

# NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024



*Easter Cross in Iona Abbey*

**Dear Everyone** – Greetings to you all and hoping all is well. I have missed being in church for three weeks and missed all of you as I have been on a pilgrimage/retreat to Iona for two of them. This is my second visit. I thought it would be a good time to go as the weather might be better; how wrong was that! In many ways enjoyable as it was and meeting up with some really lovely people, none of us reckoned on the changeable weather that cut our stay by a day. The warning of a storm that threatened to cut off the Ferry and prevent us leaving, meant we we had to pack quickly to catch the last boat to get across to Mull. The journey to the main land across Mull to get another ferry to Oban was eventful but we passed through the most stunningly beautiful rain-soaked countryside to get there. I have written a piece about it below with pictures showing something about the island.

**News from The Night Shelter:** Jenny has written an account of a meal provided by guests who are welcomed into the night shelter during the Autumn and Winter months. Representatives of all the hosts were invited to the dinner provided and prepared by the guests whom we'd been welcoming since January. It was held at our church. Such generosity and kindness from those who life has not treated well was extremely moving as are their comments. Her article is below.

**Learning Together: Lent Course.** We held our last "Learning Together" session at the end of Lent but, in fact, we decided we had enjoyed the sessions so much we would like to carry on. Those who attended suggested we would meet fortnightly, on Thursdays at 6.30pm and focus on Paul's letter to the Romans. We would take a chapter of the letter, learn more about the background of the time and consider what Paul is saying and how it applies to us today by asking, "what are we drawing from his words in our own lives and issues being faced?". **The next session is on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm.** Do come and join in for an hour. If you haven't been before don't let that deter you. It is a small friendly discussion group – with sandwiches and coffee as some of you may be on your way home from work!

**Travel Documentary Series on Nigeria:** Tony sent a message on WhatsApp drawing our attention to the fact that **Michael Palin, is presenting a travel documentary on Nigeria from next Tuesday.** This will go on for several weeks. It will be found on Channel 5 at 9pm. It sounds a really good series and one I expect many of us will enjoy watching.

**Future Repairs to the Outside of the Church:** Tony's comment (below) on the renovation of the outside area of the church has been left in the newsletter as they are so important. Please read it and think how you could help by donating towards making this good news happen.

**The Toddler Group:** The Toddler group starts again on 23rd April. As Ifey and Modupe are visiting their families in Nigeria we will be very short of help to run the group. If you feel you can step in and do this for the time they are away, please let Kamran or Tracey know on 020 8455 1873.

**APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting):** Please put this important date in your diaries and come to the APCM on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April. This will take place after the service. There will be an opportunity to look back on all the events and gatherings of the last year, read the report and ask questions. Please do remember there is a Bring and Share lunch on that day before the APCM. Do make a point of joining us; the APCM is an important occasion for all churches to learn about what happens in their lives and worship.

**MAY 19<sup>th</sup> Bring and Share Lunch:** Please note that the **Bring and Share Lunch will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> May** and not the end of the month.

**Wednesday Morning Coffee: from 10.30am-12noon.** Our time of gentle exercise is going well (you can do exercises sitting down!) followed by coffee, cake and a chat – and it is fun - so do come and join in. This is followed by a short communion service at 12noon.

**Food Bank:** Many thanks to those of you who have contributed goods and money for the food bank. Max and I did a big shop last week and delivered it all to All Saints for their distribution day on Saturday. They do need as much as they can get as the numbers using it are rising. What you are providing is gratefully received.

**Local Elections on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May:** It is important that as many people as possible exercise their right to vote on this day. You will receive a card telling you where you will vote and the address. What a number of people are not fully aware of is that you now need to provide evidence of who you are before you can vote. If anyone is not aware of this, they will be ineligible to vote and deprived of their right to take part in the democratic process. At the end of the newsletter is a list of acceptable Identification Documents. Please could you let anyone you know, who might not be aware of what they need or might have problems finding the right ID so they can take it with them to the polling booth. I wonder how many young people/students, those who are elderly with sight, mobility or any other issues, know about this who need information and support. Don't miss your chance to vote. The website to find out more is: <https://www.gov.uk> **There is a check list at the bottom of this newsletter.**

Much love and good wishes - Sally

### **News from The Night Shelter - Jenny**

We've been supporting the night shelter run by Homeless Action in Barnet (HAB) for some years now and are coming to the end of the current 'term', which began for us after Christmas. There's a group of hosts around Barnet who each take a night per week to provide food, somewhere safe to sleep and a friendly welcome for up to 16 homeless people who are being supported by HAB. These are mostly churches but some other faiths are involved as well. We share Tuesday nights with friends from Alyth Synagogue.

If you were in church on Sunday you'll have heard me talk about a remarkable gathering the previous evening. Representatives of all the hosts were invited to a dinner provided and prepared by the guests whom we'd been welcoming since January. This week being the last until the autumn, the guests had decided that they wanted to offer hospitality to us! This was totally unexpected, and incredibly generous. We all sat together at a long table and enjoyed delicious soup, main course and an astonishing selection of cheesecakes!

At the end, one of the guests stood up and explained why they'd invited us. She said it was because we made them feel special. All of them experience frequent abuse on the streets, and she said that the welcome and kindness that each host had offered helped them recover from whatever had happened during the day. They

felt safe with us. Most of us can't begin to imagine how significant that is. When I spoke to her afterwards, she repeated their collective gratitude, and was explicit that we were doing what Jesus did, serving others rather than insisting on being served.

That was itself special. Those from GGPC who volunteer to help with the night shelter are not looking to impress people by doing good(!), in fact much of what happens is done quietly and without any fuss. The motivation is simply to show the love of Jesus to people who might not otherwise encounter that.

I'm so glad I was able to be part of that gathering. It was humbling and at the same time deeply encouraging to hear firsthand what a difference the night shelter makes to people who are so often treated as worthless and socially inconvenient. On Saturday evening our guests became our hosts. They blessed us with their hospitality, and that's an amazing gift.

### **Iona Pilgrimage - Sally**

Iona is an island in the Inner Hebrides, on the western coast of Scotland. It is described as a holy island, and was the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland. St Columba and his 12 companions fled there from Ireland in AD 563 (They were always fighting each other in Ireland at that time for one family feud reason and another and fleeing from one place to another). There they founded a monastery, bringing craftsmen and builders from across Europe to construct it. To do this they had to bring the granite stones across from the larger Island of Mull which has huge amounts of granite that Iona doesn't have being formed at a different geological age from that of Mull. When you think about it, how they achieved this is mind blowing, as the sea is rough and the coracles they came in were so small.

#### ***Replica of a coracle.***



However, the Abbey, having been reconstructed over the centuries, became one of the most important and influential in the British Isles. It was the centre of Gaelic monasticism for three centuries and is today known for its tranquility (storms permitting) and natural environment. About 170 people live there permanently. The island is only 15 miles wide and 3 miles long, so it can be walked around to see the different landscape and beaches, as I did with a local historian and geologist who gave much detail of the rich history and happenings across the Island. On one side of the Island there is a mound, where, in the early centuries, deceased members of European royalty, and other distinguished people rested before being taken along what is called the, "Street of the Dead", to the other side to be buried in the grounds of the Abbey. Among them it is said are the graves of MacBeth and Duncan (of Shakespeare fame). The paving slabs of part of the street can be clearly seen and followed today. There is a high mound overlooking the Abbey where St Columba had his writing hut and kept an eye on the monks and their work. I think I certainly would not have liked Columba, who sounded tyrannical and anything but loving - saint though he may be. One of the first things he is said to have done was to banish all the women from the Island; other stories about him are legion, but, we do have to thank him for the many illustrated manuscripts he and the monks produced that can be seen in Ireland where they were taken when the Vikings attacked the island in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the 12th century nuns came there and built their own Nunnery. They did much good work among the people who they cared for. I would go and sit in the beautifully preserved nunnery ruins whenever I could as they are so peaceful. Because of its history, Iona developed over the centuries into a place of pilgrimage and remains so today. The air is certainly very "thin" and has a special feel about it. A Community has formed there with many members joining from all over the world. It is a dispersed Christian ecumenical

community that works for peace, social justice, rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship. The services in the Abbey are welcoming; the worship fully inclusive with inspirational hymns and prayers and have the benefit of not being too long (It can and does get very cold). They are taken by different members of the community that live on the island for periods of time. Those of us on pilgrimage would go to the morning and evening services.



***The Abbey at Easter***

As a place of pilgrimage it is just right - for me anyway. It meets my beliefs and philosophy of what Christianity is about. There were 28 of us who stayed together in the Columba Hotel with a pilgrimage leader.



From there we went out to have times of meditation, taking in the spirituality of the Island and its soul-healing landscape.



Each day we had sessions with the pilgrimage leader on “Seven Ways to Pray”, focusing on the Bible and how to use passages to hear what God might be saying to us and to encounter ways of being aware of the presence of God. One interesting session was, “Praying with Lament” using the Psalms and Lamentations, which we all felt was so appropriate at this time. We were encouraged to read psalm 22 and then write our own version of it. We were then encouraged to write an acrostic Lament in the style of Lamentations which was interesting, absorbing and a challenge; I quite enjoyed that one.

By the Abbey was the ancient chapel of St Oran. This was built in the 1100’s and is the oldest intact burial chapel on the Island built for the MacDonald Lords. It has the remains of an impressive tomb and some beautifully carved West Highland grave slabs. The starkness of this chapel makes you realise how ancient it is and you feel it. From the door you can see St Columba’s Mound where he would sit in his hut, keeping an eye on the monks and creating his beautifully decorated manuscripts. Musicians on the island often came and played their instruments in the chapel.



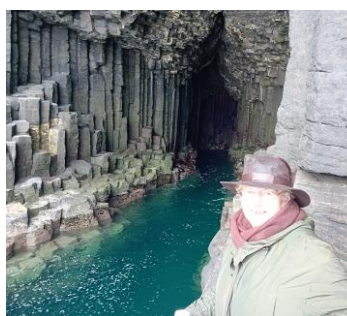
Finally, one thing I want to tell you about, as I was a bit proud of what I did- although I will never do it again. On the one really fine day we had, some of us took a boat to Staffa Island to see Fingal's cave (Mendelssohn composed the Fingal's Cave Hebridean Overture about it). It was utterly beautiful. En route we saw Puffins, Cormorants and Seals. The water was crystal clear and blue. The rock formation of the island was amazing with its pillar-like structures and caves all around – unforgettable.



Then we got to Fingal's cave with an entrance high above sea level only accessible by climbing up and along a steep path of rocks with a small hand rail running along it. It didn't occur to me not to climb up to the entrance. I wanted to see the inside of the cave so badly- so I did - with the help of a stick someone lent me and the occasional arm of a friend and I actually made it. The sheer beauty of the cave and the sea, the colour and the sounds took my breath away. Thinking about it I know I won't ever do it again but determination had egged me on. The next day the weather completely changed, as happens there; a huge storm was forecast so we had to pack quickly to catch the ferry to take us off the island to Mull before everything stopped. In spite of all that it was an adventure of variety, friendship, retreat and pilgrimage from which we all learnt a great deal in our different ways. I will go back sometime but wonder just when would be a good time of year to choose!



*Fingals Cave - Starting the climb*



*Got there!*

### **The Front Steps Area and Carpark – Tony**

I mentioned this last Sunday that your PCC is looking at some major works to the entrance to our place of worship on the corner of West Heath Drive and North End Road and some remodelling of the grassed area through to the carpark. This work is going to involve engineering works to help stabilize the ground

movements - to be clear there is no guarantee that there would no further subsidence - but we should have less movement.

Having said that the aim of the work is to restore the steps to a much better condition along with providing step free access to both the main entrance and the Lady Chapel create an opening through wall through to the carpark area that would allow for a mobility vehicle to park. The plan will also lead to the creation of 4 spaces including the disable space.

The plan is to seek planning permission all the works and listed building consent for the steps and access. We need permission because of the engineering works.

As I indicated I am not yet in a position to say how much all this is going to cost but once we know we will share that with you all. The work will be phased as the more urgent piece of work is the carpark.

So the reason for telling you all this now is for you to begin thinking about what you might be able to contribute towards the work.

### **How We Are**

We send all those who are sick our love. Please continue to pray for all who have been unwell that they gain in strength and good health as well as those who are grieving because of loss of a loved one.

We continue to pray for a return to health to those who are unwell and that God's healing hands may be upon them.

We keep in our prayers **David Agbim, Chuba Agbim, Eunice Adiele, Gideon Onwutalu, Annie Bwanaope and Rose Ochwada**. We hold them in our hearts that they may be filled with God's healing love.

Please pray for a full return to health for **Tony**. We pray that God's healing spirit may come upon him and help him make a good recovery.

Please continue to let us know of family members and friends who are sick and would welcome our prayers, either by WhatsApp, email, [Kamran@gg-pc.co.uk](mailto:Kamran@gg-pc.co.uk) or by phone, **020 8455 1873**

Natash

### **Prayers with Kamran**

From Mondays to Thursdays, Kamran will be in church at 9.00am for a short time of prayer with anyone who would like to join him. Kamran will also be in church each day for those who would like to visit and talk with him. Please consider making an appointment to ensure that he will be available to meet with you;

### **Topic: Church Wardens' Personal Meeting Room**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8585545365?pwd=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0x0DaDhY2paUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: J4FbKf

**Reader:**

**Intercession:**

**Hospitality:**

**Eucharist Minister:**

**AV Desk:**

**Contact details:**

Parish Priest: Revd Kamran Bhatti

Office Tel: 020 8455 1873, Website: [www.gg-pc.co.uk](http://www.gg-pc.co.uk)

## Voting preparations for Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May

### What types of ID are acceptable?

Voters are required to show one form of photo ID at the polls, and it does not need to be in date so long as it is recognisable as the person at the ballot box.

However, it must be the original version – not a photocopy – and the name on the ID should be the same as it appears on the electoral register.

Acceptable forms of voter ID are:

- Passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card)
- Full or provisional driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- A Blue Badge
- Any identity card bearing the Pass (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) hologram

Any of the following travel passes:

- Older person's bus pass funded by the Government
- Disabled person's bus pass funded by the Government
- Oyster 60+ card funded by the Government
- Freedom pass
- Scottish national entitlement card issued for the purpose of concessionary travel (including a 60+, disabled or under 22s bus pass)
- 60 and over Welsh concessionary travel card
- Disabled person's Welsh concessionary travel card
- Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- Registered blind SmartPass or blind person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- War disablement SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- Half fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland

**Any of these government-issued documents:**

- Biometric immigration document
- Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- National identity card issued by an EEA state
- Electoral identity card issued in Northern Ireland
- Voter authority certificate
- Anonymous elector's document

## GGPC Rota April 24 – May 24

Date	Bible Passage	Readers	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister	AV Desk	Duty Managers	Service leader
21/04/24	Acts 4:5-12	Sam	Jenny	Sally	Tim/Naila	Dozie	Tim	
	John 10:11-18							
28/04/24	Acts 8:26-40	Poppy	Sally	Cynthia/Chinwe	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Ruth	Chinwe	Alexis
<b>Bring &amp; Share</b>	John 15:1-8							
05/05/24	Acts 10:44-48	Kai	Alexis	Ezim	Nwadi/Nehar	Shaniv	Alexis	
	John 15:9-17							
09/05/2024	Acts 1:1-11	Keith	Nehar	Naila	Naila/Nehar	Shaniv		Alexis
<b>Ascension of the Lord</b>	Luke 24:44-53							
12/05/24	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26	Kool	Nwadi	Bilan	Daniel/Ezim	Onyeka	Florance	
	John 17:6-19							
19/05/24	Acts 2:1-21	Nwennaka	Tony	Florance	Sally/Tony	Dozie	Tim	Jenny
<b>Day of Pentecost Bring &amp; Share</b>	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15							
26/05/24	Romans 5:1-5	Ash	Sally	Cynthia/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Ruth	Chinwe	
	John 16:12-15							
02/06/24	2 Corinthians 4:5-12	Andrew	Nwando	Silvia	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Shaniv	Alexis	Nehar
	Mark 2:23-3:6							
09/06/24	2 Corinthians 4:13-5:	Khan	Rose	Nehar	Nwadi/Nehar	Onyeka	Florance	
	Mark 3:20-35							