



NORTHERN LIGHT

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*The occasion of the Retirement Dinner of the
Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert A. Gillies, Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney ,
words by Rev Canon Tom Miller ,St Mary's, Stromness*

When I was asked to speak about our Bishop, two phrases immediately came to mind, one a biblical reference and one from secular jargon - though it's theologically sound I hasten to add.



The biblical phrase is 'the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians as incorporated into the Prayer Book canticle Pascha nostrum. I know that 'unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' is a reference to our Lord, but the words nevertheless apply to Bob Gillies and indicate why he has been such a good friend and mentor to me and to the people of this diocese. Bob is as unleavened bread. There is nothing puffed up or false about him. He's not fresh out of the oven, full of hot air. He is solid, and he provides nourishment, food for the journey to those with whom he gladly shares the pilgrim way.

Bob is truly a man who is without guile. Now, I come from New York, so I am not unacquainted with guile. It's the way of the world. So for me, entering into a new country, a new community, and a new province of the church, I have been glad to have the support and guidance of someone who exemplifies sincerity and truth, those two virtues that are so woefully undervalued in our public life, but qualities that are essential for establishing trust, building relationships, and providing effective leadership, perhaps especially in the church. Bob's commitment to the truth as he understands it has been crucial to seeing St. Mary's Stromness through some perilous times. And people in Orkney, in Scotland, indeed around the world, respond to Bob's sincere faith, deeply rooted in the love of God and the gifts of scripture and theological tradition. People respond to his straightforward approach and personal enthusiasm. The fact that he also loves just about everyone doesn't hurt.

The other phrase that came to mind as I thought about Bob's influence on me and on the church, is the mantra 'think globally and act locally'. Convinced of God's love for the world, and the dignity of every human being, Bob is at home everywhere and with everyone: in great cathedrals as well as in peedie parish churches, at supper with the Queen or feasting on southern fried chicken in Harlem, New York; in the silence of Orkney and Shetland or in Manhattan, sitting



with Liz listening to a jazz concert in the park whilst Tim plays basketball with some inner-city teenagers. Bob is at home leading groups in quiet contemplation or worshipping with congregations on at least five continents. He can embrace many local traditions because those local ways all point to the universal love of God for all of God's children.

Finally, a more personal reference to how Bob has influenced my ministry and how in the world I ended up going from the largest Gothic cathedral in the world to one of the smallest churches in the Diocese of Aberdeen and the historic Diocese of Orkney. Some years ago, Bob shared with me some material he prepared for a clergy retreat in the Diocese of Mthatha, I think it was. He focused on the diaconal ministry we all share as clergy and as baptised Christians. One of the texts he worked with, as I recall, was from Matthew: the good servant who

does not expect undue thanks for doing what he or she is called to do.

The challenge for the faithful servant is to go beyond what is merely expected; in other words, to go beyond the job description, to go beyond the received wisdom, even; to serve the Lord in the knowledge that there

/over



will always be more we can offer, and importantly, to know that God will encourage us in our offering and inspire us to go beyond what is merely sufficient or necessary.

These thoughts stayed with me as I retired from full time work in New York and took a leap of faith to see what God might be up to in the Northern Isles. For that I am most grateful to him. And for the example of Bob's unleavened faithfulness, sincerity, critical engagement with the truth, perceptive encouragement, creative ministry, love of God, and love for every community and church in his care, I think we must all be most abidingly thankful.

On 30th December to mark the anniversary of the Deeside floods last year, the Kellas Cat Press in Aberdeen will publish ...

A KNIFE IN DARKNESS

BY LEXIE CONYNTHAM

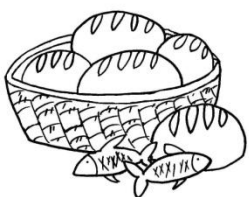


... the first in a new crime fiction series set in nineteenth century Ballater. The action of the first book takes place in August 1829, the time of the Muckle Spate, another severe Deeside flood.

All profits from the book will go to the Ballater Flood Fund, administered by Rev. Vittoria Hancock and Rev. David Barr in Ballater. The book is available in electronic form on Amazon (£2.99) and in paperback (£8.99), postage free if you mention Northern Light, from the publishers at 43, Bedford Place, Aberdeen, AB24 3NT, or by e-mail at contact@kellascatpress.co.uk.

UNEXPECTED ABUNDANCE

Back in August the Aberdeen Cyrenians sent an appeal letter to local congregations to remember them in their Harvest celebrations. St Ternan's Banchory, which normally collects food items to distribute locally, liked the idea of contributing to this organization's request for supermarket gift cards, especially after reading that this would allow them to 'purchase fresh items throughout the year when donations levels are lower' to help bolster both their gifts of food parcels year-round, and preparation and service of 'hundreds of hot meals per month to people sleeping rough or with no access to cooking facilities.'



The team organizing this drive in Banchory hoped to raise a couple of hundred pounds and were astounded when the

special collection (including Gift Aid bump) totalled £1,450.00. 'Loaves and fishes come to mind,' said the Rector, Canon Lisa Eunson. 'The love of God is always near when we just ask.'

GOING ON ...

Many years ago when former Primus +Ted Luscombe was elected Bishop of Brechin a worthy member of the Diocese said to him the day following the election,



"Ah well, yer noo the Bishop, but yer only a day and a dinner in the life of the Diocese."

Luscombe knew these were wise words and held on to them.

Each of us has our part to play and our contribution to make. And I have sought to ensure my own has been the very best it could be. But time is moving on and you are all, I hope and pray, looking to the election and then consecration of my successor. He or she will both carry on from where I have left off and putting in place things that will need to be done that I didn't do. This will involve improving things, inspiring with newness, changing what needs to be changed and putting in place all those things which were either beyond my capacity or beyond my recognition.

This is how things should be and I hope the new Bishop enjoys what lies ahead and is challenged by the responsibilities that come with being a Diocesan Bishop every bit as much as I have. Some things will be easy. Others more difficult. New things will need to be learned. Former habits of ministry will need to be reshaped. Do help your new bishop into this newness. I have rejoiced in your pastoral patience as you have tolerated me through it all and I know you can and will rise to the task once again.

How fortunate I have been to have shared in the work and life of such a wonderful team here amongst you and to have followed +Fred and +Bruce as worthy Bishops before me. I go onwards knowing that I have left everything in very capable hands and look forward to learning who it will be that in due course will be handed the Diocesan Crozier as a symbol of that immense privilege of being the Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney.

My blessings to you all, *+Bob*

Vocations - Revd Joan Lyon, St Ninian's, King Street, Aberdeen

The recent history of St Ninian's Church in King Street shows that it seems to be a place where seeds are not only sown but are nurtured and begin to blossom. Jenny Holden, who has worshipped with us for four years, has been accepted for ordination training and will begin her full-time studies in Edinburgh in September.

St Ninian's has supported several would be-ordinands and it is good for us to follow their progress and see them beginning to shape the future life of the SEC. For us, it's a pity and a wrench that they have to leave us as their time here has made their mark on many aspects of our congregational life. But we are not asked to sit comfortably where we are but to move out to learn and share more of God's love.

We wish you well Jenny, and our prayers will also be with Henna Cundill and Jenny Bressers-Stuart, also from this diocese, who are taking the same path.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, PORTSOY

By Rev Canon Jeremy Paisey

On 2nd October 2016, at the conclusion of the Harvest Festival Eucharist, +Bob in a short and poignant service, deconsecrated the church building of St John the Baptist Portsoy.



Episcopalianism in Portsoy dates back prior to 1689 to the days of the Reformation, when those loyal to the Episcopal cause set up a meeting house outside the Burgh – and hence outwith the jurisdiction of the local magistrates. It followed the pattern so common in

the North East of suffering for the support of the Jacobite cause, gradual legal acceptance, growth and movement into more open meeting houses and finally the building of a church in 1840. Perhaps we are attached to our church buildings as they are the badge of respectability. Certainly in Portsoy – as in many other places – the Episcopal Church has borne witness to Bishop Skinner's comment that the church is not built with bricks and mortar, but with living stones.

The building of St John's narrowly missed being closed in the 1950s, but continued to house a small congregation – by 1994 a regular worshipping congregation (in the building) of one person.

The next few years saw phenomenal (statistical) growth, with the excitement of seeing the congregation grow into double figures. However, this was not to be sustained and after much heart-searching – and many initiatives to try to find a time and format of worship which might attract new members – the Vestry of All Saints, Buckie and St John the Baptist, Portsoy concluded that St John's was simply not a viable nucleus of mission. The Standing Committee's permission was sought to close the building – and that permission was given.

As so often happens in church life, that seemed to be the spur to indicate that after all growth was possible – the Church of Scotland was talking of reducing Sunday services in Portsoy to every second Sunday. Could there be scope for St John's to fill the gap? However, the Church of Scotland's plan never came to fruition and the recent quinquennial inspection of the building confirmed what we already knew: to keep the building properly maintained was beyond the congregation's means. We concluded that it would also not have been the best uses of resources to do so.

So the building has been sold and we understand it will be converted into a dwelling house. Our hope is that the building which has graced the centre of Portsoy for the last 175 years will continue to form an important part of the street-scape. The remaining congregation have strong links with their sister churches of All Saints, Buckie and St Andrew's, Banff – ministry to the people of Portsoy will continue from these bases.

It is a testimony to the faithfulness of the small band of pilgrims who have sustained and supported Christian witness

in Portsoy for the past few years, that the Church has continued in regular use as long as it has. May the prayers which hallowed that small building in Portsoy for so many years continue to light the Banffshire coast with the love of Christ and as this building – the last of many – falls out of church use may we look to the past in gratitude for what has been done and to the future in prayerful hope for what is to come.

ARE YOU TRUSTWORTHY?

If so, you may be just the person we need! Trustees are sought for the *Chipukizi Wa Yesu Trust*. The trust oversees missionary work in a fairly remote part of Tanzania, in the Diocese of Ruvuma. It was established here in our diocese in 1997 when the Rev Jeanette Forsyth responded to God's call on her life. Jeanette had been Head Teacher of Strichen School (near Fraserburgh) for many years, but took early retirement when her husband (Jim), who was blind and who shared her musical interest and accomplishment with piano and violin, became ill with cancer and died a few years later.

Inspired by the wonderful singing of a girls' choir that she discovered in a remote part of Tanzania, led by the wife of the then Bishop of Ruvuma, she sought ways of bringing its music to a wider public and raising money, initially towards paying for secondary education of the choir girls. CDs of the choir's singing were made and sold in Scotland and more widely as a means of raising financial support for her missionary work. In Tanzania she set up a corresponding trust that would work towards raising the livelihood of the village people above subsistence level. Among its activities have been the promotion of improved techniques of vegetable growing, tree growing and fishing in Lake Nyasa.

Jeanette is a person of deep spiritual faith, irrepressible enthusiasm, typical Scottish determination, and great energy. Such is her energy that a recent battle with disfiguring facial cancer has been overcome and she now is tackling the difficulties that confronted her on her return to Tanzania after extended absence for surgery, and a protracted process of renewal of her work permit in Tanzania. She returns to her home in Strichen occasionally and participates in Trustees' meetings during such periods.

If you would like to offer yourself for consideration as a new trustee, or would like more information, please contact Canon Ken Gordon (canonken@bopenworld.com, tel 01330 810260) or John MacCormack (jadmaccormack@gmail.com tel 01224 722691)

Found in the September issue of the Magazine of The Friends of Gordon Chapel

Two boys were walking home from church after hearing a strong preaching on the devil:

One said to the other: "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?"

The other replied: "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out, it's probably your dad."

AROUND THE DIOCESE



+Bob starts off the annual Ballater Duck Race during Victoria Week.



The Cathedral Choir sent a small schola to All Saints, Buckie on Sunday 31st July 2016 to sing Choral Evensong for the 10th Sunday after Trinity, and this was followed by supper in the hall.



St Ninian's, King Street, Aberdeen, hosted a gift day for the Syrian families who have made Aberdeen their home. St Ninian's, a small church in size, does have a fairly large basement but it is not fit for public use. However for several months it has acted as storage space for donations. This was done in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council.

(pictured above and below)



All Saints Woodhead of Fyvie were joined by St Luke's Cuminestown to say their farewells to Bishop Bob at a recent service in All Saints. The two churches are making plans to link together in the near future. The Bishop has given his support and blessing to this venture. The members of both churches wish the Bishop good health and happy retirement.

Think on Sunday

This is an initiative at St Andrew's, Alford which is used in their service on the first Sunday of the month.

At the moment they are looking at the Lord's Prayer, and in the instance in the photograph, it was about forgiving others.

There is a quiet space and activities for all ages. It is to help folk go deeper in their understanding.



NEW BEGINNINGS



Rev Captain Gerry Bowyer, Priest in Charge and Jo Bowyer, Evangelist for the Church Army at the Licensing Service at CAF4E, Bridge of Don Aberdeen



Rev Canon Paul Watson receives the oil at his licensing as Rector of St Clement's, Mastrick, Aberdeen



Rev Nick Bowry pictured with +Bob at his Deaconing in St Devenick's, Bieldside, also serving at St Clement's, Mastrick, Aberdeen



Rev Andrew Tucker pictured with members of St John's, Crown Terrace Aberdeen at his Commissioning.



(left) Bishop Bob and Liz pictured at Evensong at St Andrew's Cathedral which was held to celebrate his Episcopate as they move into retirement



(right) Members of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese meet to celebrate their 140th Anniversary



(above) A crowd gathered to celebrate 150 years of Christ Church, Kincardine O'Neil with a service of Choral Evensong. Bishop Bob Gillies preached a rousing sermon and later led an outdoor rendition of 'Shine, Jesus, Shine.' The event was also the occasion for the unveiling of the Deeside-themed altar cloth made by local primary schoolchildren, Mrs. Stacia Greenwood and Mrs. Jessie Bisset.

'Photos by Callum Gibson photography'

TEA BAG ANGEL



The 'Angel of Presence', aka 'Tea Bag Angel', has been on view at All Saints, Whiterashes during September. A large number of visitors came on the Aberdeenshire Council's Open Doors Day and stayed to enjoy the art of the angel and the artistic interior of the church, before tucking into some soup, sandwiches and cake in the meeting room. There

were also prayer services each Thursday reflecting on aspects of angels, concluding with a Eucharist on the Feast day of St Michael and All Angels, when Bishop Bob was present. Afterwards the congregation enjoyed some seasonal Michaelmas fare of soup and bramble scones (to mark Satan's fall from grace into a bramble bush after his encounter with St Michael). The angel then 'flew' to St Anne's Kemnay to take part in a very popular coffee morning and has been there for a few days attracting visitors to St Anne's who have never visited the church before. Further visits by the angel are planned. Christmas Cards of the angel are available – contact Richard Murray, tel: 01467 641098

UNITED DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW BISHOP

*(Extract from Canon 4: The Preparatory Committee shall receive suggestions
(for candidates for the new bishop) from whomsoever wishes to make them)*

Stage 1: Resignation by Bishop (May 2016).

Stage 2: Standing Committee of the Diocese to compile a Description of the Diocese, along with future plans and intention for work of the Diocese. The Description (Profile) must then be circulated to all members of the Electoral Synod and the Diocesan Bishops, and passed to members of the Preparatory Committee¹ for use by that Committee in selecting candidates.

Stage 3: Within 21 days of the Diocese becoming vacant (31 October 2016), the Primus shall issue to the Dean of the Diocese the Mandate for Election in terms of Appendix 1 of the Code of Canons. A copy should also be sent to the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Clerk to the Episcopal Synod and the Convenor of the Standing Committee. The Primus must also inform the Dean of the name of the Convenor of the Preparatory Committee. The issuing of the Mandate is the beginning of the election process.

Stage 4: Within 7 days of receipt of the Mandate, the Dean of the Diocese shall send to the Convenor of the Preparatory Committee the Description and the names of the two lay and two clerical members of the Preparatory Committee. Within 14 days of receipt of these papers, the Convenor will summon the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

Stage 5: The Preparatory Committee will meet for the purpose of discussing possible candidates and putting together a list of candidates. The Committee will also select a date for putting forward the list of candidates to the Electoral Synod.² This date must be within 120 days of the issuing of the Mandate (i.e. before 20 March 2017 at the latest). The Committee is entitled to interview candidates or employ other means if they deem it necessary. The Committee will require the CV, a statement in response to their own questionnaire and a form of assent to nomination in the form of Appendix No.2 of the Code of Canons for each candidate. Each candidate must be approved by the College of the Bishops. If the candidate's name makes it on to the list, the candidate is deemed to have been approved.

Stage 6: Within 14 days of the issuing of the Mandate (approximately mid-November 2016), the Convenor of the Electoral Synod (the same individual as the Convenor of the Preparatory Committee) will summon a preliminary meeting of the Electoral Synod by letter to be held on a date and time following consultation with the Dean. This date must be between 14 to 20 days after the letter. At the preliminary meeting, the Convenor will go through the election process with the Electoral Synod.

¹ The Preparatory Committee is responsible for the preparation for meetings of the Electoral Synod. Membership of the Preparatory Committee is limited to the Primus, one other Bishop, five members of the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections and two lay and two clerical members chosen by the Diocesan Synod.

² The Electoral Synod is responsible for the election of the new Bishop. Membership of the Electoral Synod is restricted to those who were qualified to vote at the last Diocesan Synod. In respect of lay representatives, only those that were in office at the date of the last Diocesan Synod prior to the issuing of the Mandate may be members of the Electoral Synod.

Stage 7: Following the Preparatory Committee declaring their list of candidates, the Electoral Synod will meet the candidates. This must take place between 30 to 60 days of the declaration of the list of candidates. Each candidate will be met alone with the Electoral Synod and will be given the chance to discuss their views on the Diocese's future and the role of the Bishop.

Stage 8: Between 5 and 15 days after meeting the candidates, the Electoral Synod meet again to elect the new Bishop. Once the election is made, a declaration in terms of Appendix 3 of the Code of Canons is made. Following the Bishop-Elect's acceptance of the position, the College of the Bishops have 60 days from the date of acceptance to provide for ordination and 100 days for installation.

On the basis of the dates and durations set out above, it is possible that a new Bishop will be appointed in or before June 2017. During this time, the Primus, or some other Bishop agreed by the College of Bishops, shall act as Bishop of the Diocese, with full powers.

REV MARGARET RICHARDSON (1923-2016)

A tribute by Stuart Donald

Margaret was a life-long supportive member of St Peter's in Torry, a church that had been built on the fortunes of the fishing industry in the expanding suburb of Aberdeen. The church congregation diminished however and St Peter's was closed in June 1982. That year saw Margaret as both secretary and treasurer of the congregation.



The few remaining members decided to continue to worship in the church hall which lay behind the church. Margaret had made St Peter's the ministry of her life and ordination came naturally. Firstly she was appointed as a Lay Reader then in 2005 she was ordained to the Diaconate and spent the rest of her life looking after the cure of the gradually diminishing number of members. She retired as Deacon from St Peter's in 2013, when the small congregation decided to amalgamate with near-neighbour St John's.

I remember visiting Margaret in her home at Balnagask Place and she showed me her photograph albums, which I thought were a treasure trove of photographs and memorabilia and of course very interesting to me as a historian of the church. She guarded them jealously and would not however let them out of her sight!

She was a grand old lady and could tell a lot of good tales about St Peter's and of their church life in the diocese of Brechin of which they were a charge until 1972, whereupon their petition to join the diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney was granted.

Margaret, Rest in Peace; well done, true and faithful servant, you will be sadly missed by all your family, friends and associates in the diocese.





MEET OUR PROVOST

(Part 2)

The editor asked the Provost, the Very Rev Dr Isaac Poobalan, some leading questions about his first year in Office. The Autumn edition carried his answers to some of the questions the remainder follows:

What are your hopes for the future of the post and of the cathedral?

The many conversations of support and encouragement from the Diocesan Family over the past six months indicate that the Diocese looks up to the Cathedral as a home of prayer and spiritual renewal, a place of collective witness in the city and above all, the Cathedra, i.e. a seat to be with the Lord. It is open to all of the Diocese for spiritual nurture and growth. There is room to develop new approaches to worship and experiment with the space for individual congregations. The forthcoming Confirmations from various congregations in the Diocese should give those confirmed, an experience of a life time. The rich diversity of styles of worship in the Diocese should be experienced in the Cathedral.

The Cathedral is regarded by many a house of the living God, for all people and all Faiths, a resource to foster unity in our community. The members of the local Jewish community saw the Cathedral where they could celebrate their Mitzvah. The local Islamic community saw the Cathedral where they could come to enrich their own discipline of prayer. Young people of no faith come to the Cathedral and find inspiration to be who God calls them to be.

The Cathedral is seen as a Sacred Space and a venue with exceptional acoustics for the city of Aberdeen where orchestras, performing artists and talented young people in the North East of Scotland and beyond could come and present their gifts and talents. It has been a venue for a number of youth orchestras from around the world, this summer. The aim would be to make it more user friendly and well equipped, for the glory of God and the welfare of the society.

How does the Provost relate to the Board of Trustees, the Chapter, the Dean and the Bishop?

'Relate' is the key word that undergirds every aspect of people involved in the Diocese. Keeping the relationships between the Trustees, the Chapter, the Dean and the Bishop both dynamic and joyful and maintain a true sense of belonging is the key role of the Provost. We are members of One Body of Christ and this is reflected in our work and worship.

The emerging Cathedral Development Project is three-fold. It incorporates a) developing part of the property for residential, communal prayers, b) developing the interiors of the Cathedral for a range of religious and spiritual use through music and performing arts and c) developing the halls as a Song School. The Project will draw people from a much wider catchment, including City developers, local business people and leaders in the community and especially, key people from the Diocese with particular gifts and talents in Project development and management. Maintaining good and positive relationship with this network is the key part of 'relating' which requires prayerful presence and affirming leadership.

What is the role of the cathedral in the mission of the Diocese?

'Cathedra' which translates 'seat' is often interpreted in terms of power. But the term used in the gospels in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ is used as a place of rest. It is the place of Sabbath rest which the Creator ordained at the end of six days of Creation. Here in lies the mission of the Cathedral in the Diocese. The core of the Gospel is that in Christ we are destined to that realm of glorious rest and peace, which is our home in heaven. We believe and confess that in Christ, this is a reality already, and it is for the whole Creation which groans with longing. In our present state of the world which is 'restless' socially and economically, the Church is called to be that place of rest and peace. The Cathedra is called to be the focus not only for the Diocese but for God's world.

I believe, the world is yet to see the full benefits of what has been accomplished in Christ Jesus, in his life, teaching, ministry, compassion, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. The Church is still learning to be a true witness to this glorious Gospel. I see so much hunger and thirst for life, rest and peace as I walk through the crowds of the city centre. The range of people that stop me to converse with and ask to be prayed for is endless. It moves me to prayer and I pray walking through the crowds. I feel blessed with an excellent team in the Cathedral Operations and in the Chapter, and I pray God will grant us grace to respond to the challenge with joy and confidence.

What are your thoughts on the change this new role has brought to your life?

Even before commencing my new role as the Provost, I invited a total stranger from Trinity Church in Wall Street to my Installation. My dear sister in Christ, Revd Kristin Miles turned up at the Installation with three days' notice. This is the best part. The Church and the world out there is ready and keen to collaborate to advance the kingdom of God. Of course, having the global profile through international media coverage of the 'hospitality' event three years ago on Easter Sunday helps with networking.

Last year, when I was in the Old City, someone spotted me in Jerusalem and thanked me for the hospitality we extended to our neighbours at St John's. He was a total stranger, a Palestinian Arab, who longs for a world free of conflicts. I was in the airport in Amsterdam on my way to a conference, last summer and was spotted again as the 'welcoming priest'. The South Bank Centre invited me last year to recognise our work and now I am officially a 'Change Maker.'

People see me, I believe, in this new role as a means of bringing the Good News of Christ to a much wider world. In this sense, the meaning of the word 'Provost', the 'one placed in front' fits the role perfectly. It gives me the sense of being like Abraham when God said, 'Walk before me and be perfect.' I am praying for God's grace to fulfil that call to 'walk in front of God and be perfect. I do nothing. It is God who does, and the people God gives me, to walk with. Please pray for me and come to pray with me for our Cathedral and our Diocese.

Copy deadline for the Spring edition is

27th January 2017

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www.aberdeen.anglican.org

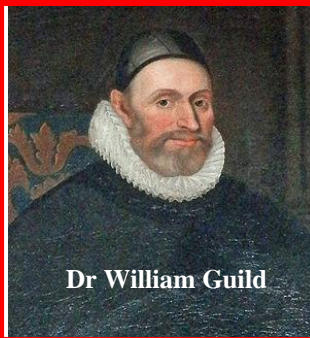
The email address is: office@aberdeen.anglican.org or

by post to Diocesan Office, St Clements Church House,

Mastrick Drive, Aberdeen, AB16 6UF

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Trinity Chapel The Green Aberdeen



Dr William Guild



A view of the Trinity Hall site

Trinity Chapel in the Green was the ancient chapel of the Monastery of the Trinity Friars. Sacked at the Reformation, it was gifted along with the other buildings in the year 1631, by Dr William Guild to the Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen. The chapel was long used by the Episcopalian craftsmen as a place of worship, some of the trades reserving seats and creating 'lofts' until its demolition. In 1686 a portion of the congregation of St Nicholas Church were evicted and removed to this chapel led by Dr Andrew Burnett. He probably officiated as the minister until after the suppression of the *Jacobite Rising* of 1715, when, in order to avoid arrest he went 'underground' and afterwards officiated at a private Episcopal meeting house.



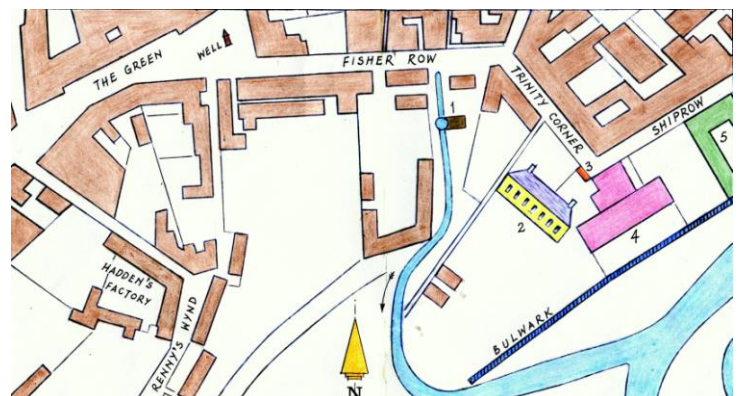
Doorway to Trades Hall

Dr Burnett's disappearing act was due to the fact that he had protested before the Presbytery of Aberdeen against a call that had been given by the Magistrates to Mr Colin Campbell (father of the Principal of Marischal College, George Campbell) to be one of the ministers of St Nicholas Church, in 1703; he asserted that '*the principal and most numerous part of the people*' were in favour of '*his*' installation; on the other hand, Presbytery decreed that he had not taken the oaths in time, and had set up preaching in Trinity Chapel. The Presbytery disregarded his protest, and proceeded to institute Mr Campbell. In the same records of Presbytery (in which details of these proceedings are given) Trinity Chapel is mentioned as the '*Episcopal meeting-house of this place, of which Dr Burnett was the minister.*' When another vacancy occurred in the Church of St Nicholas in 1711, as the Revd Thomas Blackwell had been appointed to a Professorship at Marischal College, of which he later became Principal, the Trades of Aberdeen petitioned the Magistrates for Dr Burnett's restoration to St Nicholas, proposing, if the authorities refused, to enter him by force. The Lord Justice Clerk, Sir Adam Cockburn of Ormiston and Sir David Dalrymple, the Lord Advocate, intervened, which put an end to their intentions. Dr Burnett's name appears in a list given by an Aberdeen correspondent, in a letter to Robert Wodrow, dated 20th November 1717 of the clergy officiating in the '*five private Episcopal Meetinghouses in this town;*' after this date his history disappears from the records. In order to comply with the law, clergy were expected to take an Oath of Allegiance to King George. Many refused; Dr Burnett being one of the dissenters. Congregations were legally obliged to employ '*qualified*' clergymen; that is clergy who had taken Holy Orders in either England or Ireland, or a clergyman who had taken the Oath of Allegiance. In so doing these churches and chapels were outwith the jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop.

In 1766 the Revd George Farquhar was Minister of Trinity Chapel. During that year he was succeeded by the Revd William Blake a '*qualified clergyman*' of a congregation at Ellon, which had been set up there in opposition to the ministry of the Revd John Skinner (later Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church) at that time in charge of a congregation in Ellon.

Trinity Chapel was let at a rental of from £5 to £7 a year. In a statement drawn up in 1791 it was stated that the congregation belonging to Trinity Qualified Chapel had, in consequence of the political contentions which prevailed in Scotland in the last century, been reduced to the precarious state of possessing a place of worship of which the clergyman was taxman. He farmed the pews to harvest his stipend. In order to place the congregation upon an independent and permanent footing they decided to remove to a chapel of their own building in Netherkirkgate, within the shadow of the ancient Church of St Nicholas from which it had originated a century before but now in a different guise. Not long after their removal from Trinity Chapel, the old building was demolished, and the ground cleared for other purposes.

Stuart Donald



Part of a plan by Surveyor Alexander Milne dated 1789. 1 Malt Mill, Barn and Bridge; 2 Trinity Hospital; 3 Trades Hall Gateway; 4 Trinity Chapel; 5 Fish Market

Research from Bain (1887) History of Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen; Records of Presbytery of Aberdeen 1703; Robert Wodrow's Correspondence is published by the Spalding Club; Map coloured by John A. Souter Contact us : archives@aberdeen.anglican.org