

Augustine's New Times

"Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer" Prov. 30:25 NIV



£1 Suggested Donation

The One Day At A Time (ODAAT) Sculpture



A dramatic memorial to Scotland's drug victims, created by local artist John Woodcock, (a.k.a Woody), has been recently donated to St Augustine's. The sculpture is on display in our side chapel, where a book of remembrance for those lost to addiction is being kept, people who are gone but not forgotten. At first, I was not keen on the idea of a Christ holding a syringe in his right hand. I struggled for a while, trying to make sense of it all. However the unconventional art-work didn't take long to captivate me. Two things that really struck me were that Christ's face could be easily removed, giving way to a mirror in which you can see yourself, and the wording from the plaque at the foot of the cross ("ODAAT"- One day at a time), reminding me of Desmond Tutu's famous quote: "There is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time." I have found it very, very powerful. Yes, everything in life, even those things which may seem extremely difficult, can be accomplished gradually. The sculpture would be disturbing if it portrayed Christ injecting his arm, but the fact that he is holding the syringe when facing his own greatest suffering beautifully shows how he is

beside everyone, especially the outcast, the desperate and the suffering. As we have become accustomed to the crucifixion, we forget what a shocking image it is itself.

Perhaps this new sculpture at St Augustine's will help people, through their shock at seeing it, appreciate that there are small "crucifixions" every day in our modern society, and that everyone is precious to God. Crushing the instrument of their suffering has a parallel with the crushing of the cross through his resurrection, and the new life we are offered, which speaks to me of love, power, grace, forgiveness, healing and acceptance, far beyond any words I can tell you to describe it.

Heller

'Wait Till I Tell You.....'

Janette says goodbye to summer and hello to the 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.'

'GEEZA DAUD O' CULTURE'

Dumbarton's Town Centre and High Street are in the pipeline for future improvements. Let's hope our councillors are taking heed of a recent Arts Council Survey which asked the people what they wanted to see when they came to town. No, it wasn't posher pubs, better toilets or cheaper charity shops. Oh, no it wasn't! 48% of them voted for culture - museums, art galleries, theatres and musical venues. We've heard there's going to be a new museum - great! But the jewel in Dumbarton's (or Drumtartan's) crown since 1969 has been the Denny Civic Theatre which closed in February 2019 on cue for Covid. Now, just when we need it most with restrictions being lifted, we are told that a lot of work is required and it won't reopen until well into 2022. Oh, no it won't! So, Cinderella's magical coach will get a closed door this December, Aladdin's Cave will remain in the dark, there will be no Giant Beanstalk hovering over St. Mary's Way and sadly, no Disney Princesses will rush off the Westcliff bus to queue for a front seat! Members of the Dumbarton People's Theatre are concerned, looking for ways to bring 'live' theatre once again to the area and hoping that a Fairy Godmother (or even WDC) will hear their plea. 'Dumbarton needs Drama' - oh, yes it does!

PANIC BUY FOR CHRISTMAS.

Oh dear, it's started already. Shortages of Nando's Chicken, McDonald's Milkshakes and other essentials that we never knew we needed have alerted the worriers and sent them into a frenzy of hoarding. 'But - it'll be Christmas in no time at all and I've heard that it will be difficult to get pigs in or out of blankets! Brussels Sprouts are on the danger list and we have them every Christmas Day! I'm telling you, the shelves are empty!' Yes, it's only September and we are being urged to shop early for Christmas. The turkeys are pleased - there's less chance of them ending up on an M&S lorry since there is an international shortage of drivers due to Covid, Brexit, Westminster, miserable wages and other easy to blame evils. And blood tests are also in jeopardy with our hard pressed NHS struggling to get tubes in which to collect it. No, they haven't requested advice from Count Dracula yet - but it's only a matter of time. Stranger appointments have been made to government! Last year's Christmas was far too low key. We were all in our own houses following the rules and saving toilet rolls. This year's favourite toy has still to be announced but whatever it is you won't be able to get it. So wake up - panic buying helps the economy. Make it scarce this Christmas!

A WEE 'KINNA' IMPORTANT WORD.

What would we do in the West of Scotland without the word 'kinna' - abbreviated from the English 'kind of'? How many times a day do we hear it in interviews or, heaven forbid, use it? It's ubiquitous - 'a wee kinna fluffy dug' or 'a great big kinna wasp', 'a kinna black top' or 'a kinna white frock' - it goes with everything. It's amazing! Its use, I suspect 'kinna' gives us more thinking time, makes us sound more 'kinna' reasonable and less 'kinna' dogmatic. Great 'kinna' word! Onwards into autumn with falling leaves expected. There is also a warning from Scottish Water about falling reservoir levels so save water. Relaxing in your hot tub with Prosecco? Drink it on the sofa instead!

Janette

Charity vs Compassion



Peter Ustinov, the actor, once observed, "charity is more common than compassion, because charity is tax deductible while compassion is time-consuming.". Although we all know about compassion we are sometimes troubled by the thought we may be 'ripped off' or, if too soft, become a 'doormat'. Some would even claim we live in an affluent society which affords great opportunities so if people are in need it is their own fault. To give them a hand out is the worst thing to do.

There are two ways of looking at humanity's condition: fallenness and potential. When we see the extent of evil in our world we can lose hope. However, the incredible successes of mankind can cause us to wonder what man was intended to be when he came fresh from the Creator's hand. We can despair at the waste of potential for good God has invested in man, only to be perverted and used in destructive behaviour and God-defying attitudes. Believers must cry to God for His love to be shared and spread in our world. Let's respond NOT with charity which is tax deductible but with compassion which is time-consuming! Paraphrased by Dot Russell from an article by Stuart Briscoe.

Gift Day

Everyone has their special day, usually their birthday.

Traditionally on our birthday we receive gifts from family and friends. St Augustine's special day, or birthday, is also known as our Patronal Festival and our Patron is St Augustine of Hippo, whose life is celebrated on 28th

August or the Sunday nearest to that date. As in most families, a birthday is an occasion for celebration, parties, gifts etc.

When you read this St Augustine's special day will have passed, but you can still show your appreciation for being part of the St Augustine's Family by bringing along your GIFT in the attached envelope on Sunday 26th Sept.

Please be as generous as you can on this once a year occasion. We would very much like the work of God's Kingdom to continue here at St Augustine's, but the upkeep of our beautiful building and hall does not come cheap.

Your GIFT really does matter. Thank you very much.

If you pay tax don't forget to fill in your details on the envelope.



Saying Welcome..., and Saying Goodbye



St Augustine's said Welcome to **Max McAleaney**, on August 15th.

We give thanks to God for the new life in Christ offered to Max. We pray he may grow up to be healthy and strong, come to know Jesus in his hearth and follow him all the days of his life.

We pray also for **Ailish Sarah Lawrie** who will be baptised on Sept 19th, and for her parents, godparents, family and friends.

And we said Goodbye to: **Mary Wemyss and Ruth Gillian.**

We give thanks for their lives as we leave them in the care of Jesus our Lord.



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Layout/Design: Montse Aparicio

Love Your Garden



I'm sure everyone loves to sit in their garden (big or small) enjoying all the flowers and plants and listening to the birds singing. I certainly do, but last year with the advent of the covid pandemic and lockdown I was very sad at not being able to buy my favourite flowers to display and enjoy. With all garden centres closed it was impossible.

However, this year it has been so different. Restrictions lowered some, and less lockdown. The joy of being able to buy so many lovely blooms to brighten up my garden brought a spark into my life. Thanks be to God.

Then, over and above that, I had to have a big tree cut down, and was left with a big stump.....what to do with that to enhance my garden??

Well, my artist friend Anne popped in one day and I showed it to her. She immediately said she would make it into a super fairy house. Anne is well known in the area for making fabulous fairy houses for sale. She set to and I attach a photo of the finished article, super! What a wonderful friend is Anne.

Issy

Forward And Beyond With Friends

The AGM of Friends of St. Augustine's will be held on Sunday 5th September with afternoon tea in the Hall at 4pm. Existing members and all who wish to become members are welcome – bring your ideas. A preliminary meeting of the executive committee has been held and a programme of social events for the Autumn has been arranged.

Our first event will be on Sunday 31st October – Hallowe'en – when we shall do our best to scare you, though this Fright Night will have to be very scary to rival the 6 o'clock news these days! So get out those broomsticks and fly in after dark for a spooky, ghastly evening.

In November, the dreariest month of the year, we are going to treat ourselves to an event called 'The Holiday You Never Had' and all those who have missed the Benidorm Beaches, the Magaluf Nightlife and the Playa de Sunburn can make their way down to the Hall for a genuine Spanish Fiesta. Heller and Montse will be in the kitchen preparing Paella and Sangria with Fish Suppers for the unadventurous Dumbartophiles. Watch out for notices.

Then, in December Friends will work with the Music Group to bring Christmas Spirit to all with a traditional Candlelight Carol Service with seasonal refreshments. That's on 19th December – save the date and tell your friends.

Meanwhile carry on joining us for Saturday Coffee – 10 am till 12 noon every Saturday.

Thank you for your ongoing support – it's been amazing!



Janette and Margaret

Seeds of Hope

Remember in the last ANT there was a photo of 3 seedlings, grown from Morrisons' gift of Seeds of Hope? Well, this is them now, in the middle of August, in the week of the easing of Covid restrictions, when we can sit next to each other in church, shake hands and hug during the 'Peace'. The evidence of the hope that sustained us through so many months. And the bees love them too.

Kirsten's sunflowers are bigger and much, much taller!

Fran



Afghanistan Crisis: Fear and Despair



"So they got up by night and left for Egypt" Mathew 2:14

A boy just turned 2 is woken by furious clattering. His parents having packed a small bag each lift him out of the cradle with worried faces. Holding tight to his teddy as his mother dresses him, the boy is confused; it is night, he should be sleeping. For the next few weeks the boy and his parents trudge through baking heat, biting flies and perishing cold nights. At first the boy cries because of the toys he has left behind, then he cries from hunger, soon he mourns in silence too

dehydrated for tears to form. When the journey finally stops the people around him look strange. They wear strange clothes, they eat strange foods, talk strange words. No-one wants to play with the boy, no-one can understand him and he understands no-one. Some days he goes with his mother to beg in the streets, some days he watches his father work with the tools he carried over the long trek. No-one will pay a fair wage for the work but father doesn't complain, illegal people can't afford to draw attention to themselves. Some nights the boy goes to bed hungry, dreaming of the food, the toys and the people he left behind.

This story could belong to a thousand refugee children. It belongs to Jesus. Our Lord suffered the life of an outcast that we might not forget the humanity of displaced people.

Afghanistan has fallen, the government has stopped the evacuation telling all that have claim to British asylum to run to the borders, there are no more planes. The same government who have made such escapes illegal. Any refugee who arrives by plane or ferry and notifies customs of their intention to seek asylum is an "asylum seeker" but any poor soul that has to resort to running for the border and being smuggled in is classed as an illegal immigrant who, if they are not immediately deported back to the country they fled, must report once a month to immigration with proof of the veracity of their claim, waiting for a space that will enable them to be upgraded from "illegal immigrant" to "asylum seeker". Before the collapse of Afghanistan the wait could take 10 years. And all that time these poor souls are "illegal"; they do not get a penny of help, no shelter, no food, no health care. They are forced to be homeless, to beg, to sell themselves into modern slavery or prostitution because they have no-one, nothing and no other choice.

If like me you have been horrified by the situation in Afghanistan please consider lending a hand.

If you have a spare room you can host a refugee <https://www.refugeesathome.org>

Or you can donate to refugee centres <https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/donate/>

Eli

The Language of The Rectory Roses



A visit to the rectory a month or so ago reminded me that there are beautiful red and yellow roses near the front door of the house. So symbolic. All roses symbolise

God's love at work in the world and whilst the different colours have different spiritual connections, the thorns are reminders of the woven crown put on Christ's head before his crucifixion.

The red roses can be seen to mean passion and sacrifice and there is an idea that a red rose bush grew at the site of Christ's death. The adjacent yellow ones symbolise wisdom and joy - just right for our rectory and its inhabitants.



Fran

"Its Not Easy Being Green" sang Kermit the Frog.



That was back in the 70s when The Muppets were one of the big things on TV. And if it was difficult then, how much harder is it now when we get

inundated with things about Climate Change and Emergency, Net Global Carbon Emissions, COP Conference etc? What are these things and why do they matter? Well, to put it simply, the humans on Planet Earth have wasted a lot of resources, interfered with creation and put the planet in a state where you have to wonder how much longer it will last. All the recent stories about floods, fires, famines, polar ice caps melting, plastic pollution – that's all part of the problem. The Piskie Church, like many other groups world-wide, have decided to try and tackle the problem by reducing Net Carbon Emissions (or Carbon Footprint) to zero by 2030; that gives us just over 8 years to work on it.

At some stage, we will be trying to think of church initiatives to make St Augustine's a greener place, but in the meantime here are some things you can do on your own which all help. So anyone who fills their blue recycling bin and puts it out regularly, you're already helping. Anyone with a garden who composts garden rubbish or takes it to the council site for use in their gardens, you're helping too. Those who car-share when they can.....those who use public transport.....the people who use a reusable coffee mug for their take-away latte machiatto.....and the ones who have bought a special water bottle rather than buying plastic "one use" bottles when they go shopping – all of you are helping the environment and reducing our carbon footprint.

So its not an impossible task to help out. Every little thing that every individual does is a step in the right direction. And remember - how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

We Can All Shine!

I love the look of well polished brass. Polishing can make a big difference! When I polish the brass I see it as removing tarnish marks, letting the natural beauty of the brass to shine. I enjoy the peace and serenity and the nearness of our good Lord while being in Church helping to restore

the shine of candlesticks, book stands, crosses... When they are all in position around the altar and the sun shines on them, to me it proves with a little care we can all shine too. My favourite brass pieces in Church are the high altar cross and the offertory plate, which I always ensure has a high shine to encourage large donations.



Theresa