

CHRISTMAS 2022

The Grapevine



*The Newsletter of St Magnus Cathedral Congregation
Scottish Charity SC005322*

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Scottish Charity SC 005322/CCL No 119086

Sun 4th Dec	11.15 am	THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT Lighting of The Grimstad Christmas Tree
Sun 11th Dec	11.15 am	THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
Thursday 15 th Dec	7.00 pm	Loss service
Sun 18th Dec	09.30 am	Communion Service in the St Rognvald Chapel.
	11.15 am	THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
	6.30 pm	FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS The Cathedral Choir
Tues 20th Dec	7.30 pm	KGS Carol Service
Wed 21st Dec	10.00 am	Papdale Primary School Christmas Service
Sat 24 th Dec	11.00 pm	Community Carol Singing
	11.30 pm	JOINT WATCHNIGHT SERVICE
Sun 25 th Dec	11.15am	CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
Sun 1 st Jan	11.15 am	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

From the Manse



At this time of year, we call to mind that much of our life of faith originates in the experience of the holy, and religion is defined as a set of symbols which purport uniquely to explain the meaning of life and serve as templates for responding to and shaping the experience of life. Faith often begins with experiences which renew human hope, and these experiences are stored in the memory as symbols — special memory traces which act as templates for life's ultimate problems — and that they are shared with others through experiences. Our overarching religious tradition, and none more so than at Christmas provides the repertoire of images with symbolic potential which dispose us for hope renewal experiences, shape the experience itself, act as 'storage containers' which hold the memory of that experience, and facilitate the storytelling by which we share our hope renewal experiences with others who possess the traditional images in common with us.

For example: One frustrated traveller trying to get home to Orkney for Christmas recalls, 'Discouraged and depressed with the futility of life, I wait for an endlessly delayed flight in December at Edinburgh Airport. I see a young mother holding her baby with passionate and protective adoration. In the beauty of that instant recognition of grounds for hope, my confidence in the purpose of life is revitalized and renewed. The friends who meet me at the end of the plane flight in Kirkwall are astonished at my good spirits. Today, I tell them by way of explanation, I met a Madonna.'

He goes on - 'the Madonna image, lurking in my memory on the threshold of consciousness, especially in December, disposes me to experience renewal in the presence of a mother with a child, shapes that actual experience, provides a 'pigeonhole' into which I can insert my new experience, and becomes a shared symbol with which I can explain my unusual (after plane flights) cheerfulness to my friends. If someone should preach a Christmas sermon about the Madonna, I remember both images — Bethlehem and Edinburgh airport — and 'correlate' them; each gives emotional vitality and resonance to the other.'

At Christmas time especially things like Creeds, doctrines, philosophy, and theology — essential reflection on and criticism of the moments of raw religious experience — all can be put aside for later. The origin and raw power of experience reside in life-explaining experiences. Religion, faith is a meaning-bestowing story before it becomes anything else.

I hope that your Christmas is a faith enhancing experience this year.

Every Blessing

Fraser



Malawi News

ST MAGNUS SCHOOL UPDATE



This year the Cathedral has donated a substantial sum to our Malawi partners as they embark on a major project, the St Magnus Secondary School.

Kelvin Matola, the Local church correspondent and coordinator of the Malawi Partnership has written with an update on progress.

With pleasure, I wish to inform you that we had our first visit by the Blantyre Synod Education Secretary, Mr. Moses Kastomu on, 15th November 2022.

School Board

He first met members of the Board of the school where he appreciated their interest and effort in improving education in Thyolo Highlands Presbytery and as a result, education in Blantyre Synod.

He told the Board that all great things start from humble beginnings and therefore, the Board should endeavour to work hard and make the school a success.

He thanked the St Magnus Congregation in Orkney Presbytery, Scotland for offering to assist Thyolo Highlands Presbytery to repair the school buildings at Chimvu CCAP that have now enabled 40 students to enrol at the school presently.

He assured the Board that he would work with them to make the school a success and achieve the Standards required by the Ministry of Education in Malawi.

Meeting Teaching Staff

Next, the Synod Education Secretary met the Teaching Staff in their "Temporary Staff Room". He commended the Teachers for accepting to work at St Magnus Private Secondary School; a school that had just opened its doors and had minimal facilities/resources.

He requested the Teachers to be committed and hardworking and ensure that each learner was accorded the appropriate attention necessary to achieve good results, both, for the learner as well as the school.

The Head Teacher, Amon Mtchuka; after introducing his Teaching Staff, informed the Synod Education Secretary of their gratitude for being granted the opportunity to pioneer the running of St Magnus Private Secondary School.

They assured the Synod Education Secretary and the Board of their commitment to ensure that the students are given the appropriate attention for them to achieve good results and thus, make St Magnus Private Secondary School one of the best and sought-after schools in Thyolo District.

He commended the Board for recruiting experienced and qualified Teachers with Degrees and Diplomas that are an asset to the school.

Students

Visiting the learners in their classrooms, the Synod Education Secretary thanked them for choosing St Magnus Private Secondary School to continue their education. He encouraged them to take their studies seriously in order to get good results.

He implored them to have a reading culture as this would help them acquire more knowledge. He hoped that they would be well disciplined and mannered students.

Thyolo Highlands Presbytery Education Coordinator

The Presbytery Education Coordinator said the school had started with two classrooms; Form one and three with around 40 learners. It is hoped that within the coming twelve months, funds permitting; to construct a two-class room block, a Library, a Laboratory and an administrator block.

In due time, it is hoped that we shall construct additional 8 classrooms, hostels, kitchen, cafeteria, recreation hall/centre, football and netball grounds.

Challenges

The school operations are "School Fees driven", that is, all operations depend on school fees paid in



by learners. We have 40 learners currently and the fees earned are hardly adequate to meet Staff Salaries and other operational costs such as utilities, learning and teaching materials currently pegged at **1,850 British Sterling**. Until enrolment reaches an optimum level, we are seeking assistance to find a Donor that could subsidize us in the financial operations of the school. Ideally, we are looking for a Donor able to assist us with 60% of the current operation costs for a period of 18 months starting from January 2023.

We are wishing that our friends at St Magnus Congregation would note of this plea and perhaps recommend us to agencies who would be sympathetic to our situation.

Conclusion

The visit by the Synod Education Secretary has given us hope and confidence that we are going about this project correctly. The assistance he has pledged to provide, will go a long way to enable us to achieve our goals.

Kindest Regards, **Kelvin Matola**

THE ST MAGNUS CENTRE

The St Magnus Centre Management Committee are seeking a Secretary.

The Secretary takes notes at about 5 or 6 meetings per year and keeps the Committee updated on any correspondence between meetings. The current Secretary also leads a dedicated working group who compile the Centre Volunteer Rotas in January and February of each year.

Please contact secretary@stmagnuscentre.org if you are interested and want to find out more information about the role'

Through the year with Anne Flint



Happy 50th Birthday Kirkwall Lifeboat



Welcome to our many visitors



Signs of Hope



A thousand thanks to one and all



Time for Reflection?



The end of an age.

MARGOT CANT



Margot Cant, wife of former Cathedral Minister Revd Bill Cant, died on 27th July 2022. We include, with permission, the eulogy given by her daughter the Revd Alison Newell, at her funeral in the Cathedral on the 17th of August 2022.

Mum (Margot) was born on the 20th September 1927. She was the only girl in the middle of a family with 4 brothers where she held her own (they said she was bossy!) and she was always given the same opportunities as all the boys. They grew up in Cramond in Edinburgh where her father was a civil servant helping to bring the NHS into being. Mum and her brother Robin were to follow that interest in health and became doctors. Margaret, Margot or Loudo as her school friends called her, because her maiden name was Loudon and there were too many Margarets in her class, went to Mary Erskine School. She enjoyed her

circle of friends and was involved in the Girl Guides, the Girls Association, and her church youth fellowship. In holiday times she went off with her family with their caravan to the Highlands, cycled up the west coast with friends and went harvesting in student years in Pitlochry. She had an early interest and knowledge in the natural world that she passed on. Her father, who grew enough vegetables to keep his large family going, encouraged in her a love of gardening, a useful interest to have later with a large manse garden in Kirkwall to tend.

Mum was a great writer of wee notes about her life in her latter days. Here is a quote from a note 'My experience of acceptance in my family growing up gave me a desire to have long vision, to give our own family love and security and patient understanding. I wonder whether that came over?' We would all say in response to her 'Yes it certainly did Mum.'

She valued her education and the encouragement as she said recently 'to make the most of any brains you have'

At University she put herself forward to be a medical missionary but meeting Dad changed that. She loved to tell us how she and Dad, who was a theology student at the time, met at a bus stop after Mum's family had moved to Colinton in Edinburgh. He bumped into her later again at a bookstore and at the end of the conversation he asked her out. Mum explained she was busy that night as it was her 21st birthday party but said 'you are welcome to come.' She describes how he hung about hopefully at the end! Dad was convinced from the start she was for him and when he went to the States to do postgraduate studies they wrote back and forth regularly. On his return, his enthusiasm for her meant he asked her to marry him the day before one of her final medical exams which sent her into a complete tiz and unfortunately led to resits!

She saw her marriage as a very happy one. It was certainly full of hospitality and generosity and laughter. They were a wonderful compliment for each other and in Orkney they shared their gifts with others and delighted in this community that has welcomed them both so warmly for over the 54 years here.

Mum valued all the opportunities she had in life. She enjoyed their first parish in Fallin, 5 years in a coal mining town where Elizabeth and I were born. Mum would help with first aid for minor accidents down the pit, then 3 years of busy University life in Edinburgh with staff and students. Dad was the Student Christian Movement Secretary there and Mum enjoyed the lifelong friends they made there who were also occupied with young families at that time.

Then Dad became the minister of St Thomas, Leith for 8 years. Andy was born at this time and after a few years Mum started on her professional medical path. A next door GP invited her to be his first trainee GP and she agreed and soon became a partner in the practice. As always she juggled work, family life and hospitality as a minister's wife with apparent ease although there was always the desperate cranking of the car in the morning to get us to school on time and Dads not so exciting meals because Mum was away doing a surgery. (He never stretched much further than boiled eggs and toast)

Then the move to Orkney where Mum was asked to help first Dr Gordon in his practice and then Dr Peace and Dr Bevan. She says of this doctoring time in one of her notes 'All the doctors I had the pleasure of working with were so dedicated to their patients and to the NHS and so supportive, I can't believe I was so privileged as to do this'

In Orkney she became involved in guiding as a County Commissioner for 10 years. In the Cathedral she was President of the Young Wives and the Guild and in the community she served on the 'Save the children' and 'Marriage counselling' boards. She also became an Honorary Sheriff and sat on the children panel.

Mum lived a full and rich life and it is not surprising to us that we were still learning from her to the very end, especially about the importance of gratitude. She was so affirming and appreciative of the nurses and doctors in the wards for their kindness and attention. She had a ridiculous moment in the hospital which she enjoyed retelling. Her first doctor was called Dr Kahn, KAHN, and when he came in to see Mum on his first meeting he said 'Good morning Dr Cant, I am Dr Kahn.' As a family we want to echo her thanks to the hospital staff - they were indeed extraordinary and wonderful in their care of Mum as were those who supported her in her home in Clay Loan.

As her sight worsened with macular degeneration she held onto her independence as best she could. There were some funny moments. Here is one Alice told me 'Mum went to Shearers for her shopping and as usual had her cotton shopping bag with her handbag. She passed it up to Audrey behind the desk and asked if she could pack her shopping for her as her poor sight made this difficult. Audrey replied it would be tricky as Mum had just handed her a pair of pants and not a shopping bag!'

Last year Mum had a dream. It was about a red ribbon that came in the window of her room and along the mantelpiece and out the door. Mum knew the ribbon was about the river of life, 'eternal life' she told me. On the ribbon was an old piece of card (one of the recycled cards from cornflakes packets)

On the card was written her name in her signature Margaret E Cant. This was clipped onto the ribbon with one of Dad's paper clips that he used for his sermons. It was a wonderful dream as it was about her uniqueness - there was only ever one Margaret E Cant (with the signature that only she has) and the dream showed her unique place in the flow of life, the red ribbon that we are all part of.

Mum *was* unique and she made a very particular mark in life and on us all. One of her lovely qualities was the way she was able to relate to others because she had such interest in life and such a wide knowledge from the arts to the sciences. She had relational gifts and was a great conversationalist. So many felt Mum's understanding and the interest she took in them. And each one of her children, in-laws and grandchildren knew a special relationship with her. To many, Mum was a good friend, naturally other-centred and humble and many enjoyed wonderful laughs with her too!

A recent happy gathering was her 90th birthday at Kincaig in the Highlands where our grandparents had a cottage and where the extended family shared many good memories of walking up Glen Feshie and picking blaeberreries or swimming at Feshie Bridge and we are very glad to have extended members of the family from afar with us today.



In her later years, the family in Orkney were great visitors and Mum would delight in hearing about everyone's comings and goings. She followed Libby's flower and bird walks with great interest and in hearing about it she remembered her own pleasure in the natural world. (In her working life she would take her binoculars to spot birds on patient visits outside town) She loved Andy's music, listening to his compositions and music with great attention - often I would come in and she would be sitting in her corner in her chair playing his cds. She had the only collection of all Andy's tunes and loved listening to them in the hospital too. She would come down at Christmas to be with us, her Edinburgh family where she became the heart and soul of things, endlessly encouraging to all of us including her 3 great grandchildren, encouraging their painting or swimming or biking.

She delighted in the weekly Sunday teatime when the family gathered at Quoylobs and later at Clay Loan whipping everyone at bagatelle and scrabble as well as the constant visits from the Orkney family throughout the week. She loved the way her adult grandchildren supported each other whatever the interest, whether it was nature, water sports, or travel exploits, music, animals and birds, photography, or dance. When her granddaughter Kirsten produced her recent dance performance called 'Mama' this past month about motherhood, Granny was in it at the grand age of 94! At one point Granny's recorded voice can be heard in the show commenting with others on motherhood where she is heard saying 'just relax and enjoy it' and at another point 'just make the most of all the help you can get'

And as her progeny we are deeply grateful for her endless support, love and laughter though all the ups and downs of life that we received from her. How privileged we are to have had her with us so long. Even as she physically faded from life

she said of herself 'I must be the most blessed person in the world' and she made everyone around her feel we contributed to that wellbeing.

The interest she took in her nuclear family she of course also took in the community and wider world for hers was a big world, not at all narrow. Whether it was her medical work or church involvement or any of her other many interests. I often wondered how she balanced her life so well. I think Mum, in living that full life, importantly didn't forget how to restore herself. She found gardening therapeutic and often in the light of a late summer evening she would be out weeding or picking strawberries listening to the birdsong at dusk. She would stop when I came to find her and when Dad was still alive, she would sometimes fetch Dad too and we would wander slowly round the garden pausing and admiring it in all its summer abundance, enjoying the calm and beauty.

And for her, Dad was her inspiration and special love. She had a photo of him on her bedside chest of drawers and he got a tap every night before she went to sleep.

Looking back, I am grateful that Mum taught me a way of seeing - to see and value the play of life in everything. And we will all continue to recognise that play of life as we delight in all the simple things she loved - the flowers will keep budding, the birds will keep singing, the waves will keep crashing on the eternal rocks, we will continue to gather round food and laugh, to enjoy fiddles and tunes, to care about our diverse world with its variety of peoples and cultures and 'our precious earth' as Granny called it recently. What she would most want is that we keep on keeping on, delighting in life, creatively building lifegiving community and caring about our world and if we do that with kindness and inclusivity, with generosity and laughter, with unconditional love, then we will of course continue to feel her presence with us.



SOME GOOD ADVICE FOR THE NEW YEAR!!!!

- "Remember that nothing is sacred except you."
- "If it doesn't fit anymore, physically or psychologically, let it go."
- "Take the items that you are going to review out of their space and move them to another room, or outside, so you can get a fresh perspective."
- "If you hesitate, trying to decide whether something is worthwhile, it's clutter."
- "If you haven't used it in a year, it's clutter."
- "If you find yourself defending the object because of how much it cost you, it's clutter."
- "If the item makes you feel out of sorts, it's clutter."
- "Always remove from your home what you know to be clutter. Otherwise, it will continue to detract from your life."
- "Toss or give away gifts that you don't like."
- "Feel good about the process of tossing and avoid the guilt. Advertisers taught you that things are more valuable than you. They were wrong. You are right."
- "Keep the things that feel alive to you. Things have either a living or a dead essence. When you clutter bust your life and home, you will very quickly become aware of the difference, and you will drop the dead things into the trash can."
- "Be ruthless. Clutter will try to trick you. Question everything."
- "First impressions are always correct. If your first feeling is that the thing is clutter, it is. No dumpster diving."
- "Your activities can be clutter. I guarantee that something that you are doing in your life now is clutter. You may be thinking that your value is determined by the activities in your life. That is untrue. You are already valuable! There is no need to prove anything. Those days are over. Ask, 'What makes me happy?' Whatever is left over, toss."
- "Any piece of clutter could be the thing that stands between you and your happiness. Nothing is too small to be disregarded. Every piece of clutter keeps you from rolling down the freeway of your life with the windows open and your favourite songs playing, with you singing along."

'Around the manger'

'Around the manger'

Who am I?

The mother, a vessel for someone else's plan?

The father, not the father, standing sentinel?

A shepherd, dirty and bedraggled, a loner from the veld?

A magi, wise and discerning, hoping in star-studded messages?

An angel, iridescent, illuminating and terrifying?

A donkey, nuzzling the manger, hungrily searching for hay?

A lamb, bleating, frightened by the commotion?

Where am I in this nativity tableau?

Is there a place for me around the manger?

Do I even want to be here?

Frozen in time

Sentimentalised on the mantle and displayed in shop windows

Re-enacted with dusty costumes and sullen faces

Petrified symbols or beloved catalysts into the story of Emmanuel? Emmanuel, then, there?

Or here, now?

Let it be here. Let it be now.

The JOURNEY

The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice—
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations.
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late

enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—
determined to save
the only life you could save.

Mary Oliver



PARISH REGISTER

April–November 2022

Baptism

April 17th Amelie Robyn Gillespie

Weddings

May 6th Jess Flett and John Inkster
June 11th Lily Crawford and Calum Corse
July 2nd Shauni Findlater and Kieran Learmonth
July 8th Lauren McWilliams and Steven Milne
July 9th Hope Roberts and David Leisk
July 15th Maria Sutherland and James Brodie
July 16th Megan Robertson and Graham Christie
July 23rd Rhiann Crawford and Chris MacDonald
July 30th Taylah Spence and Jack Paterson
August 4th Katie Stevenson and Christopher Mullan
August 5th Kirsten Tait and Joseph Grant
August 6th Joanne Rendall and Rhys Dixon
August 22nd Margaret Harris and Alistair McNair
August 26th Hannah Thomson and Gary Stanger
August 27th Sarah Sutherland and Scott Gilmour

Funerals

Below is a list of funerals which were conducted by the Cathedral clergy in the Cathedral or the Funeral Home.

24th May Margaret Dearness, Stoorie, St Ola
16th July James Raeburn, 36 White St
17th Aug Margot Cant, 10 Clay Loan
24th Aug Norman Reid, Wynbury, New Scapa Rd
13th Sept Nancy Corrigall, 7 The Crafty
15th Sept Ian Scott, 11 Earl Sigurd St
7th Nov Maria Glass, St Rognvald's House
12th Nov Jim Pettet, Eastwray, Weyland Bay
14th Nov Jack Drever, Warbister, Dounby