CHRISTMAS 2020

Glasgow Cathedral (St Mungo's or High), Church of Scotland
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Dear Friends,

The opportunity to celebrate Christmas in the traditional way has been recast by the restrictions of the Corona virus. Covid 19 has become one of the most reported phenomena of the past year. The created vaccine brings forth hope of therapy and remedy. We welcome the opportunities an antidote gives to us.

During lockdown some people helped us see the good in others and the good others can do. The value of community and communication brought meaning to life for many and allowed some to recalibrate their priorities. Those who were separated became creative and inventive in affirming their love. The activities to raise money often raised our spirits.

For some folks holidays have been postponed and special events rescheduled. The year that lies ahead is charged with expectation. We hope plans for the new year may be fulfilled.

At this time, we sit on the threshold of a new beginning. This is appropriate in the season of advent. Advent this year may be different, but we will still celebrate and remember the significance of this season for us all.

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to go into the Cathedral and record different parts for our broadcast services. On one occasion I was in the lower church and noticed behind one of the communion tables the nativity scene that is usually, at Christmas time, displayed at the crossing of the nave. The model stable was wrapped with plastic, preserving it for the annual display. I remembered earlier in the year meeting with Margaret Grant on the occasion of her one hundredth Birthday. Margaret, with others, created our nativity scene. Since the nativity’s creation it has been used annually in the Cathedral. It must have been seen by so many people over the years. This year we may see a picture of our nativity scene, but we may not see it in its usual place.
However what the scene depicts will be seen in so many places. The scene will be seen on cards, advent calendars, posters, shop displays and in many homes.

The story of Jesus’ birth will be told in the animals, the artificial straw, the figures of the wise travellers, shepherds and their gifts. Mary and Joseph will look upon the manger and see the infant Jesus.

It may be the same ‘old... old story’ but it will be new this year. We will see it differently through the lens of the pandemic. You cannot experience the pandemic and the affect it has had and not be changed. We have been changed by the events of the past year and we can be changed by the events we remember this Christmas.

The life changing story of Christmas is that God reached out to the world and brought those who responded close. Faith for many during lockdown was a consolation. Many found mystery and meaning when the familiar was locked away and removed from sight. The mystery and meaning were seen in selfless acts as individuals reached out to their community. They were seen in prayer as they supported those they could not physically help. They were seen in worship as they looked beyond their immediate situation to those things that give life meaning. Some were challenged to think about what was truly important. Many realigned their love, resources, actions and ambition.

The Cathedral nativity scene may be wrapped and preserved for the future. However, the scene will be represented in our community and our home. Jesus must be unwrapped and placed at the centre of our celebration this Christmas. I urge you to take time to think of God looking for us when we are lost, when we are stumbling in the darkness. We must place ourself in the nativity scene in a different way this year. We should stand shoulder to shoulder with the shepherds, the wise men and even the holy family. What will you see, what will it ask you to do? The Inn Keeper gave shelter, the shepherds brought all they had, the wise travellers brought generous symbolic gifts, Joseph brought safety, Mary gave life. What will we give to the life of the world this Christmas?

May we look forward to seeing some things as they were and should be. May the experience of the past year be a catalyst to change the wrongs in our life and the world around us.

Look afresh at the nativity scene and look afresh at the world.

With every good wish and blessing,

Revd Mark E Johnstone DL, MA, BD.
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2020
From the Lord Provost of Glasgow

I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to send a Christmas message to Glasgow Cathedral’s congregation, supporters, visitors and all of Glasgow’s citizens alike. This year has been a difficult and extraordinary year filled with unprecedented challenges for all of us. To those of you struggling in whatever personal way that may be, but particularly to all who have lost a loved one or have suffered detriment due to this global health crisis, I send my deepest condolences, as well as my sincere wishes and hope that you find the fortitude to look forward to a more optimistic 2021.

Christmas is a special time of year. Traditionally, it is a time to gather with family and friends and, particularly for children, it is a magical season. It is also a time, for those of faith, to quietly reflect on the birth of Jesus and what their faith means to them and those they care about. Events this year have brought home to us all what is and should be really important in life, and it is just those personal but special moments spent with family and friends and in contemplation of our faith that allow us to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

This year’s pandemic has been a lesson in patience, altruism and collective responsibility. I trust we all recognise the significance of such behaviour and values, which I am sure, you will agree, chime with the Christian tenets of charity, kindness and love for each other.

I hope that this festive season will offer all of us a chance to recuperate from the challenges of this year and to take time out from work, personal preoccupations and other responsibilities and reflect on our lives in the true spirit of Christmas.

No matter how you will celebrate Christmas, may I wish you all health, happiness and all the blessings of the season for a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous new year filled with renewed hope for a brighter future.

Best wishes

The Rt Hon The Lord Provost of Glasgow Councillor Philip Braat
2020: A GREEK ODYSSEY
WHO ON EARTH FINDS THEMSELVES EMIGRATING DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

Cathedral Member - Rachael Weir

Back in the good old less than 2 metres days of 2019 as I applied for an overseas job the prospect of success felt remote enough. I could not have imagined the circumstances in which I might be successful and find myself packing my life away to begin life in Athens, Greece. Strange as it is to be here, it’s all the stranger to be apart from family and friends, though as my folks pointed out I was pretty much separated from them for several months even within the same city.

Until recently Greece has fared well with COVID-19. A strict, early lockdown and community commitment to “menoume spiti” (or “stay home”), and later “menoume asfaleis” which saw people’s movement limited to their neighbourhood, saw off the first wave. On arrival the difference in approach was immediately obvious. Full adherence to mandatory indoors mask wearing and around 50% of people wearing masks when walking around - in line with a recommendation to do so in crowded places where social distancing is not possible (essentially all of central Athens). (The infection rate has crept up recently, with quick and strict action again being taken. I haven’t had a curfew since I was a teenager!)

As I sit in my apartment looking out on the Acropolis, this ancient monument that has seen every war and plague for millennia I’m reminded not only that this too shall pass but of all the wonders and celebratory moments that the Parthenon has borne witness to - not least the birth of Jesus. Meanwhile each day dusk arrives as sure as dawn and in these times that is not nothing. I fell in love with Greece when I was 8 or 9 years old, on a family holiday, and it’s long been my dream to live here. Of course, the sunshine and drier climate is a major draw but the culture, the food, the people, their history, and their hospitality are the hook that captures your heart forever. The theatrical thunderstorms, on the rare occasion they come, are pretty breath-taking too. Lying in bed with the doors open watching the sky light up is magical.
It’s not all baklava and souvlaki, though both have been consumed in plentiful measure. I am here to work and though a little constrained by the restrictions in place it is easier to get business done here than it was working remotely from Glasgow. Security is tight, and rightly so. I’ve never felt so safe and cared for. Having access to a free handyman on tap, I fear adjusting to real life in the UK at the end of my tenure may be a challenge. Hopefully that is some years away!

It is somewhat difficult to find a church home in this time of segregation - an irony in a city where I spent an early Sunday at the Aeropagus where Paul is reputed to have delivered a sermon to the Athenians. There are two or three churches offering services in English (I’m working on my Greek with a tutor and while improving by the day it is definitely siga siga!) but all are operating online. The one unexpected bonus of COVID is being able to keep up with services at the Cathedral. Excited though I was by this opportunity, leaving my Cathedral family behind was difficult and all the more so by not being able to see people before I left. Consolidating my connection to the Cathedral was a major reason behind my becoming a member during Lockdown. Seeing Mark’s face and hearing his voice each Sunday transports me back each and every time and for as long as that remains possible, I shall be grateful. The work that he, Glen, Jane, Heather, and the Elders (and others) have done to keep the spiritual home fires burning has been second to none.

Hope all is well with you and yours and that you are not working too hard. Sending you some sunshine!

Best,

Rachael (Weir)
A COVID GARDENING YEAR
By Cathedral Elder Norma Clarkson Gorman

Norma is a retired lawyer and lives in Troon with her husband, James. They were married by The Rev. Dr. William Morris in 1975. Norma is a long-standing member of the Cathedral Flower Committee and was ordained as an elder by The Rev. Dr. Laurence Whitley in 2011.

“Count your blessings!”, my Mum always used to say, “Name them one by one. And it will surprise you what The Lord has done!” There have indeed been a number of blessings to find even during this spooky period. The rapid shift to IT platforms like Zoom, for example, has enabled a far wider range of participants in various educational and leisure activities than in previous face-to-face formats. This has even extended to our church life, including Zoom Kirk Session meetings and online worship. Humans are nothing if not ingenious and adaptable....

However, for me foremost amongst blessings is my garden. Tending “our small corner” of God’s Creation in the fresh air is a privilege I never take for granted. It provides constant opportunities to slow down, to reflect and to refresh the soul. Spotting the first new shoots never fails to give a little thrill and uplift of the heart - be it from annual seeds newly sown or from established perennials which pop up every year like old friends. Then seeing them erupt into glorious blooms of every shape and colour, attracting the birds, butterflies and pollinating insects, gives the reassurance that the seasons still turn and the sun is still in the sky and shining above us. God is in his Heaven, and all is fundamentally still right with the World, even though we’re having to plough on through the days with some temporary restrictions which put a bit of a crimp in our usual social habits and activities.

I have been acutely aware that the restrictions have been tougher for some other folks than for me - friends who have been cooped up in city centre flats, for instance, so in an effort to share the blessing of my garden, I started a “Coronavirus floral journal” this year. Each day during the first lockdown, then weekly thereafter I emailed and posted on Facebook photos of a different plant currently in bloom with a few lines about its origin, folklore, medicinal uses, etc. The marvel of an iPhone camera can capture the form, textures and colours of my flowers, but not their scent! So there are limitations to humankind’s cleverness after all! Rather fitting that it takes a microscopic organism to highlight this and abruptly check our headlong and heedless exploitation of Planet Earth.

Is it too much to hope that humankind may emerge from this pandemic with re-calibrated priorities, a more thoughtful and sustainable approach to the Planet and more caring dealings with our fellow citizens of the World? I do believe so, being a born optimist myself!

Even as the daylight hours dwindle and I clear up the dying leaves and foliage, I am already planting tulips, daffodils and wallflower in anticipation of a colourful spring display and the start of another gardening year...
FUTURE OF GIVINGS TO THE CATHEDRAL
From the Treasurer Charles Scott

Collections in 2020 are a fond memory and, like all things in a world with a pestilence swirling around us, will force us to rethink our givings for the wider benefit of the church.

The old way of FWO envelopes is becoming less important. In their place many have taken the initiative to use tele-banking, on-line banking and set up BACS payments. Some are gratefully maintaining their gift by monthly cheques. I manage to the bank at least twice a month, but the future lies with on-line giving.

QR codes, Credit card payment methods, Merchant accounts, and Fixed value terminals have been assessed but are costly, need greater footfall to be value for money and somewhat odious in the context of our solemn space.

So if you, all dear friends, could rethink how you may support the good works of the Cathedral and the Church please talk, phone or go on-line with your bank if you possibly can. Then let me know as I will remove you from weekly FWO list. Also I would be pleased to hear from those who presently are substituting BACS and Cheques as to whether they wish FWO Envelopes discontinued wef 5/4/21.

Enjoy the best of the future Christmas season and here’s to a new and better year in time.

Charles Scott

SMILE AMAZON

If you are an internet shopper, you might consider shopping via smile.amazon.co.uk. Register with them and the Cathedral gains a percentage of the purchase.
Admittedly, the percentage is very small, but as the advert says, “Every little helps”
I’m Miriam Hennig and I’m originally from Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil.

Last year, I visited Glasgow Cathedral and was welcomed by Reverend Mark Johnstone. I was on my way to Iona, in great expectations to do an Ignatian retreat there. I had also planned to spend Easter in Glasgow and what a blessing it was to be with the community at the Cathedral again! At the end of the Easter service, Reverend Mark greeted me and asked me about the time on Iona. That greeting and interest on the retreat caught my attention as well as the lovely conversations with community members afterwards. There was coffee and muffins and a great atmosphere inside the Cathedral. There was Easter joy!

When the pandemic started in Brazil, and I started working from home in March, churches were also closed. I immediately thought about Glasgow Cathedral! After a few weeks attending the services, I wrote an e-mail to Reverend Mark to inform him about my “Sundays in Glasgow”.

I can certainly say that the services have been a blessing! In these uncertain times in Brazil, I feel welcomed again when I listen to and sing the beautiful songs, pray with the community, reflect with the sermons and watch the beautiful nature in Scotland.

I would like to contribute with the Chronicle and express my gratitude for the blessed time I have had every Sunday since the pandemic started. One contribution is the picture of the nativity scene at home. The other is a poem by one of my favourite writers, David Adam, whom I met in 1999 on Holy Island. Thank you so much!

Christmas Poor (The Edge of Glory)

You are the caller
You are the poor
You are the stranger at my door

You are the wanderer
The unfed
You are the homeless
With no bed

You are the man
Driven insane
You are the child
Crying in pain

You are the other who comes to me
If I open to another you’re born in me
Dunedin Consort recently welcomed a new cohort to their training scheme for early-career singers. Andrew Forbes spoke to Tim Edmundson about his first professional experience with the ensemble.

The cathedral choir has strong links with Dunedin’s Bridging the Gap scheme. Founded in 2018, it is the brainchild of our Tenor 1, David Lee, and offers practical training to a team of four singers each year. Our Bass 2, Jonathan Kennedy, was selected for the scheme’s first intake, with Tim now following in his footsteps—and hopefully more of our choir members can join the scheme in future years. The first project for this year’s cohort was How Lonely Sits the City, a filmed performance inspired by the emptiness that has characterised our city centres over the past few months. Directed by Nicholas Mulroy, the concert juxtaposed Renaissance and contemporary music, including the world premiere of Vigil I by Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade, which was commissioned specially for the performance.

The music was mostly unknown to Tim, so turning up on the first day of rehearsal was quite an overwhelming experience. Whilst he feels comfortable about his musical role in the cathedral choir (having sung with us for eight years), the challenge of new colleagues and new music resulted in a very intense first few hours. Moreover, standing two metres away from everyone makes it difficult to get to know each other, both socially and musically—and of course there were no trips to the pub; usually a crucial part of post-recording socialisation! However, by day two Tim had started to get into the swing of things and, when recording day came, it had begun to feel almost like a normal concert. Usually, recording sessions offer the chance to return to specific moments and rework them several times to get the perfect take. However, with an entire concert to film in just two sessions (six hours), there wasn’t time for this sort of finessing and Dunedin Consort had to get most pieces down in one take. This added a fair bit of pressure—which Tim was glad of, since it helped recreate the atmosphere of a live performance. Whilst nothing can replicate the spirit of a real audience, the red light going on with a tight schedule certainly helps.

Tim found the project hugely instructive, as the repertory – although unfamiliar – wasn’t so challenging that he didn’t enjoy singing it. In fact, he realised that thinking less about the music and just letting his instincts and vocal technique take over yielded the best results. We look forward to hearing the difference in the cathedral choir once we’re allowed to sing together again! Until then, you can catch Tim on the (virtual) stage at RCS, in Handel’s Giulio Cesare and Jonathan Dove’s Flight, or performing Victoria’s O Magnum Mysterium with his other Bridging the Gap colleagues for a recording project with Nevis Ensemble.

How Lonely Sits the City is available at https://bit.ly/lonely-city until 18th December
HEARTFELT THANKS FROM THE LODGING HOUSE MISSION

I am writing to acknowledge and thank you and the Glasgow Cathedral Outreach Team, for your donations of clothing and a sleeping bag delivered to assist our work with homeless, vulnerable and socially excluded persons at the Lodging House Mission here in Glasgow. A lot has changed about our work this year, although our day centre closed to the public at the beginning of the pandemic, our Mission has continued. We are currently seeking to raise funds for our Winter Appeal, providing hats, scarfs, gloves and facemask to those who will experience hardship over the colder months. We have adapted and continue to review the situation in line with changing Government guidance.

At LHM, we seek to make a positive impact on the lives of those who are affected by homelessness, feel vulnerable or are socially isolated. While we remain closed to the public we are keeping in touch with individuals through our Chaplaincy phone line (07864 705 668) which aims to help combat the stress of social isolation and provide access to wider support services. Angela, our support worker is available for one-to-one appointments in person or over the phone to offer advice and advocacy services.

Our dedicated volunteer team continue - as we have done throughout the pandemic - to prepare emergency food parcels and essential toiletries packs to be distributed to those most in need through our frontline agency partners. In addition we now have a ‘hot meal voucher’ scheme, fulfilled through partnership with local takeaway restaurants, and supporting local business. This is proving to be a great engagement tool for the frontline services and making sure no one needs to go without a hot meal.

We continue with God’s grace to seek new and creative ways to meet the Mission’s aims.

We know none of this would be possible if it were not for the generous donations and prayers of support from teams such as yourselves, so please accept our heartfelt thanks and know how encouraged we feel.

May God bless you as you have blessed the least of these brothers and sisters of Christ. (Matthew 25:40)
May you know joy and Peace this festive season.

Deacon Claire Herbert, Chaplain LHM
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Scottish Charity No SC017283
LHM 2020
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

KEEP THOSE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS WARM THIS CHRISTMAS WITH A WINTER WEATHER PACK

Winter Weather Packs contain; gloves, hat, scarf, face mask, and a phone number providing access to support and chaplaincy services. Each pack will be delivered to an individual who finds themselves isolated and affected by homelessness this festive season.

You could sponsor the cost of a Winter weather pack at £12 or simply make a donation to our Christmas Appeal and help us to continue to care for and support those who are isolated and without a home over the festive period.

HELP US SHARE SOME WARMTH THIS WINTER.

THANKYOU.
It is a hard time of year. The old year, with all its problems, is drawing to a close. We are deprived of the special services of Advent and Christmas with their promise of new beginnings. When things are tough, I find myself turning to collections of poetry. I like WB Yeats; specially his ‘Second Coming’. In its opening verse, he writes the famous lines: ‘Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’.

Things may be rocking here, but they have not fallen apart. The Kirk Session continues to meet to support the Minister and look after the affairs of the Congregation. We now use modern means to communicate by Zoom over the internet. We can see each other and speak freely, share pictures and papers instantly. All whilst sitting safely at home, free form risk of Covid! The move online started well with relatively few hiccups and has got better each time. The members of Session have worked out how to sit before the camera and present a suitable image to the world. We have enjoyed a variety of hairstyles and beards. Mostly, we remember to turn on the microphone before we speak. I have learned the value of contact with others, even if it is electronic contact. I think most members are glad to avoid travel to the meetings on dark winter nights. Business in the Session and Committees continue to be done effectively.

We have maintained contact with other churches and organisations. In early October I met with Shabir Beg and representatives of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society. They visited the Cathedral last month as a stopping point on a Peace Pilgrimage. It was strange to welcome them at a distance and without shaking hands. The warmth and fellowship was clearly still there. Their first question was ‘How is Ross Mennie?’ I was able to answer them. Some things do not change.

I suspect the big job ahead is working out how to proceed as we emerge into a post Covid future. I think we need to retain the new skills and advantages of operating online. Email is free and instant. Can you guess which elder was shocked by the price of postage stamps? Many people all round the world join in our online services and email to tell us how good
they are. Joining in via the internet helps with the sense of isolation many people feel. The big challenge is working out how to include those without easy internet access. I feel it is important we remain inclusive and make everyone feel welcome and valued in the Cathedral family.

The closing verse of Yeats’ poem says: ‘Surely some revelation is at hand; Surely the Second Coming is at hand.’ Here we are at the start of Advent, waiting and waiting. Stay safe, stay strong and keep the faith.

THE LISTENING PROJECT

From Frances Tran Cathedral Member and safeguarding coordinator

As a Church we recognise that the Covid 19 pandemic has affected us all. We feel it is important that as a Church we listen to one another’s experiences and share what we have learnt from this difficult and challenging time. To help us do this, the Church of Scotland’s trustees have initiated a Listening Project. The project wants to hear from all kinds of people aged 16 and older from across the Church, people of different generations, living in different circumstances in every corner of the country. As Safeguarding Coordinators it would be really helpful if you would take a few minutes to participate in the Learning Project – and also encourage others to do so.

The Listening Project has already got off to a flying start. Many people have already shared their experiences of faith and church during the current pandemic. Now organisers are eager to hear from some specific groups within the Church who are yet to participate.

The project would especially like to hear from people born 1920-45, 16 to 20-year-olds, people without internet access, and those whose connection with a local congregation was infrequent before the Covid pandemic. Anyone for whom the online form is difficult to access or use can call 07966 286617 and request one of the trained telephone facilitators to help them share their experiences and insights.
A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS AT GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

by Dr Andrew G Ralston

Andrew Ralston was educated at the Universities of Glasgow and Oxford and is a retired teacher. He has written numerous educational textbooks and historical works, the most recent being a biography of former cathedral minister Nevile Davidson. He is an elder at the cathedral and a member of the Council of the Society of Friends.

If someone asked you to explain the historical difference between Christmas in England and Christmas in Scotland, you might well say something like this: in England celebrating Christmas became increasingly popular during the nineteenth century, thanks in part to Charles Dickens’ novel ‘A Christmas Carol’ (1843) and innovations such as decorated Christmas trees, said to have been introduced by Queen Victoria’s husband Prince Albert. But in Scotland since the time of the sixteenth century Reformation the church had disapproved of religious festivals and as a result Scots placed more emphasis on celebrating New Year instead. Christmas Day was not even a public holiday north of the border until the 1950s.

There is, of course, much truth in all of that – but it is not the whole story. The following report from the ‘Glasgow Herald’, dated 26 December 1884, suggests that Christmas in Victorian Glasgow was not as joyless as you might think.

"The fashion of sending Christmas greetings is now as largely followed in Scotland as in any other part of the kingdom; and of late years not a few of our Presbyterian churches have been opened for service during some part of the day. Yesterday was by no means observed as a holiday in Glasgow, but the banks, the Royal Exchange, the Stock Exchange, and various other public places were closed, and in a number of private establishments business was suspended.

For those set at liberty the weather was highly favourable for enjoyment. The frost, which threatened to give way the previous night, continued very keen, and the different ponds and lochs in the neighbourhood of the city attracted crowds of holidaymakers. Many more left the previous night or in the morning trains to spend the festive season with distant friends. Throughout
the day the streets were crowded with children set free from school, the
tasteful displays made by our leading shopkeepers having for them only a
secondary interest to the pantomimes and other spectacular
entertainments.
Christmas services were also held in a number of the leading churches. At the
Cathedral, the Rev. Dr. Burns was the preacher.
The evening was largely given over to festivity, and in many houses there
were happy family gatherings."

One of the most interesting points in this report is that the Cathedral was already
holding a Christmas Day service at this time. The Rev. Dr. Burns is a reference to
George Stewart Burns, minister of the Cathedral between 1865 and 1896. His
memorial can be seen on the left-hand side of the stairs leading down to the choir
room.
The idea of a Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve did not come about until the
1930s when it was introduced by Nevile Davidson. These services continue to be
among the most popular annual events at Glasgow Cathedral, though sadly
curtailed this year by restrictions resulting from the pandemic. Nevertheless,
whether or not we are able to mark the day in our traditional manner, the central
message of Christmas remains: as another Victorian, the famous preacher Charles
Haddon Spurgeon, once put it, 'the infinite has become the infant'.
Can the Bible, Church history, the Christian faith, and history in general help us cope better mentally with the Corona Virus Disease (Covid)? For us, the current stresses are unfamiliar and generate fears. Can putting things in various perspectives offer any consolation and reduce anxiety? One might say yes. In our times there is faith in science and technology to shield us from many life-threatening physical and natural dangers – as would have been unimaginable to our ancestors. Yet the current pandemic has reminded us how such confidence can be shaken and how vulnerable humankind is, despite its cleverness. To most people, awareness of this does not need to go beyond identifying a gap in health defences and plugging it: a matter of public health management. People of religious faith can, of course, only welcome and endorse this. But they can also discern opportunities for deeper growth, grace, and enhanced humanity.

One might, however, say that due to the extent of the current alarm in the entire world, the “crisis” dimension is rather exaggerated. It has been sad to hear about the deaths of many senior citizens and others with chronic health problems, and about underemployment everywhere. But for most of us, the crisis has been relatively mild: a matter of inconvenience and some disruption rather than catastrophic or life-threatening. On balance, many of our parents or grandparents experienced harder and more dangerous times during World War 1, the Spanish Flu, World War 2 and so on. Then, the numbers of deaths were astronomical and there was no NHS, no furlough schemes, no online shopping, no mind-boggling money injections etc. In the 1830s Britain suffered badly from the cholera pandemic, and in the middle of the 17th century, London and Edinburgh were afflicted by severe plagues lasting 2-3 years. Most famously
there was the 14th-century Black Death pandemic killing populations in all-Europe by up to 50%.

And the Bible? It occasionally depicts disasters of the notorious “biblical proportions”? These were sometimes seen as divine punishments or threats due to human bad behaviour. Grim details of them can be read in Exodus 8-10 and Revelation 15-16. There is little mention in the Bible of life-threatening, infectious disease pandemics, but there were endemic infections like “leprosy”, as well as elaborate systems of public health precautions, described in Deuteronomy 28. However, the Scriptures and the gospel do focus overwhelmingly on healing and mercy rather than punishment, although this does not guarantee a life and world free of problems and suffering.

Some people ask: if God is good and all-powerful, why does he not intervene to stop terrible things? But we cannot read the mysteries of God’s mind or purposes. Anyway, for all we know, God does intervene in hidden ways and with good purposes unseen by us. Acceptance and trust define our relationship with God, not a contract, so that immediate personal comfort and security are not the priority.

In 1519, the Swiss Protestant Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, was as a frontline church carer stricken with the ‘plague’ for 6 months. He survived, but in the face of apparent death became resigned to God’s will. This was expressed in a verse of his subsequent well-known “Plague Hymn”:

Fulfil your purpose,
Nothing can be too severe for me.
I am your vessel,
For you to make whole or break to pieces.

This recalled the Potter and Clay in Jeremiah 18 and 19. Zwingli’s verse embodies powerful faith in extremity, like that of the martyrs. It is inspiring, but we can hope that we will not be led to such a test.
RICHARD FAWCETT BIOGRAPHY

Following completion of his PhD on the work of later medieval master masons in Norfolk, Richard Fawcett spent most of his career in the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of Historic Scotland and its predecessor bodies.

In 2006 he was invited to take up a chair in the School of Art History of the University of St Andrews, where he is now Emeritus Professor following retirement.

He has published extensively on medieval architecture, including the award-winning Architecture of the Scottish Medieval Church 1100-1560 (Yale, 2011).

He has been Principal Investigator of the AHRC-funded Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches project.

He is a Fellow of the Societies of Antiquaries of London and Scotland and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and in 2008 he was appointed OBE.
THE MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL

By Richard Fawcett

In its medieval state, Glasgow Cathedral was the magnificent architectural framework for a complex range of religious, liturgical and administrative functions. Primarily it was the location of the *cathedra* or seat of authority of the bishop – later archbishop – of the diocese, the territorial grouping of deaneries and parishes over which he had authority. As such it was the setting for a constant round of daily worship which varied according to the time of year and the importance of the particular day. This worship was the responsibility of the cathedral’s clergy: the dignitaries, canons, vicars and chaplains, under the leadership of the dean. The most prominent focus of worship was the high altar, towards the far end of the east limb, at which the principal masses were celebrated. Most of the daily services, however, were conducted from the clergy’s stalls, to that altar’s west. There were also large numbers of additional altars spread throughout the building, at which particular aspects of the life of Christ and his saints might be commemorated. Many of these altars were endowed to provide masses for the welfare in life and salvation in death of particular individuals or groups. Glasgow, like most Scottish cathedrals was also a parish church and, as the burial place of St Kentigern, it was in addition a major focus of pilgrimage. For the favoured few it might also be a place of burial, sometimes in association with a particular altar.

As eventually completed, with its architecture and sculpture, the rich colouring on its walls and in its windows, all combined with the smell of incense and candles and the sound of its music, the cathedral must have been thought to offer a foretaste of the joys of heaven to those who worshipped within it. Indeed, for those who appreciate architecture it is still a heavenly sight!

Glasgow’s is the most complete mainland cathedral in Scotland, having lost little more than its two western towers, one of which had in any case never been finished. The most unusual feature of its layout is that the main body is completely contained within an extended rectangle, albeit there is clear differentiation between the massing of the presbytery and choir in the east limb and the nave in the west limb, with the transepts and central tower rising between them. Despite the lack of differentiation of parts in the plan, there are several projections around the periphery. Apart from the lost west towers, there is a two-storeyed chapter house at the north-east corner, and there was a two-storeyed sacristy and treasury block off the north flank of the east limb, of which only the lower storey survives. There was also a plan to build a two-storeyed projection off the south transept, of which only the lower storey, now known as the Blackadder Aisle, was ever built. The function of this aisle is unknown, though it may have been on the presumed site of the burial of
Fergus, whose ox-drawn hearse Kentigern is said to have followed from Culross to Glasgow

Although its architectural history is much longer, as it now stands the cathedral is predominantly a product of the mid- and later-thirteenth century. The eastward slop of the site meant that the east limb, which was the first part of the new building to be started, had to be raised over a crypt or lower church (either term is correct). The subtle way in which the space of this crypt is modulated by the piers and vaulting, so that the traditional site of Kentigern’s tomb is at its heart, is unquestionably one of the greatest triumphs of medieval spatial planning to be found anywhere in the British Isles.

The main body of the cathedral was constructed over several decades. The east limb was planned to contain the presbytery for the high altar and the clergy stalls, together with a feretory for Kentigern’s shrine behind the altar, with additional chapels at the far east end. The west limb would have been the place of worship for the parish and also served as a processional prelude to the choir. Although the east and west limbs are of very different designs, they both follow the three-storeyed formula favoured in the great churches of the period. Arcades open into flanking aisles at the lowest level, above which is a triforium at the level of the aisle roofs; at the top is the clearstorey, with windows casting light into the main space.

No great building is produced in an artistic vacuum and, at a time when Scotland was enjoying a close interchange of ideas with its southern neighbour, parallels can be found with several of the great English churches. The east limb was designed in an idiom established at Lincoln Cathedral, though the closest comparisons are with such as the choir of the Yorkshire Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx. By contrast, the way in which the clearstorey and triforium stages of the nave are vertically interlinked suggests parallels with western England, Wales and Ireland, such as the cathedrals of St David’s and Dublin.

At the Reformation, in the years around 1560, the cathedral survived structurally intact and was progressively subdivided to house three separate congregations. The main targets of the reformers were the fixtures and furnishings associated with rejected forms of worship, although Glasgow was unusually fortunate for what survived of those fixtures. The pulpitum, the stone screen that cut off the clergy’s choir from the nave, survived as the base for one of the partitions that were installed to subdivide the building, for example. More extraordinarily, the bases provided by Archbishop Blackadder for two altars in front of the pulpitum also came unscathed through the turmoil of the period. Rare survivals indeed.
It is unlikely that we will ever know the exact age of the High School, although we claim 1124 as our foundation date as the Sang School or Choir School of Glasgow Cathedral. We do, however, know that in the 15th Century the School moved from the Cathedral, was called the Grammar School of Glasgow and came under the control of the Town Council.

In 1834 the name of the Grammar School of Glasgow was changed to the High School of Glasgow and it continued to be a school for boys only. Over the years it moved around the centre of Glasgow, finally ending up in Elmbank Street in 1878. In 1894, the Glasgow High School for Girls was founded and flourished at Garnethill and eventually at Kelvindale. In the 1970s, when Scottish and Glasgow education was being reorganised, the Glasgow High School Former Pupil Club arranged a merger with Drewsteignton School to form a new co-educational and independent High School.

We celebrate and recognise our historic links with the Cathedral and remember the schools that went before our present-day school. We give thanks to God for our school and for all the people whose dedication, generosity and prayers make it possible for the High School to survive and flourish, and for us to be part of it.

Gregor Howie
Christina Miller
School Captains 2020-21
THE KENTIGERN WAY by W. Jack

St Mungo, otherwise known as Kentigern, is the patron saint of Glasgow. Much of his life story is based upon a collection of myths and miracles, commemorated in the Glasgow coat of arms - the bird, the bell, the tree and the ring. He was, however, a real person who lived in the second half of the 6th and was contemporary with St. Columba. It is recorded that St Columba travelled south to Glasgow with a delegation of monks to meet and discuss missionary tactics with Kentigern. Columba recognised the importance of the Church in Strathclyde in relation to the evangelisation of Scotland and he urged Kentigern to actively engage in missionary activity throughout Strathclyde - and possibly further south around the Solway Firth in the kingdom of Rheged. It would appear that Kentigern was an energetic, charismatic and powerful figure and the church in Glasgow and more widely in Strathclyde thrived under him. However relations with the ruling King Morken deteriorated to such an extent that Kentigern was obliged to leave and travel south to the safety of the court of the king of Rheged in Carlisle. From there he carried on his evangelising activities in North Cumbria and eventually as far south as North Wales.

Following a power shift in Strathclyde, Kentigern was invited to return to Glasgow. Before his return he spent time establishing a major religious community at Hoddom in the Annan valley just north of the modern town of Annan. Some accounts claim this to have rivalled Lindisfarne in importance, but all that remains now is a graveyard named after him. There is little surviving evidence of an extensive building at the site, but archaeological excavation and modern carbon dating has uncovered increasing evidence that there was a major presence there.

For some time now there has been an ambition to develop a pilgrimage route linking the two ecclesiastical centres of Hoddom and Glasgow Cathedral. In recent years, a group of enthusiasts in collaboration with the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum have worked to bring this to fruition. A pilgrim way has been devised which links a series of existing paths to provide a continuous, mainly off-road walking route which starts at Hoddom and finishes at Glasgow Cathedral 150 miles later. The work is now largely complete, and a web site has just been published – kentigernway.com - which provides full details of the route along with walking instructions. All that remains now is to arrange a formal launch and promote the existence of the route. The date of 13th January 2021, St Kentigern’s Day, was chosen for the event but Covid intervened. Well, we have waited 1500 years for this event to take place – so maybe we can afford to wait a little longer.
CURRENT DEACON CONVENER – KEN DALGLEISH

Ken Dalgleish is a Chartered Accountant and Managing Director of Aspen People Ltd, which specialises in executive recruitment.

He is heavily involved in the Glasgow Modern Apprentice Awards at Trades House and has a particular interest in the Education Festival. Ken believes young people have a key role in developing the economic success of Glasgow in the future.

INCORPORATED TRADES OF GLASGOW

The Trades House of Glasgow was established in 1605 to represent the 14 Crafts within the City and to resolve disputes which may have arisen between the Crafts. The Organisation was created at a time of reform of Local Government with the City of Glasgow with two groups bring established. The Merchants and the Crafts. The Crafts were led by the “Deacon Convenor” who along with the Lord Dean of Guild were given seats on the City Council. These seats are still retained today albeit the Deacon Convenor and Lord Dean of Guild are unable to speak at meetings and are unable to vote.

The current Trades Hall was built in 1794 and was the work of the renowned architect Robert Adam and is the second oldest building in the City still being used for its original purpose, the first being Glasgow Cathedral.

Trades Hall houses a Museum on the upper floor. The original use was that of a school to educate the children of Craftsmen and education is still supported by the Crafts today.

The original Hall was the former Manse of Morebattle which was situated at the corner of High Street and Cathedral Street and was described as an “Alms House”. The Alms House supported “six poor men”. Later this number was increased to thirteen and donations were sought from funeral parties en route to the Cathedral Burial Grounds.

Charity has always been at the forefront of the activities of the Crafts and the House, focusing on both educational needs and those who find themselves in poverty. Over £750,000 is distributed annually to deserving causes.

Our relationships extend throughout the City and beyond and include nurseries, colleges and universities as well as many other charitable bodies. Donations are made through Trusts such as the Commonweal, Drapers, McFarlane and Education. Given the unprecedented times we are experiencing at present, the charity work undertaken by Trades House is as relevant now as it was in the early 17th Century.
FLOWERS IN THE CATHEDRAL

The Flower Committee gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have continued to contribute to the Flower Fund in memory of the following:

- In memory of his wife Muriel from Ian Smail
- In memory of Isobel Carlton, our mother and grandmother, from Ronnie and Kathy Watson, grandson Kenneth and granddaughter Emma
- In memory of Andrew Dykes and Margaret Dykes from Jessie Summers and Shona French
- In memory of Gavin Summers from Jessie, Gavin, Shona, Elspeth and extended family
- In loving memory of her parents, Johnnie and Minna Clarkson and her brother, Iain, from Norma Clarkson-Gorman

"AFTER HIGH TIDE"

In the Autumn Chronicle, we featured “Wind In The Trees” by Gregor Smith. Following on from that, we have included another fine example of Gregor’s artwork. It is called "After high tide". Gregor gives us his insight.

“Watercolour on paper with a coastal edge theme. Watercolour has been a principal painting medium for me for many years It can be used both with large expansive washes of colour working up to a clearly defined finish, as in this case. Papers come in a variety of surfaces and the choice is best determined by the subject matter.”
THE LIFE OF AN ACTOR DURING THE PANDEMIC
From Cathedral Member Elaine Ellis

Being an actor, and my day job also being in a theatre, work came to an abrupt closure for me on March 26th! I was meant to be appearing in Aladdin as the 'spirit of the ring' this Christmas in the Kilmarnock Palace, but we've been postponed....for a year! By this time we would have been in the last week of rehearsal and the show opening next week.

I've only been cast as a 'baddie' twice and I loved it! More often than not I'm Beast's kindly housekeeper or the fairy Godmother...which for those who know how torn faced I can be can raise an eyebrow.

A couple of years ago I was a mermaid in the Kings in Glasgow....my pal (Julie) who was the other mermaid, and I were supposed to come 'swimming' down from above the stage on wires wearing fabulous sequined tails, but I am terrible with heights. Julie looked fabulous coming down from the proscenium arch. I came on from the side about three feet off the ground like I had fin rot and was dragging myself round a tank!

I'm also missing the Cathedral players shows this year, last year they worked so hard for both the murder mystery in March and last years Christmas cracker.. ....and raised a lot of money for the Doddie Weir foundation, We always have a lot of laughs and a LOT of cakes.

I've never believed in the old 'never work with children and animals' adage, I love working with kids. They bring such a lovely energy to any cast and help stop the pomposity actors can indulge in...not me obviously. I'm a delight!! This is a picture of me in the wings at the Kings, it's the crew and I playing with the ponies I was about to 'magic up' in the show to take Cinders to the ball. The other is my first ever panto ..as.Bunty the baker!

PS Mark was accepted for RSAMD (or the conservatoire as we have to call it now), the same year as me...... he would have made a great third mermaid!
WHAT NOW FOR THE CATHEDRAL, THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, AND FOR SOCIETY?

By Liz Scott, Cathedral Member

2020 has been the most extraordinary year any of us has experienced. Everything has focused on the pandemic. We have lived through a complete breakdown of normal social relationships and complete change of lifestyle. We now have the wonderful prospect of vaccination to tackle Covid 19: there is light at the end of the tunnel! Such good news!

Sadly, the same is not true of the equally serious crisis of climate change and the destruction of the planet through the continuing burning of fossil fuels, pollution, the felling of the rain forests and our failure to address global social inequality. This crisis is escalating and there is no vaccine to fix it.

The last months have given us the time to contemplate our future. What kind of society do we want to live in the future? Just as we know that Covid 19 will not be defeated unless everyone throughout the world is vaccinated against it, we realise how interdependent we are. We have to work towards curbing our over-consumption and transferring a fair share of finance and technology to poor countries. In the last nine months, how much increased pollution has resulted from the accumulation of used PPE - and indeed the littering of our streets with face masks? How are we going to dispose of the billions of syringes which will be needed to inoculate the entire population of the world? We know that the climate crisis is a faith issue: We believe that we are the custodians of God's earth and of all creation. What are we going to do about it?

Christian Aid focuses on communities living in extreme poverty - those hardest to reach and most marginalised, living on less than 2 US dollars a day. Poverty is political and can be eradicated only when the systems and structures which keep people poor are dismantled. The climate crisis is leaving people who are living in poverty hungry, homeless and heartbroken. Everyday they battle with a crisis which is not of their making. The UK has grown wealthy through fossil fuels, extracting natural resources, and cheap labour from the global south. The people experiencing the worst effects of the climate crisis have done the least to cause it. At present the swarms of locusts sweeping across Ethiopia as a direct result of climate changes, are eating, in one day, the food required for 35,000 people! Our focus on the pandemic has overshadowed this frightful situation. The pursuit of climate justice is inextricably linked to the pursuit of equality, economic justice, gender justice, and human rights. We are the change makers. Let us do more in the cathedral to support the work of Christian Aid.

We all look forward to returning to meeting in the cathedral as a congregation for Sunday worship .. What can each of us do to contribute to tackling the environmental crisis? Let’s gather together ideas and try to put them into action.......All suggestions gratefully received through the Chronicle....
MESSAGE FROM REV. FRAN OTA, REYKJAVIK

Fran was a colleague of Mark’s when he served in the United Church of Canada. Fran offered him support during his time within the Canadian Presbytery. She has visited Glasgow on many occasions and is always a welcome face.

Your minister Mark has been a friend for a long time, and asked that I write a message. I am ordained in The United Church of Canada, a senior citizen well past retirement age, and studying a Masters Degree in Medieval Norse Studies at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik.

Why here, and why this? It just looked interesting. I believe we are never too old to learn new things. Most of the coursework is medieval literature, Old Icelandic language, cultural institutions and the church, and specifically (for me) the formation of church laws. The roots of Icelandic church law were brought here from Norway, and adapted to fit the medieval immigrant reality. Iceland became a Christian country by law, in 1000 AD at the ‘Alþingi’, the ‘annual general meeting’ of the smaller assemblies around the country. Iceland is the first commonwealth in the world.

About mid-October, as Covid-19 numbers increased, the University went online. So life has consisted of studying in a student apartment, classes by Zoom. There are 34 students in this cohort, from Canada, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Australia, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and the United States. We are all ages, varying levels of education, and many disciplines. We are adapting to different climate, different food, new language, and we are learning...together. Yes, I miss family and friends, but this is worth it, even with Covid, and maybe because of it.

Advent and Christmas are about hope, about finding the best of life wherever we can. They are about, not letting go of hope, even when life may seem hopeless. Imagine Mary, a young pregnant woman, knowing how society would treat her, and how Joseph would be shamed. Yet she was able to sing anyway, praise for life. Mary and Joseph’s whole life was turned upside down, and yet hope was not gone. Hope is what we believe in. The Christian hope tells us that ‘we are not alone, we live in God’s world.’ (United Church of Canada, A New Creed.)

Here it is 4:22 and dark, but homes all around have lights up. Those lights are cheering and hopeful. The ocean is a short walk down the street, with a beautiful sea walk and snow-covered mountains. We can still get out, ride the bus, visit local landmarks, check out smaller shops, get groceries and meals. All these things are part of a whole. Christmas lights are more than just cheery decorations, they symbolise life and light. They may seem like small things, but in a time of hope and waiting, seemingly small things are beacons to let us know we still live in God’s world. At Christmas this year, in our new ways of meeting and worship, may we hold light – God’s light, the light of a newborn who teaches us the way.

With hope for what is yet to come,
Rev. Fran Ota, Reykjavik
WE REMEMBER

‘All human wisdom is summed up in two words; wait and hope’. Alexandre Dumas

At the end of what has been a year like no other, we reflect on what might have been. Think of all the Sunday morning services, Choral Evensongs, Prayers for the Sick, communions and special services unattended. We have missed weddings, funerals, the Cathedral Music Festival and Doors Open Week.

We can appreciate what the role of the Cathedral in within the city and beyond when you look at the list:-The Annual Saying Goodbye Service, October Communion, Glasgow Academy Annual Service, Kirking of the Trades House, St. Luke’s Day Communion, St. John Scotland Annual Divine Service, Order of St. John 3bis. We were unable to pray for those who died in the last year, at our All Saints’ Day Communion, welcome the Seafarers’ and Physicians and Surgeons or celebrate St Andrew, our Patron Saint. We did not have the chance to remember those lost in war, or our link with the Cameronians. No Christmas services-Advent, 9 Lessons and Carols, Watchnights, NSPCC and Strathclyde Christian Union.

We have missed the fellowship of the Cathedral, that constant in our lives, the certainty of seeing friendly faces, have our spirits uplifted and comfort to a troubled soul.

However, there have been some positives, thanks to the hard work of the minster, music department and technical know-how of Glen and Jane. We have had to adapt to a new form of worship, via our website. We have attracted new “visitors” to the Cathedral from all over the world, also new members. In depth discussions take place regularly about Sunday Morning Services being resumed-format still to be agreed. The Cathedral has opened again for visitors and the HES staff report they still welcome visitors from many countries. Globally, we have the possibility of a vaccine. Perhaps there is light at the end of this very dark tunnel?

Have a safe Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

THOSE WE REMEMBER

Miss Elizabeth Sutter, Mr Iain McGlashan, Mrs. Anne McCue, Mr. Iain McNair, Mr. Robert Watson, Mr. John McNeill.

They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from the God of their salvation. Psalm 24:5
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>165 O come, O come, Emmanuel omits v3</td>
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<td>Richard Pratt (director), Chris Nairne (baritone). Rec 2014</td>
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<td>191 O come, all ye faithful</td>
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<td>1. Malcolm Archer (arr.) – In the bleak</td>
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<td>2. Matthew Martin – Adam lay ybounden</td>
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<td>3. John Rutter – What sweeter music</td>
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<td>Richard Pratt (director). Rec 2014</td>
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<td>6. Francis Pott – Balulalow</td>
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<td>7. Cecilia McDowall – Gaudete</td>
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<td>8. J S Bach – In dulci jubilo, BWV 729</td>
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<td>24/12</td>
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<td>1.1 L Vierne – Berceuse from 24 Pièces en style libre</td>
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<td>Psalm 96</td>
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<td>4. D Willcocks (arr.) – Ding! Dong! merrily on high</td>
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<td>5. H Murrill – Carillon</td>
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<td>25/12</td>
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<td>n/a, Mark deciding order</td>
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<td>Christmas Day</td>
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<td>Psalm 98</td>
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<td>John 1:1–14</td>
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<td>27/12</td>
<td>Isaiah 61:10–62:3</td>
<td>Mark deciding order</td>
<td>2. W Mathias – Sir Christémas</td>
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<td>Psalm 148</td>
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<td>Richard Pratt (director). Rec 2014</td>
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<td>4. J S Bach – Quia fecit mihi magna (lib)</td>
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<td>Jonathan Kennedy (baritone), Matthew Gibson (piano)</td>
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SERVICES IN THE CATHEDRAL
Sunday:
Recorded Morning 11:00
Podcast 4:00

HOLY COMMUNION
Due to restrictions these are subject to change.
12:15 on the first Sunday of each month
11:00 on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, on a Sunday in March and October, Epiphany, St Kentigern’s Day (13th January), Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, All Saints (1st November), St Andrew’s Day (30th November) and Maundy Thursday Evening.
When desired, Holy Communion can be celebrated privately in hospital or the home.

MARRIAGES
MHAIRI COUTTS
session-clerk@glasgowcathedral.org

BAPTISM and FUNERALS
Contact the Cathedral Minister.

CONGREGATION MATTERS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS
SHONA FRENCH

OPENING TIMES
See the Cathedral Website glasgowcathedral.org for current opening times outside of services or phone the Cathedral Custodians