



# Keeping in Touch April-May 2018



I write this on Palm Sunday enjoying the first evening of longer daylight hours. I always associate the Easter season with what I label 'new light'; those first few weeks of often grey and somewhat cold daylight that come as we change time. Everything around us starts to show green and the daffodils (despite the beasts from the East covering them in snow and ice!) are nodding their golden heads in my garden.

As we move through the events of this coming Holy Week however it can seem that the light disappears as we walk with Jesus through the last days of his life. The dark clouds gather ominously as the religious authorities conspire against him and the machinations of Judas become apparent. The dark night of Gethsemane when Jesus struggles in prayer as he asks God to take away the cup of suffering and then finally the black hours of betrayal, mocking and torture as he is judged and finally crucified. Jesus, the light of the world who has come in love to save us dies alone and in agony, seemingly abandoned by God his Father. The light fails, and darkness covers the whole land. Every hope is gone, the world is indeed lost and evil and death have finally won.



But yet, as the hymn writer so beautifully puts it, "there dawns a yet more glorious day"! The joy of Easter day as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The death of death, the promise of eternal life, the hope that in him all suffering can be redeemed and creation itself renewed come to shine in the darkness. Neither the cross nor death itself can overcome the light of the love of God in Jesus for each one of us. I pray that you may know that light and joy in your life, that peace in whatever place of darkness you may find yourself and the certainty that you too, with Jesus, can walk out of the tomb into his glorious light and life.

This will be my last letter to you as I move onto my new post in the Scottish parishes of Dingwall, Strathpeffer and Invergordon, with my final services here on April the 8<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the love, kindness, generosity and friendship that you have shown me and my family over the last seven years. It has been a huge privilege to be your priest and I pray that God will pour out his blessings on you all as you continue to witness and serve him here.

With my heart full of love and prayers for you all  
Julia



Since 1237 St Mary's Church has seen many Priests come and go. Many will already be aware that our current Team Vicar, Rev Julia Boothby is moving on in April after seven years. Whilst we will be really sorry to see her go, it is for an exciting and new challenge that she is called. That is as Priest in three churches way up in the highlands of Scotland. They are in Dingwall, Strathpeffer and Invergordon, part of the United Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness.

In her time with us we have all been touched by Julia's warmth and compassion, her willingness to listen, pray and walk alongside us in the good and bad times bringing a real sense of God's love for each and every one of us. Her faith is rooted in the everyday and it is there that we meet God and seek to serve Him. It is Julia who brought in the Family All-Age Service on the first Sunday introducing new families into the church community. The Mums and Tots Group meeting twice a month at the Memorial Hall has also been well -received. We have held a Summer Festival, three Christmas Tree Festivals, Community Singing, Suppers and Concerts all of which have sought to reach out to the community and invite them to the church.

We wish Julia and David well as they prepare for the next chapter in their lives. Julia's last service will be the 9.30am Parish Communion 8th April when we will be saying farewell, thank you and god bless to Julia as she moves north to start the next chapter in her life's journey. St Mary's will then go into a period of what is known as interregnum. During this time, services will continue, planned weddings and baptisms and any funerals that arise will still continue and plans are being made to ensure this happens. Please hold Julia and David in your prayers and that a new incumbent as Team Vicar will be attracted to join us in the not too distant future. Further details of the interregnum will follow in the coming weeks.

## A new choir member!



Over the past 6 months the congregation have been entranced to see baby Rosemary join the choir with her parents, Richard and Ellie Jackson. On 18th March we formally welcomed Rosemary into the church family at her baptism during the 9.30am Eucharist. The occasion was marked by her being presented with her own set of choir robes.



Don't miss out on the next **SING** on **15th April at 3.00pm** in St Michael's Room

Following what is sure to be some excellent singing everyone will be treated to tea and cake

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

will be held on **Sunday 22nd April at 11.00am** in St Michael's Room. The purpose of the meeting is to receive reports on the church's work over the past year and the maintenance of church fabric, to receive the audited accounts, and elect Electoral Roll members to serve as the parish representatives. The APCM is always interesting and offers an opportunity for anyone on the Electoral Roll to voice opinions on the way the church has been or is being managed. Do come and support your church, your parish and your representatives.

## Midsummer Concert a date for your diary



On **Friday 22nd June** we are delighted to announce that we will be holding a concert by the very talented Spiral Saxophone Quartet. The concert will take place in St Mary's Church as part of the Arts Festival weekend

Tickets for the concert which starts at 7.30pm will cost £10 to include a interval drink. For tickets and more information please contact Jill Pratt [prattmsm@hotmail.com](mailto:prattmsm@hotmail.com)

