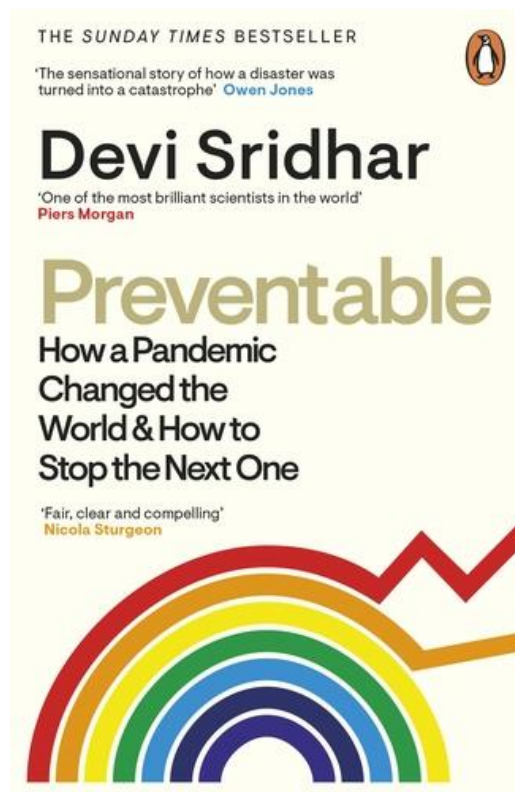
Edinburgh in 1834

Preventable

by Devi Sridhar

Penguin Books 2023

Paperback, 330 pages



The definitive story of COVID-19 and how global politics shape our health - from a world-leading expert and the pandemic's go-to science communicator.

Professor Devi Sridhar has risen to prominence for her vital roles in communicating science to the public and speaking truth to power. In *Preventable* she highlights lessons learned from outbreaks past and present in a narrative that traces the COVID-19 pandemic - including her personal experience as a scientist - and sets out a vision for how we can better

protect ourselves from the inevitable health crises to come.

In gripping and heartfelt prose, Sridhar exposes the varied realities of those affected and puts you in the room with key decision makers at crucial moments. She vibrantly conveys the twists and turns of a plot that saw: deadlier variants emerge (contrary to the predictions of social media pundits who argued that it would mutate to a milder form); countries with weak health systems such as Senegal and Vietnam fare better than countries such as the US and UK that were consistently ranked as the most prepared; and the quickest development of game-changing vaccines in history (and their unfair distribution).

Combining science, politics, ethics and economics, this definitive book dissects the global structures that determine our fate and reveals the deep-seated economic and social inequalities at their heart - it will challenge, outrage and inspire.

“Excellent . . . Fair, clear and compelling.”

NICOLA STURGEON

Sermon on Christian Unity by Erika Pryde

Sunday 26th January 2025

Readings: Jeremiah 33, 6-9; Ephesians 4, 1– 6;
John 17, 11-23

Good morning; thank you for welcoming me here to St Barnabas'. This is the first time I have been invited to speak in an Episcopal church, and it is a great honour to be invited to share with you. As you may know I am one of the Mission and Outreach workers based at Newton Church Hall in Danderhall, just across the A7. Newton is a Church of Scotland and I know the reputation C of S has, so I hope you are sitting comfortably for the 40 min sermon!

I'd like to start by telling you a story. There was a flock of pigeons that were searching for food; after flying for a long distance, they were very tired. The pigeon king encouraged them to fly a little further in search of something to eat. There was one small pigeon in the flock; he picked up speed and found some rice scattered beneath a tree. So he informed the other pigeons, and all the pigeons landed near the tree and began to eat scattered rice.

Suddenly a net fell over the pigeons, and they were all trapped. The pigeons saw a hunter approaching them, carrying a huge club. The pigeons sensed the danger and desperately started flapping, trying to get out of the net, but to no avail. The king of pigeons had

an idea; he asked all the pigeons to fly up together, carrying the net with them. The king said that there is strength in unity, and when everyone will work together. Each pigeon picked up a portion of the net; together they flew off carrying the hunter's net with them. The hunter looked up in astonishment but couldn't do anything about it. He tried to follow them, but the birds were flying high over hills and valleys. They flew towards a hill near a city of temples where a mouse community lived. They knew that the mice were the ones who could help them; they were faithful friends of the pigeon king

The mice heard the loud noise of the flock of pigeons approaching and went into hiding. Then the pigeon king gently called out to them, and the mice were happy to see him. The king explained how they had been caught in a trap and needed the mice to gnaw at the net with their sharp teeth and set them free. The little mice agreed and began to gnaw the net. One by one, all the pigeons were freed, including the pigeon king. They thanked the mice and flew away together, united in their strength, and supported by the strength of their mouse friends.

But it's not just pigeons that can be strong in unity. Today is the end of the week of prayer for Christian Unity, although I hope that we would pray for Christian unity for more than just one week of the year.

The Gospel reading today is a prayer, not the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer which is really the disciples' prayer teaching **us** how to pray; this whole chapter of John is Jesus' prayer **for us**. This prayer is

recorded in the teachings of Jesus to the disciples in the upper room after the Passover supper; although there are verses that specifically have the disciples in mind, we can extract from it that Jesus requests are also for **US**.

In verse 11 we find Jesus asking that these disciples will be one just as the Father and the Son are one. Something I love about the Anglican service is the creed, in which you regularly remind yourselves that Jesus is of one being with the Father. Jesus repeats his plea to the Father again in verses 20-22, not only praying and pleading on behalf of the disciples sitting with him around the table, but also for those who will believe in him through their word (that of course includes us, the disciples of the distant future, those who have come to know Christ through the words of the disciples in the Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles and the Letters to the early Churches).

Jesus continues to plead that God the Father will enable us to be one as the Father is with Christ and Christ is with the Father; Jesus wants that we as disciples may also be one in Christ and in the Father, that the world may believe that Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father, and that they the disciples may be made perfect in one as part of that union between the Father the Son and us as through God's Love.

Christ's desire for us his people, is to be as One; he wants us to walk in unity with each other as followers. We might not agree on everything all the time, even with our partners or our best friends, but the secret is to

disagree without being disagreeable, not to agree conditionally and then complain behind their backs! Our reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians calls us to be humble and gentle with each other; the way we treat each other reflects of Christ and the Church, both our own congregation and the one holy catholic and apostolic church. We don't need to look far to see the damage that can be done to our world-wide church by deception, lies, arguments and the blame-game within the confines of the church, whichever denomination we look at. Everything we do must be done with a view to maintaining the unity within the body. Not unity of behaviour or of denominations, nor of personality; we as Christians are not created to be clones. It is God's will that we his people are joined together in one mind one spirit! Corinthians 1 verse 10 says:

I plead with you that you will all speak the same thing and that there will be no division among you that you will be of the same mind and the same judgement.

Philippians 1 verse 27 says:

Let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that I may hear that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

Why is unity both in our own church and within the greater world church so important? It is because we are a living advertisement for our Lord Jesus, for our faith. When the world sees the people of God, they either see

the presence of God or the presence of strife. Where there is strife there is confusion, and God is not the author of confusion but of peace as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 14 .

If we are unable to live in unity with one another in our own congregations and in unity between churches, how can we be effective faithful witnesses to God's grace? As we read in John 17, we who have become Christians have not been whisked out of this world yet; we are in the world but not of the World, and we have been sent into the world as Christ's messengers. If we practise being in Christ and him in us, the world will sit up and take notice. We can be on the same wavelength united in the spirit, and we are stronger together - as were the pigeons.

At this time of year we can see the image of unity in our weather! Snowflakes themselves like us are frail, but if enough of them get together they can close an airport, demolish a roof, or stop traffic.

On this Sunday when we are thinking of Christian Unity, what can all of this mean to us in practical terms?

By focusing on Christ, practising love and forgiveness, serving together, praying for unity, studying the Bible collectively, seeking common ground, engaging in open dialogue, celebrating diversity, and leading by example, Christians can actively pursue and experience the unity that Jesus prayed for among His followers.

What does this look like in our community? You will know that David and I, despite having met previously through a combination of scouting and use of the Borders' bothies, have become united in a purpose in a new way within the new community of Shawfair. We have not stopped being part of our own denomination or church; we have not changed the way we worship, or our own personality. David still does not use technology, and I totally embrace every new gadget, but we have become united in spirit and in mind, working together not to promote ourselves, our place in our own churches or in our denomination, but united in seeking the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. As we pray in the Prayer Jesus taught to his disciples: "May Your kingdom come"; or as is said in the Apostles creed: "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church." If we truly say these things with our heart and not just our voice, then we will be building the church, the gathering of Christians of all denominations and none, to come together in unity to be an advertisement for the Glory of God so that the world will come to know the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. If we cannot unite to witness to the world of God's mercy and love, then we are not being effective advertisements. We don't have to agree with each other on everything; we are still allowed our personal opinions, but it is how we express these and how we put them aside for the greater good of the Kingdom that is important.

When I was doing youth work and the kids asked me what the difference was between denominations, I explained it like this:

We are all one family, within parents and siblings, all sharing the same DNA; but when you visit their home their rooms are not all decorated the same, and they are not listening to the same music. In my house I would be listening to heavy rock and have posters of Iron Maiden, Whitesnake and Motorhead on the walls; but my sister liked the Bay City Rollers; mum liked the Rolling Stones and dad liked jazz, but we were still one family and so it is with the church.

We still stand together as one. And as we saw with the pigeons and with the snowflakes, united together we are stronger.

Let us pray.

Father, we thank you for our great big world-wide family of Christians with our strange customs and all our differences. Help us always to remember that we share the same DNA; we are made in your image and loved equally by you. Let us show our unity to the world that we can be stronger in our faith love and mercy when we work together for the furtherance of your kingdom.

Amen.

Mission and Outreach at St. Barnabas'

by Rev'd David Dixon, Rector.

The last words of Jesus to his followers before he ascended to heaven are reported in St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28 vv.19-20: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (*Good News Bible* translation)

If a congregation is focussed solely on their acts of worship within their building, they are not "going" anywhere. While the headquarters (as it were) of the early church remained for some time in Jerusalem (possibly until the destruction of Jerusalem in about 70 AD), many of the disciples and leading apostles such as Paul, Barnabas, Mark and Silas went out on great missionary journeys around the eastern Mediterranean converting both Jews and Gentiles to Christianity.

Over the past 20 years or so St. Barnabas; has become much better at going out - into 2 Primary Schools and 2 (now 3!) Care Homes. But while this is bringing the Gospel message to well over 100 more people every year, they constitute a "captive" audience. Time has shown that, so far, none of the children who have experienced and enjoyed the Bible Alive courses have subsequently attended worship at St. Barnabas'.

Now we have linked up with partner congregations from St. Mary's in Dalkeith, St. Leonard's in Lasswade, and the Church of Scotland in Danderhall to try to establish a congregation in the Community Centre in Millerhill. Millerhill is part of the larger Shawfair development, but as yet the Community Centre is the only community space in that massive area of new housing. While we have had encouraging support from the partners there has been no response from new people moving into the area, and so we are stopping the Saturday service and starting a monthly Messy Church type of event on the last Friday of each month (schools finish early on Friday afternoons). The hope is that we may also make contact with parents and find out if they have any interest in having a regular act of worship, and when the most suitable time would be.

In all this we need to pray and seek God's guidance. Our feeling is that God has opened the door of this most suitable facility for us, but that we have not perceived what we should do next and are feeling our way. We hope that God will show us how to reach out to people in that area with the message of the Gospel. Please do pray for this endeavour.

Church administration

Vestry Secretary: Christine Collingwood.
0131 448 0240

Church Treasurer: Elaine Houliston.

Lay Representative: Philip Sawyer.

Alternate Lay Representative: Lily Johnston.

People's Warden: Lily Johnston.

Rector's Warden: Lynda Hay.

Ordinary members of the Vestry: Lib Anderson;
Yvonne Fenwick; Catriona Ferry; Sandra Fyfe;
Kirsty Hamilton; Martin Veart.

Other regular responsibilities

South-East Edinburgh Churches Acting Together (SEECAT): Alice Anderson.

Sunday circle (Junior church): Lily Johnston.

Magazine editor: Philip Sawyer.
philipsawyer@cantab.net

Useful numbers

We all have those times when we just need someone to talk to and confide in.

Here is a list of numbers that you may find useful.

- The Silver Line: Tel: 0800 470 8090 Information, friendship & advice for older people.
www.thesilverline.org.uk
- Anxiety UK: Tel: 03444 775 774
www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- Arthritis Helpline: Tel: 0800 5200 520
www.versusarthritis.org
- Mind: Tel: 0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk
(Mental Health).
- Age UK: Tel: 0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk
- Samaritans: Tel: 116 123 www.samaritans.org
- Childline: Tel: 0800 1111 Calls are free and confidential
- National Domestic Abuse: Tel: 0808 2000 247
- Cruse Bereavement Care: Tel: 0808 080 1677
www.cruse.org.uk



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Services in St. Barnabas' Church

(see the "Dates for your diary" section inside this magazine for a note of any additions and/or changes)

Sunday

1st Sunday of each month at 2.30 pm
Holy Communion.

All other Sundays at 10.30 am
Holy Communion.

Wednesday

1st Wednesday of each month at 12.30 pm
Holy Communion.

All other Wednesdays at 12.30 pm
Prayer Service.

**During Advent and Lent each Wednesday 12.30 pm
service is a celebration of Holy Communion**

