

The Scottish Episcopal Church The Parish Magazine of St John the Evangelist Forres

Charity Number SC010346



Volume 8 Issue 9/10

Sept/Oct 2010

The Eagle

What have the Popes visit to Scotland - the planned burning of the Koran and the 1982 Scottish Liturgy got in common?



The answer is they were the top three headlines on the Scottish

Episcopal Churches Provincial Website (www.scotland.anglican.org) this week and all of them were surrounded by controversy!

Concern was expressed about the Popes visit at a number of levels which ranged from the cost to would anybody attend. In the event a reasonable crowd attended, but then more controversy when the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has no locust in Scotland whatsoever, seemed to be given the primary role of welcoming the Pope to Scotland on behalf of other religions, whilst our Primus and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland were more or less left out.

The story of the American Pastor who threatened to burn copies of the Koran on the anniversary of 9/11 grew arms and legs and became a world wide controversy.

Finally the attempt by our College of Bishops to introduce non gender specific language into our 1982 Liturgy caused a similar World Wide media frenzy with the Scottish Episcopal Church being accused of altering the Churches understanding of God.

Let us hope and pray, through the Grace of God, for a greater understanding and tolerance of one another's beliefs and let us all work for the furtherance of Gods Kingdom.

Rector Cliff

The Power of Prayer

So many of you have sent me cards and kind wishes over the past month or so that there is only one way of thanking you all - a piece in Eagle. So, a very deep heartfelt thank you to all of you, for your prayers and, possibly more importantly, for letting me know that I featured in your prayers. Facing and undergoing major surgery, under the shadow of possible cancer, is not to be recommended - but it does have the benefit of focussing the mind. For a naturally 'busy' person, convalescence is not a lot of fun either - but it too has benefit, it provides a lot of time to think and reflect (and write !).

Not surprisingly, much of that reflection has been on faith and the power of prayer. Christ seems to tell us that, with faith, whatever we ask of the Father will be given to us (John 14:13-14). However, this is plainly not true as even Christ himself found (Mark 14:36). To mis-use the word 'answered' the way we all do - to mean 'answered in the affirmative' - i.e. giving us what we have asked for; prayers are not always answered'. Why is this ? Why does an all-powerful, loving, God let us go on suffering when we have summoned as much faith as we are capable of and asked Him to help ?

Perhaps I'm a heretic and should be burned at the stake - but the conclusion I have reached is that God is NOT all-powerful. He was all-powerful at the time of creation - but not now, not any more, and for two reasons - abdication and delegation.

Abdication, the disowning or renouncing of power, is implicit in the very act of creating an ordered universe that follows logical 'laws of nature'. In our universe, if you jump off a tall cliff you will plummet to the ground - and in creating a universe subject to the laws of gravity, God abdicated the power to stop you plummeting to the ground - no matter how hard you pray on the way down ! The very first act of creation involved the abdication of power (Genesis 1:26-30). There was more subtlety to the third temptation of Christ (Luke 4:9-12) than at first meets the eye.

Had Christ succumbed and God 'broken' the rules to save him, creation itself would have been destroyed because the fundamental basis on which the universe had been created would have been altered.

Unlike abdication, where power is lost, delegation is the passing of power to someone else. In His wisdom, God delegated some of His power to us mortals and He cannot take it back because to do so would negate the whole delegation process from the beginning. The very last act of creation involved the delegation of power to mankind (Genesis 1:26-30) and the second temptation of Christ was to take back that delegated authority (Luke 4:5).

So, through abdication and delegation, God is no longer all-powerful, which brings into question the whole concept of prayer. There are some things we simply cannot expect to be given, because God has chosen not to have the power to accede to our request. Put simply, prayer cannot change the 'facts' - that which is - is, end of story. Prayer cannot change 'cancer' into 'not cancer'. Cancer is a fact, a result of complex biological processes which are the foundation of our existence as living creatures. The 'rules' under which we have evolved allow for the existence of cancer and the same 'laws of nature' will not allow cancerous cells to simply disappear. If I don't have cancer now, it is because I never did - not because my (or your) prayers have changed reality. Equally, prayer cannot change those things for which we are responsible (the delegated power bit). For example, prayer cannot reverse global warming. Global warming is our own problem, of our own making, and it is us (not God) who have the delegated power to fix it.

So what or where is the power of prayer ? The power of prayer is in its ability to change our own perception and attitudes. Faced with the prospect of pancreatic cancer, which has a very low survival rate, it would have been very easy to have dropped into a deep depression, to have withdrawn from the world and to have given up. Prayer (yours and my own) helped prevent that. Your prayers helped me to maintain a positive attitude (most of the time); to stay 'upbeat'; to deal with the emotional stresses and strains of the situation.

Prayers about global warming help us to focus on the problem, help change our attitudes, help us to change the way we behave, help us to help ourselves fix the problem.

Your prayers for me have made the last few months bearable. Your prayers have given me the strength to say (and, I hope, really mean) the only prayer that will ALWAYS be answered, the one Christ gave us both through teaching (Matthew 6:9) and example (Matthew 26:42) - "Thy will be done".

Just four simple words, so easy to say, so very, very hard to really mean. Words with implications far in excess of their simplicity. A complete surrender of self to the Will of God. Total faith in His love and mercy. Total acceptance of what He has in store for us. Complete belief that, whatever happens, it must be for the best because it is what God has decided is best. "Thy will be done" is not a prayer to be said lightly, and it is not a prayer that can be said without considerable help and support from others.

So, thank you all again, not for your prayers, but for letting me know that you were praying. It was that knowledge that helped me deal with what was going on, it was that support that helped me accept (albeit weakly, with human frailty) God's will. It was that that revealed to me the true Power of Prayer.

Grant Swain

The views expressed in this article are not necessarily the views of the Editor and may well be the topic of some future Sermons!



FROM THE REGISTERS

Recently we have said farewell to
Tom (George) Andrews



Tom, who gave a lifetime of service to St John's died at the age of 96.
Tom's funeral was on Saturday 4th September.
May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

New Name for MOVING MOUNTAINS

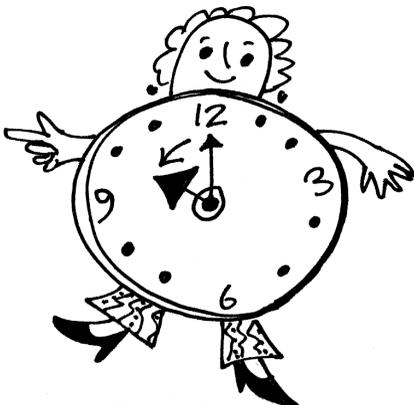
It has been decided to rename Moving Mountains as -

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER IN FORRES

As we move forward and new ventures are planned, the feeling was that a clearer Christian identity would be appropriate, although the scripture of Mark 11:25 on which MM was based, will continue to encourage us to pray in faith at all times expecting Him to move! The new title of course refers to Forres and district, but we didn't want to make it too long, and it reflects that we do meet in Forres.

The prayer for the community group will continue to meet on the 1st Mon every month 7.30pm (including school hols) – next one tomorrow (6th), and the Drop-In on Fridays as usual, (non-Christians welcome) with it's excellent newly expanded library. Both meet at No 1 Leask Rd. There's a feeling that this a new phase in what the Lord wants to do, so please come and pray with us for this work and for our community. We understand each church has its own commitments but we would love an active connection with each one, and with those Christians unable to attend church at present. The Drop-In is looking for more volunteers who will get appropriate training, but are happy to see folk for a cuppa and chat.

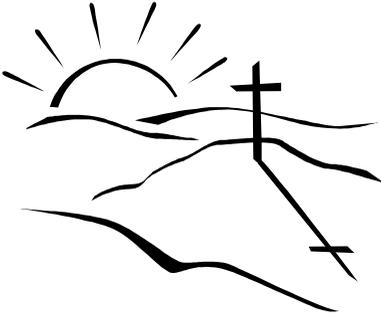
Chrissy Gibbs



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY - BISHOP MARK VISITS

Bishop Mark will visit St John's for All Saints on Sunday 31 October and following the Eucharist we will share a Parish Lunch in the Church Hall.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO
ADJUST YOUR CLOCKS -
BACK ONE HOUR!**



TORRIDON YOUTH WEEKEND - Gathering in the Hills

From the evening of Friday 19th to the afternoon of Sunday 21st November 2010. A residential weekend for young people aged 10 to 17 years based at Torridon Youth Hostel. There will be a variety of activities led by Bishop Mark, Clergy and Youth Leaders from the Diocese of Moray Ross and Caithness. Transport will be arranged from around the Diocese. Please contact Sue Piper, Diocesan Youth Officer 01309 672856 for more details. Application Forms are available from the Diocesan Website www.moray.anglican.org

MORAY CONCERT BRASS



St John's were treated to a wonderful Concert by Moray Concert Brass on Wednesday 1 September. Don't miss the next Concert at 7.00 pm on 27 October with Glen Munro on Trumpet and Isobel Burnie on Organ.



CONCERT - Moira & Steve Harris present a **Scottish Miscellany** on 1st October at St John's, at 7.30 pm. Admission £10 including refreshments. Please take a Poster to advertise this event.

MOTHERS UNION – Service on Saturday October 2nd in the Cathedral at 2.30 pm.

FRANCISTIDE - The Third Order of the Society of St Francis, Scotland meet at St John's on Saturday 2nd October. The Eucharist will be celebrated at 12.00 noon - All Welcome.

TRAIDCRAFT STALL – the next sale will be Sunday 3rd October following the 10.00 am Service.

VESTRY MEETING - Monday 4th October at 7.00 pm in the Parish Room.

CONCERT - Glen Munro on Trumpet & Isobel Burnie on Organ 7.00 pm Wednesday 27th October.

BISHOPS VISIT - Bishop Mark will be celebrant and preacher at All Saints on 31st October at the 10.00 am Eucharist. The service will be followed by a Parish Lunch in the Church Hall.

BIBLE STUDY – on Thursdays following the 10.00 am Eucharist. The Group is currently studying a book on Matthew written by Tom Wright.

ROTARY CLUB SHOE BOX APPEAL - The beneficiaries are poor or orphaned children in the least well off Eastern European Countries, as in the past. Please take a box and return to St John's once filled.

MOVING MOUNTAINS – has been renamed as **CHRISTIANS TOGETHER IN FORRES**. - The prayer for the community group will continue to meet on the 1st Monday every month 7.30pm (including school hols) and the Drop-In on Fridays as usual, both meet at No 1 Leask Road.

READERS ROTA

DATE	READER	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT	GOSPEL
September 26 Trinity 17	Mary Little	Amos 6.1a,4-7	1 Timothy 6.6-19	Luke 16.19-31
October 3 Trinity 18	John Horrocks	Habakkuk 1. 1-4; 2. 1-4	2 Timothy 1. 1-14	Luke 17. 5-10
October 10 Trinity 19	Jenny Swain	2 Kings 5. 1-3,7-15	2 Timothy 2.8-15	Luke 17. 11-19
October 17 Trinity 20	Sue Piper	Genesis 32.22-31	2 Timothy 3. 14 – 4. 5	Luke 18.1-8
October 24 Last after Trinity	Ron Fleming	Sirach 35.12-17 <i>or</i> Jeremiah 14.7- 10,19-22	2 Timothy 4. 6-8, 16-18	Luke 18.9-14
October 31 ALL SAINTS	Ann Philp	Daniel 7. 1-3, 15-18	Ephesians 1. 11-end	Luke 6. 20-31
November 7 Three before Advent	Julian Rudd	Job 19.23-27	2 Thessalonians 2. 1-5, 13-17	Luke 20.27-38
November 14 Two before Advent Remembrance	Seymour Monro	Malachi 4.1-2	2 Thessalonians 3. 6-13	Luke 21.5-19
November 21 Christ the King	Alison Manson	Jeremiah 23.1-6	Colossians 1.11-20	Luke 23.33-43

This edition of the Eagle is available in full colour on St John's Website.

The Very Reverend Clifford J Piper
 The Rectory, Victoria Road, Forres, IV36 3BN
 Phone: 01309 672856 Email stjohnsforres@btinternet.com
 St John's website: <http://stjohnsforres.wordpress.com>
 Diocesan website: www.moray.anglican.org
 Provincial website: www.scotland.anglican.org