



THE WHITE ROSE

The Parish Newsletter of Old Saint Paul's Church

June - July 2017

Decisive Moments

Decisions and choices, these have been dominating our thinking and our praying for the first part of June. The General Election and the General Synod of the Episcopal Church took place on the same day (Synod actually lasted three days). It was a day of choices and decisions that will affect all of us.

The General Election has decided the shape of UK politics and government for the next chapter of the lives of all of us. No single party has the majority it needs to govern using its own policies, and there will have to be compromise and even coalition. Other parties can at least be clear that their role will be holding the Government to account and criticising the policies they oppose. However you or I voted, and whether we welcome it or not, we all agree to receive the result of the election. We want our newly elected MPs, of all parties, to represent all of us and to work for the common good. That is the nature of democracy. It is not perfect, but as citizens we accept it and, indeed, prefer it to any other system of government we could think of (as Churchill famously said, 'Democracy is the worst form of government, apart from all the others.')

The meeting of the General Synod, the elected 'parliament' of the Scottish Episcopal Church, on the same day, made an equally momentous decision about marriage. It has come out of long discussion and careful reflection in the Episcopal Church, one of many Christian churches that are discussing and deciding about who can and cannot be married in church. There have been a lot of views expressed on both sides of this discussion, and I think that the Episcopal Church has managed to achieve a degree of respect and listening to one another about this that should be the envy of other democratic processes.

The decision now made by General Synod is that equal marriage - that is, marriage for all couples who seek to be married in church, including same-sex couples - may be



celebrated in Episcopal Churches. This is a decisive moment, but, like a General Election, there is no assumption that everyone in the Church agrees with the decision or is yet comfortable with it. So the change to the church's law makes explicit reference to safeguarding of conscience. In practice this will

mean that, if this goes against their conscience, no priest will have to marry a same-sex couple, no Vestry have to allow its church to be used, no lay person have to assist at a wedding. All those who continue to believe that marriage is only for a man and a woman will continue to be valued members of the Episcopal Church. We will need to keep respecting and listening to each other.

However, by the same act of inclusion, those who believe that marriage is open to all, including same-sex couples, will now also be able to both believe this and to put it into practice, and same-sex couples who choose to do so can now ask to be married in church.

So, unlike a General Election, this is a 'both-and' result, not an 'either-or' one. But, like a General Election, what we all have to do now, whatever our view of equal marriage, is to receive the result, accept that a decision has been made, and continue to live and work for the kingdom of God and a world where all lives can be transformed and hope is God's gift to all.

Moments of decision affect us all and are part of the process of life as a country, as a church, and as persons. For people of faith they are also moments when we try to discern the will of God. There are many of them, not all of them as life-changing as these, but life-changing nevertheless. May God's grace and love guide you through every moment of decision.

Fr Ian

A Coffee with Helen Tyrell

I was born in Manchester to Scottish parents and we moved back to Edinburgh when I was four. My father was a doctor and my mother had been an agricultural scientist. I had a younger brother who sadly died in 2015. After school at St George's, I went on to study French, Latin and Philosophy at St Andrews University.

Itchy-footed, I then went travelling – first to a tiny village in the French Alps, too small for my city tastes, so my next job was teaching French in an international school in Lausanne. A rather disastrous year studying for a Master's at King's College, London sent me back to Edinburgh and Moray House, following which I taught at Madras College in St Andrews for three years.

Although London had been a salutary lesson, I still had no clear idea of what I wanted to do and for several years I was nomadically employed. In Canada, I taught English to French students in Montreal and also worked in the book retail business, mainly with responsibility for children's books.

I enjoyed the radical 'Frenchness' of Montreal but eventually I left for Australia – mainly because there was a young man involved. The relationship came to a sticky end but I stayed on in Perth and after some time I got a job in a rehabilitation hospital doing front line work, supporting patients with benefits and welfare advice – all very practical. Similar work followed in the challenging setting of Freemantle Prison which housed 800 inmates, most of them aboriginal/part aboriginal. The gross inequity of this struck me forcibly.



I was beginning to get my act together. I suppose I have always had a strong sense of social justice and it became clear to me then that rather than working in an individual social work context, I was much more excited by structural change and population development.

I returned to Scotland to study for a Master's in Public Health which I completed in 1984. I had married by then and our daughter Katherine was born in 1982.

My work for the next twenty-five years was in research and policy development in different public health contexts – first as a University research assistant, then with the NHS before being strongly drawn to the Voluntary sector. All work with the same goal – the improvement of a nation's health, whether this concerns children, women (mobile health screening for example), tobacco

control and so on. How does a nation prioritise in spending on health? I have been passionate about this challenge throughout my later career.

In the voluntary sector I worked with Alzheimer's Scotland – a very impressive organisation – supporting the development of many local day-care projects, many of them church-based. Save the Children was less rewarding personally but it gave me more time to be at home for Katherine. Finally, I became the first director of Voluntary Health Scotland, the national umbrella body for voluntary health groups and charities, and for some years I was deputy convenor of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). I found it hard to retire in 2011 as I had hugely enjoyed all this, feeling very privileged to have worked in such an inspiring area.

I grew up in the Church of Scotland but in England my parents had acquired a taste for the Anglican service and eventually the whole family was confirmed together in St Mary's Cathedral. Largely 'unchurched' during my nomadic years, I came by chance to Old Saint Paul's on Christmas Eve 1981. I have never forgotten the moment when I heard myself saying 'I am come home'. And I have been here ever since, pursuing my own uncertain journey of faith and surrounded by beautiful liturgy, music, preaching and fellowship – though as in most long-term relationships, I have experienced both wonderful and less wonderful times.

Back on 2012-14, I studied part-time at New College. I couldn't complete the course because of family caring duties, but learning about the



basics of the theological foundation of the Christian church and the classical background to the New Testament I found extremely exciting and revelatory.

I enjoy walking anywhere in Scotland, good music and theatre, being in a book group and exploring places and ideas. My reading is eclectic. I am currently revisiting *The Phenomenon of Man* by Teilhard de Chardin and chose for our book group *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton. I am blessed with three delightful small grandchildren.

I still volunteer in different

ways: as a lay member of the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Committee which takes forward mission development and provides resources for congregations and as a member of the advisory group for Adventures in Faith; also as a member of the advisory group to the New College Missionary Society, a student group which awards small grants for mission at home and abroad. I am one of many people supporting the exciting social enterprise work of the Grassmarket Community project, both as a board member and as an intermittent

kitchen volunteer.

What makes me angry? I think mostly social injustice – and excess. I try to keep in mind the mantra – *live simply so that others may simply live*. I feel hopeful when I witness the Holy Spirit at work in the most challenging places.

As for dinner guests, the place of honour this year would have to go to Martin Luther – the other guests would just have to fit in!

*Helen Tyrell was talking
to Sheila Brock*



A Word from Victoria Stock

‘We have to stand up for what is right.’

‘We have to follow the truth of God.’

‘We have to maintain unity.’

I imagine these might be just some of the thoughts around the room today – and how exactly we understand these things is likely to vary from one person to the next. As Christians, and indeed Anglicans, we are not, and never have been, a group of people in harmonious agreement. Throughout our history, there has always been wrestling with the sometimes-painful reality that people can have a very different understanding of God to ourselves.

If I had been stood here a year or so ago, I probably would have said that standing up for what is right is more important than anything else. I would have told you about the deep hurt and pain I have experienced at being told that there is something wrong with me, that being attracted to women is a deep psychological flaw, and against God’s created order. I would have spoken about my struggle to feel accepted for who I am and reconciling that with both my own faith, and that of the Church. I would have expressed my anger and frustration at the apparent need to keep parts of the Anglican communion on board at the cost of doing what is ‘right’.

I still do think that we should allow same-sex marriage in the church. I firmly do believe in my heart of hearts, that if Jesus was standing right here in this room today, he would be telling us to just get on with it. But it seems to me now that this vote today means far greater than simply allowing same-sex couples to marry in church.

This really isn’t about a side ‘winning’ or ‘triumphing’ over the other. Rather, it is about committing to gracefully and bravely walking alongside each other, holding our different truths in tension, of reaching out to one another with compassion and love in all our dealings with one another and the wider world.

As we have come together throughout our Church’s discernment process these past few years, as new relationships have been formed and others strengthened: I have truly seen God and the Holy Spirit at work through all of this. I have learnt that unity in Christ isn’t about us all agreeing with one another. Rather, unity is about learning to walk alongside each other, even in fear. It is about grace. It is about stepping outside of ourselves and valuing others, of seeing their truths, no matter how different they might be to our own – and joyfully recognising God in them.

I think that the SEC has something special to offer to the world. We can offer generosity of heart to the other – even when that is towards those we vehemently disagree with. I am truly proud to be a part of this small, but rather feisty outpost of the Anglican Communion, the Scottish Episcopal Church. In our world of increasing fear, and prejudice against the other, now more than ever we can be an example to the world of unity and love – God’s love through all our diversity.

*This address was given by OSP Lay Representative,
Victoria Stock,
at the General Synod on 8 June 2017*

Calendar and Lectionary June-July 2017

June 4—THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Acts 2.1-21; Psalm 104.24-34,35b
1 Cor 12.3b-13; John 20.19-23

Readings at Evensong

Isaiah 11.1-9; John 14.21-29

Weekday observances:

Mon 5—Boniface of Mainz, *bishop, missionary, martyr, 754*; Wed, Fri, Sat—Ember Days of prayer for the vocation of all God's people; Thu 8—Ephrem the Syrian, *deacon and teacher, 373*; Fri 9—St Columba of Iona, *abbot, 597*

June 11—THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Readings at Mass:

Genesis 1.1-2.4a; Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13.11-13; Matthew 28.16-20

Readings at Evensong

Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus*) 43.1-12,27-33; John 1.1-18

Weekday observances:

Mon 12—St Barnabas, *apostle*; Wed 14—Basil of Caesarea, *379*; Gregory of Nazianzus, *c 390*; Gregory of Nyssa, *394*; *bishops and teachers*

June 15—CORPUS CHRISTI

Readings at Mass:

Exodus 16.9-15; Psalm 116.12-19; John 6.51-58

June 18—SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Exodus 19.2-8a; Psalm 100
Romans 5.1-8; Matthew 9.35-10.23

Readings at Evensong

1 Samuel 15.34-16.13; Mark 4.26-34

Weekday observances:

Tue 20—Fillan, *abbot, c 750*; Thu 22—Alban, *first British martyr, c 209*; Fri 23—The Sacred Heart of Jesus; Sat 24—The Birth of St John the Baptist

June 25—SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL

Readings at Mass:

Ezekiel 34.11-16; Psalm 87
2 Timothy 4.1-8; John 21.15-19

Readings at Evensong

Isaiah 49.1-6; Galatians 2.1-9

Weekday observances:

Mon 26—Robert Leighton, *bishop of Glasgow, 1684*;
Tue 27—Alexander Jolly, *bishop of Moray, 1838*;
Wed 28—Irenaeus of Lyons, *bishop and teacher, 202*;
Sat 1—Serf, *bishop in Kinross, c 500*

July 2—FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Jeremiah 28.5-9; Psalm 89.1-4,15-18
Romans 6.12-23; Matthew 10.40-42

Readings at Evensong

2 Samuel 1.1,17-27; Mark 5.21-43

Weekday observances:

Mon 3—St Thomas, *apostle*;
Thu 6—Palladius, *bishop in Tayside, c 450*;
Fri 7—Boisil, *prior of Melrose, c 642*

July 9—FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Zechariah 9.9-12; Psalm 145.8-14
Romans 7.15-25a; Matt 11.16-19,25-30

Readings at Evensong

2 Samuel 5.1-5,9-10; Mark 6.1-13

Weekday observances:

Tue 11—Benedict of Nursia, *abbot, c 550*;
Wed 12—Drostan of Deer, *abbot c 600*

July 16—SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Isaiah 55.10-13; Psalm 65.1-13
Romans 8.1-11; Matt 13.1-9,18-23

Readings at Evening Prayer:

2 Samuel 6.1-5,12b-19; Mark 6.14-29

Weekday observances:

Fri 21—William Wilberforce, *social reformer, 1833*;
Sat 22—St Mary Magdalene

July 23—SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

Wisdom 12.13,16-19; Psalm 86.11-17
Romans 8.12-25; Matthew 13.24-30,36-43

Readings at Evening Prayer:

2 Samuel 7.1-14a; Mark 6.30-34,53-56

Weekday observances:

Tue 25—St James, *apostle*; Wed 26—Anne and Joachim, *parents of Mary, Mother of the Lord*;
Thu 27—John Comper, *priest in Aberdeen, 1903*;
Sat 29—Martha and Mary of Bethany

July 30—EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Readings at Mass:

1 Kings 3.5-12; Psalm 119.129-136
Romans 8.26-39; Matthew 13.31-33,44-52

Readings at Evening Prayer:

2 Samuel 11.1-15; John 6.1-21

Weekday observances:

Mon 31—Ignatius Loyola, *priest and religious, 1556*; Sat 5—Oswald of Northumbria, *martyr, 642*



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