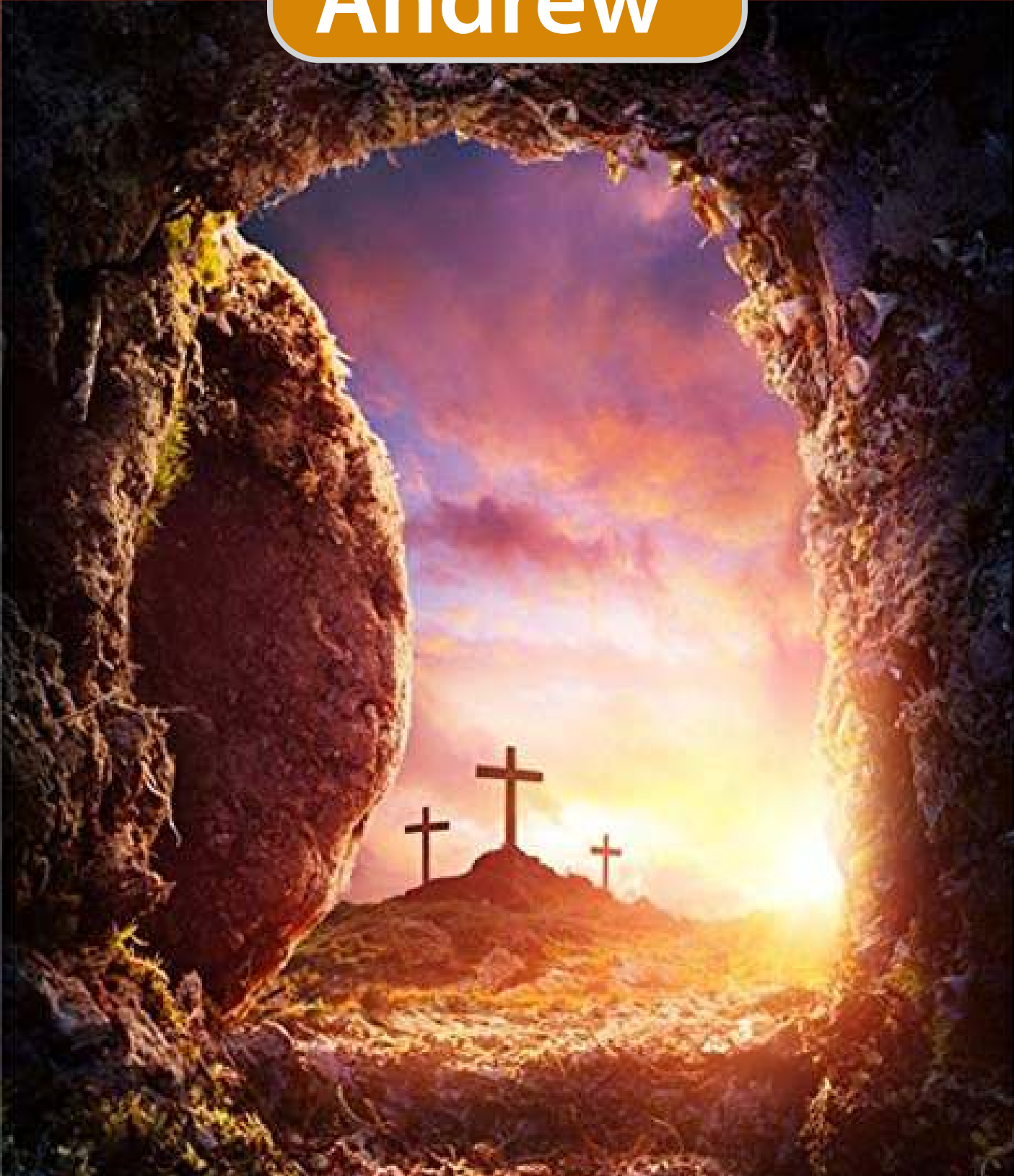


the Saint
Andrew



Church of Scotland – Presbyterian

For private circulation only



SAINT
ANDREW'S
SCOTS KIRK
COLOMBO SRI LANKA

Contents

- 02 Letter from the Minister
- 03 Revd. Bill Davnie's missive
- 04 Report from the Session Clerk
- 05 Report of the International Youth Presbytery
- 07 A permanent Minister for St. Andrew's
- 08 Through the lens – Mission Projects and Events at St. Andrew's
 - Helping Hands
 - Ward 8 - Mulleriyawa Hospital
 - Food for our Neighbours
 - Netherlee Cottage
 - The Thrift Shop
 - Musical treat on Sunday March 31st
 - Visit of the Royal Australian Navy
 - Shooting the breeze
 - Stabat Mater featuring Contempo
- 15 What is temptation?
- 16 How did the apostles die?
- 17 The Story Behind the Hymn – Crown Him with many crowns
- 18 Good Friday traditions around the world
- 20 Our Musicmakers
- 21 Meet Our Congregation – Maureen Seneviratne PC
- 22 Bringing back memories from 1944
- 23 What they say about The St Andrew
- 25 Dates for your Diary



Letter from the Minister



Dear friends at St Andrew's Scots Kirk,

First - since this is the Easter edition of 'The Saint Andrew' - I wish you all a Happy Easter!

Many people believe that Christmas is perhaps the "highlight" of the Christian year; it is, after all, the festival that we tend to celebrate most, especially in today's increasingly secular and consumer society. But Easter is, I believe, the real "high point" of the Christian calendar: that's when we remember the sacrifice our Lord Jesus Christ made for all of us, guaranteeing us eternal life in Him. So celebrate Easter too!

2019 promises to be an exciting year for St Andrew's Scots Kirk. First, I am delighted we have now found very experienced and enthusiastic Ministers to be longer-term Locums at St Andrew's. Reverend Bill Davnie, and his wife Charlotte have been with us from the USA since last November (when I had the opportunity to welcome them near the end of my last visit) and will stay until sometime around the end of May.

As I write this letter, a few weeks before Easter, we are in discussions with Reverend Eric Foggitt, a Church of Scotland

Minister currently living in Amsterdam, who hopes to travel to Colombo with his wife Tineke around the time Bill and Charlotte leave. They will be your Locum until sometime at the beginning of August. And then Reverend Ian Gilmour, a retired Church of Scotland Minister from Edinburgh and his wife Donna come into Colombo as your Locum until after Easter 2020! The finer details and the transition between the three locumcies, are still being worked out as I write but I pray everything will work out, thus giving a period of longer-term stability to ministry at St Andrew's Scots Kirk over the next year.

All of that takes place in the context of your newly elected Nominations Committee continuing its work to find a new full-time, long-term Minister for St Andrew's. Please do keep the Nominations Committee in your prayers as they pursue this vital challenge.

Once again, I wish you all God's blessings, especially at this Easter Season.

(Revd) Jim Sharp
Your Interim Moderator



Revd. Bill Davnie's missive



Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed!

Such has been the historic Easter cry of the Church since its earliest centuries. Jesus taught much that even non-Christians find valuable, but what makes Christianity more than good ideas or instructive teaching is God's entry into human life in the person Jesus, and Jesus then overcoming the limits of earthly life in his resurrection. Easter connects our limited human life with eternity, and joins us to the entire Body of Christ, starting from our own St. Andrew's Scots Kirk congregation here in Colombo.

Lent gives us time to ponder the meaning of what comes to us on Easter. We follow Jesus as he moves toward Jerusalem - the city of David and the prophets and the city that believes God has made it special, but which does not recognize the Son of God when he arrives. Lent gives us time to reflect on the challenges that we face and how we fail to recognize Jesus among us. And, we discover anew how the vision of Easter can sustain us no matter what comes our way. Easter, the Day of Resurrection, affirms once again the gifts of faith, hope and love that tell us life is worth living. Faith in God's plan for each of us, hope lighting our way even in times of darkness, and love beyond anything we have a claim to are all refreshed and renewed in the startling event of Easter morning that we will celebrate once again.

The Easter good news can seem too good to be true. Easter offers us more than we deserve, perhaps. But the love of God for all creation, and for each of us, comes not because we deserve it, but because God has fashioned this world for us – if we will but recognize that and live in the joy that offers.

Charlotte and I have been here more than four months now. We continue to be struck by your faithfulness in worship, your participation in church tasks, and your financial support of the outreach efforts of this congregation. St. Andrew's continues to show how clearly it understands the call of God to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with its Lord. As we gather around the communion table for Easter communion, and then around tables in the Church Hall for our traditional Easter brunch after worship, we will do so with full and thankful hearts for the good news of this holiday and for the healthy life of this congregation.

A blessed Easter to you all,
Revd. Bill Davnie





Report on the International Presbytery (IP) meeting

called "Reforming the Kirk" – and the Very Rev. John Chalmers, a former Principal Clerk.

The essence of their talks was for us recognize the need for radical thinking and planning to address the declining congregational numbers, income and serious shortage of ministers. It left me with little doubt that some painful decisions would have to be taken, akin to pruning a tree, for the tree to sprout new branches and grow stronger.

The Presbytery had adopted the Mulleriyawa Ward 8 project improvements as the 2019 Presbytery mission project. I was invited by the Mission convener to present the case for this project and having done so, was moved by the response. Presbyters made an immediate call to pass a hat around, which raised over 400 Euros and 150 Swiss Francs. This was about 75% of the cost of proposed improvements with the expected balance to be collected soon by the congregations. Gloriana Razeek, who gives leadership to the Mulleriyawa project, is hoping to get the work completed. The ladies in Ward 8 will have improved floor tiles, toilets and a bathing area.

My thanks extend to Rev. Jan Steyn and his wife Linda, Valerie Prieur and members of the Paris Kirk Session for making the arrangements for Presbyters to enjoy and participate in a productive Presbytery meeting.

Chandan de Silva

Host church - The Scots Kirk, Paris

Located at 17 Rue Bayard (off Ave. Montaigne, metro: F.D.Roosevelt) in the basement of a four storey building with the church hall on the ground floor, it is the only English speaking Presbyterian church in France. Since 2017, the minister has been Revd. Jan Steyn, a Church of Scotland minister who hails from South Africa. The congregation is small with worshippers from Scotland and other countries.

08th to 10th March 2019, Paris France

I looked forward to this visit to the International Presbytery meeting in Paris on behalf of St Andrew's Scots Kirk with excitement as it was a place I enjoyed in my student years.

It was not quite springtime; more like the last weeks of winter and the climate was a touch too cold for my liking. That said, the long walks from the hotel to our meeting place, the Scots Kirk, Paris, felt good for the health.

The Presbytery meeting

On Friday 8th, the committees met. It was a long day for me having started at 9.30 am, chairing the Finance committee meeting for three hours, followed by participation at the Business committee meeting. The Presbytery meeting began at 6 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm.

On the Finance front, the Amsterdam and Colombo congregations had made good progress in reducing their M&R contribution (by half or more) by re-working their contribution and persuading 121 of changes that should be made in accordance with the new Finance Regulations. The Colombo congregation has Gillian Mailler to thank for this.

The next day, the main topic of discussion was the Radical Plan for the Church of Scotland. The speakers were Dr. Doug Gay - an academic from Glasgow University who has written a book





Report of the International Youth Presbytery Meeting 2019

Rotterdam – The Netherlands

I took an airplane ride, train ride and a tram ride to finally arrive at my destination of Rotterdam on Feb 15th 2019. With a hand drawn map in hand I hobbled around with two bags on the streets of Rotterdam on search of the International Scot's Church and Rev. Derek Lawson's home. Ten minutes into my quest, I was greeted with many joyful licks and barks by Milly (Derek's dog) and an equally welcoming Rev. Derek and his wife Moira. I was the first to arrive and the other candidates were expected to come in later that evening. I was introduced to my host family Shanny, Stephan and Miffy (yes, another dog) and moved my baggage to their home which was just a ten minute walk from the church.



Since I had time till the others arrived, I walked around the city with Shanny and met the other candidates in the night at the church manse. We played a few quizzes and got to know each other and our host families more. There were youth from Hungary, Paris, Rome, Germany and Rotterdam ranging from 17 to 26 years. After dinner we all returned to our respective host homes and met back on Saturday morning for breakfast at the church.

After breakfast, we divided into two groups and discussed various topics including faith, trust, the church's role and our role in the church. Sharing each other's experiences and thoughts was thought provoking and enjoyable. Next on the agenda was bowling and a walking city tour which was full of fun and laughter. The city is beautiful with lots of modern as well as a few old buildings that survived the World War II. The walking tour ended at the church mosaic wall.

All that walking made us hungry and we got together to make our own pizzas. The kitchen was overflowing with aspiring chefs whose use of the various toppings was very wild and creative.

On Sunday I woke up early and joined the church choir for practice. During the service, I also offered a prayer of my own and spoke to the congregation on behalf of the Youth Presbytery. After service, over a big potluck brunch, there was much conversation and laughter.



Pam and Steven offered to take three of us who had a little time before catching trains and airplanes back for our return journey home on a short trip close by to see windmills. So off we traipsed to Schiedam in search of windmills and loved watching one which was making flour.

On Monday morning I left my host family and took the train back to Amsterdam Schipol Airport returning home with my mind packed with beautiful memories.

Buwanika Weerasinha





A permanent Minister for St Andrew's

from the International Presbytery reports including the recent history of SASK, our strengths and our weaknesses.

The Nominations Committee will publish an advertisement for the position of Minister which will be placed in the magazine "Life and Work" which is circulated to Ministers of the Church of Scotland. Prospective candidates will contact the Nominations Committee.

The Minister selected by the Committee as "Sole Nominee" will preach to the Congregation and all Congregation members listed on the Church Roll then, have the opportunity to vote on whether to accept the proposal.

The process of calling for a new Minister is a lengthy one (a year from start to finish is quite common but it may take longer). Its success will ultimately depend on "the right person" applying for the position. The Nominations Committee is also bound to work with complete confidentiality, so don't expect frequent or detailed progress reports. Please do keep the Nominations Committee in your prayers as it continues its important work. Our Nominations Committee Milinda Ratnasuriya, Saliya Wickramasuriya, Robin Bradshaw, Shanthini Ahangama, Buwanika Weerasinha, Sanjeev Niles and Anna Brochard

Following the visit of representatives from the International Presbytery in June 2018, St Andrew's Scots Kirk was given permission to "Call for a new Minister". To prepare ourselves for this very important task, we first updated the Church Roll; this is important as only members of the Congregation whose names appear on the Roll can serve on the Nominations Committee to select the new Minister. The Congregation voted on the selected members for the Committee and confirmed seven members to do this work.

The Elders have approved a document, "St Andrew's Scots Kirk Profile" which will be sent to any prospective Ministers who express an interest in serving at SASK. The document draws on various contributions from the Congregation, the Elders and



The committee meets for discussion – L to R: Shanthini Ahangama, Anna Brochard, Milinda Ratnasuriya, Sanjeev Niles, Robin Bradshaw and Saliya Wickramasuriya. (Absent: Buwanika Weerasinha)



Through the Lens

What's been happening at St. Andrew's

continue to support the project. St Andrew's Annual Bazaar, also generates funds for this project.

Today, we support 20 needy people, who receive a monthly allowance and in special cases get assistance to address their immediate needs. The Helping Hands team visits the families to understand their concerns and circumstances. Many beneficiaries are single mothers and elderly sick people who find life a struggle.

We follow an established guideline to assess each new beneficiary by interviewing them and visiting their homes. We expect to add new recipients to the Helping Hands family in the near future.

Just before Christmas, each year we invite the Helping Hands families to enjoy a morning of fun and games at the Church Hall followed by lunch, serviced by the Elders and Project Leaders.

Helping Hands

The Helping Hands Project begun in 2006 assists those who are financially challenged and are resident in close proximity to the church, in special circumstances, we don't refuse anyone who requires assistance. Three years ago, when our funds were very low, a number of families receiving the monthly allowance were phased out; however, after several appeals, our congregation responded very generously and we do now have several regular donors who



Ward 8 - Mulleriyawa Hospital

St Andrew's has been supporting Ward 8 for over 30 years. The visits began at the time of Minister Julian MacKnight and despite some years of less activity, the relationship continues today. Recent years have seen the renovation of the beds and the bathrooms, supply of new mattresses and a television and painting the ward. The bathrooms require some attention once more and we hope to attract financial support from the International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland for this work.

Each month, en route to the hospital, we make a stop at a supermarket to purchase soap, washing powder and other necessities, which would last a month until our next visit in addition to soft drinks and pastries for the residents.

A special lunch is organised and paid for by the Church and delivered direct to the Ward for the residents to enjoy after the visit, but at Christmas time and Sinhala New Year, always special occasions, extra treats and new clothes are gifted to the residents. While there's much conversation

between the visitors and residents, there's occasionally some entertainment brought in as well which the ladies join in with song and dance.

The income from the Thrift Shop activities support the funding of Ward 8.



Food for our Neighbours

There has been discussion to bring our mission projects closer to home and to try to serve the community in the vicinity of SASK. There are several areas of urban poverty in the locality. The Thursday Lunch Programme was inspired by the Soup Bowl programme which functions from Kollupitiya Methodist Church is in its 5th year of operations and serves every Friday. A couple of Elders from SASK attended the KMC session and were most impressed by the camaraderie and good will generated amongst the participants, servers and sponsors of the project. About a 100 needy people attend at KMC every Friday and were served a delicious and nutritious meal of local fare of rice and curry.

We then decided that a programme on Thursday would be appropriate and so set about walkabouts in the community in the areas of Slave Island and other areas of proximity where there are catchments of disadvantaged people. We found people who sweep and clean the roads and sleep rough, people who wait for handouts in the vicinity of the catholic churches, those who are labourers and many who work as cleaners at local offices.



We commenced the programme in November 2019 and are pleased to report that the programme has been a tremendous success. We see many regulars who attend to receive a nutritious meal served within the haven of our church and engage in chat.

We have also had a wonderful response from donors, many who have pledged to contribute regularly and we readily welcome new donors in view of rising costs to the programme.



Volunteer servers are much needed for this programme.

Netherlee Cottage

The Netherlee Project has matured beyond measure over the last few years as the total team works closely together, always putting the future of the resident at heart and looking to achieve the objectives of the Project.

We have been dealing with many Ladies from the Mulleriyawa Hospital since 2005 and have learnt to understand our long- standing residents better. All this experience has helped the team to manage difficult situations and challenges. We have researched the background to each lady, as knowing the history helps us to decide how to manage the future. All this does take time but we hope we are able to make better decisions, making the future of the resident more secure. We work closely with the doctors for this work.

The Mulleriyawa hospital plans to reduce their residents to 420 Ladies within the next four months. They currently have 475. They plan to discharge 70 residents to elders' homes, taking 15 residents from Angoda.

The next residents for Netherlee Cottage are likely from the new in-take from Angoda Hospital. Netherlee has rehabilitated all the ladies capable of independent living currently at Mulleriyawa Hospital. We expect to move two further residents on to independent living within the next two months.



We recently installed a new water tank at Netherlee Cottage, funded by the Association of British Residents with the proceeds from the British Song Recital held at Westminster House last October.



We also took the ladies by train from the Maradana Station to Galle, hiring a van for the trip round Galle and to the beach. The ladies enjoyed getting very wet at the beach and having lunch with Buddhika's family. It was a long day and everybody returned tired, but happy. Our annual trips are funded by the proceeds from the sale of Netherlee craft work.



The Thrift Shop

Tuesday is Thrift Shop Day at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk! For many years now this shop has served shoppers of limited means, reduced waste for all, and supported our ministry with the ladies of Muleriyawa Hospital Ward 8.

The shop
is open at
the church hall
every Tuesday
from
11 am to 1.30 pm
(except
holidays)

Please donate generously with anything that you don't require, nearly new or brand new!



Musical treat on Sunday March 31st



Young violinist Ayoush Seneviratne was accompanied by his mother Neluka on the piano adding some lovely nuances to the offertory with the melodious, Make me a channel of your peace.



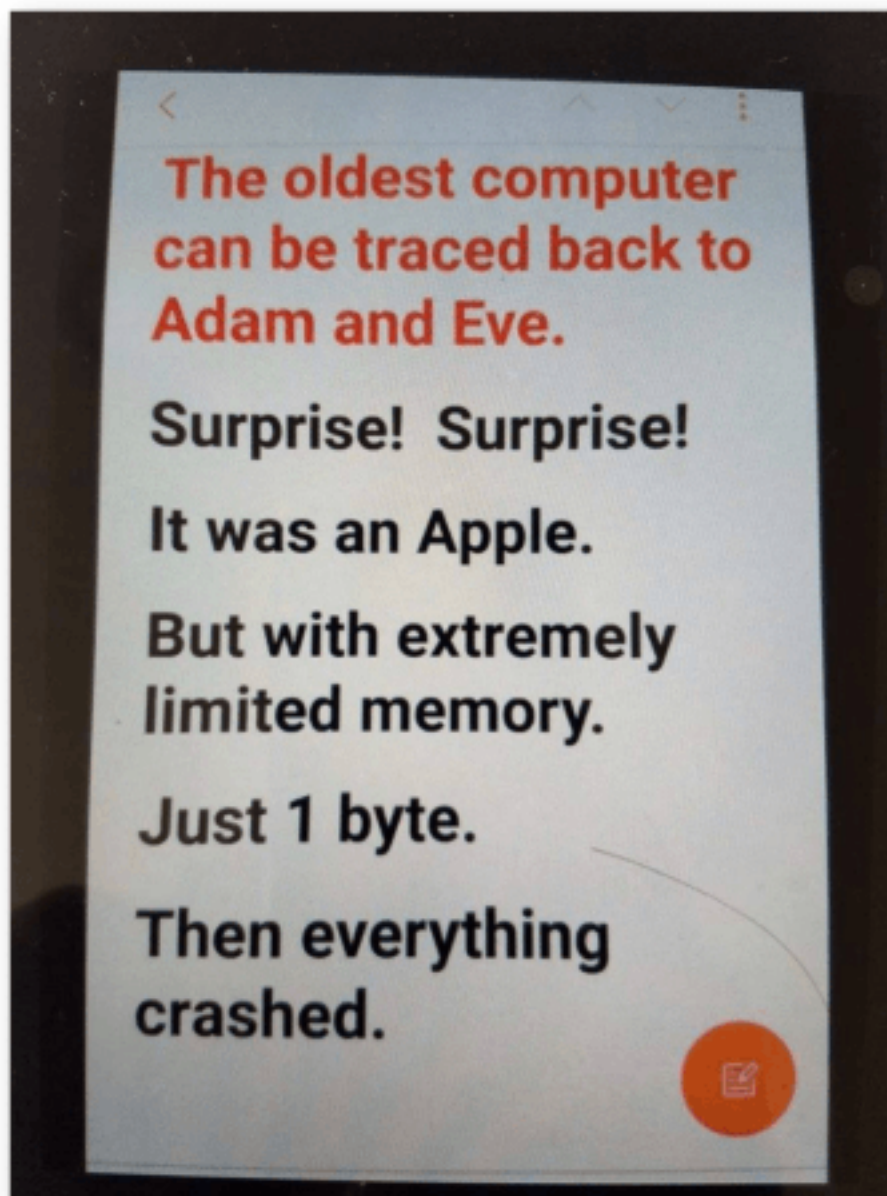
Visit of the Royal Australian Navy

Crew members of the Royal Australian Navy, which had docked its ship at the Port of Colombo worshipped with the congregation on Sunday March 24th. It was a lively Sunday, enriched by Dhanan Senathirajah's concluding sermon on the Fruit of the Spirit and our choir's debut in worship.



Shooting the breeze

These new benches were delivered on the 28th of March and were a welcome spot for some of the members of our congregation to enjoy a sunny Sunday, with animated conversation and a cup of tea.



Stabat Mater featuring Contempo

Directed by Harin Amirthanathan



Contempo, the past pupil's choir of St. Bridget's Convent conducted by Harin Amirthanathan performed Stabat Mater to a very crowded and appreciative Church on 22nd March. This was their first performance of a classical piece. The sequence began with a single voice chant by Dilini Fox, whilst the choir walked down the aisle to take their place on the steps at the front of the Church with the musicians seated in front of the pews.

Stabat Mater, a Latin hymn commemorating the sorrows of the Virgin Mary at the Cross starts with "The grieving Mother stood weeping beside the cross". This piece is composed by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi in 1736 and is scored for soprano and alto soloists, violin I and II, viola, cello and organ. Pergolesi composed it during his final years while suffering from tuberculosis in a Franciscan monastery in Pozzuoli, Italy and, it is said, that he completed it right before he died.

Contempo is an all-female vocal ensemble comprising Bridgeteens with a passion for music and singing. They participated in the 'Asia Pacific Choir Games 2017' under the training of music director Harin and won four golds and a silver in total, including one gold at the 'Grand Prix' which is the highest level in the competition.





What is temptation?

-Rev. Bill Davnie

Chinese who died in politically-caused famines, to the Killing Fields of Cambodia under Pol Pot, to the forty years of destruction in Afghanistan caused by the Soviets, the Taliban and then American forces, and more – the greatest damage caused not by people setting out to do conscious evil, but by leaders claiming to build better, more perfect, utopian societies. Their power would only be used for good – and they would determine the good. As was said long ago, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

You have no doubt heard amply about the scandal of child abuse in the Roman Catholic Church. I'm not interested in picking on our fellow Christians, for the same error can be found elsewhere as well. But I see a sad example of yielding to temptation in the bishops and others who have covered up the abuse. I'm confident these bishops knew wrong had been done – but the temptation to protect the institution of the church was too strong, and they covered up what should have been brought out into the cleansing light of day. They thought they were doing good in a bad situation – yet only made things worse.

From our origins as a Church, we Presbyterians have insisted that decisions be made by groups because we know the most serious of individuals can still allow themselves to assume powers they should not have, and find ways to justify what should not be justified. We've not been perfect in this, to be sure, but we know that all authority – in church, in government, in business – needs checks and balances and openness to prevent the temptation to do 'good' from getting out of control.

The real temptation of Jesus in this story is the temptation to forget his identity as the Son of God, and take the world's path to authority and rule, the path of brute force and spectacular displays of power and awe – instead of the quieter, but no less firm ways of living for God. Jesus resisted temptation because he already had all the power and authority he needed to demonstrate the love of God in a broken world – and the devil's power would only distort and damage that.

When we are uncertain about our identity as God's children, we let our uncertainty lead us to do what we convince ourselves is good, when our heart tells us it is not. We give in to the temptation to claim knowledge and power we do not have. Jesus has shown us a life that is not driven by human desire for power or authority, however we claim we will use them – because we will not use them well. If even the Son of God declined to claim worldly power and authority – if he did that in order to show us how to live – then surely we must give up our claims to them as well, because we already are blessed children of God, and God alone do we serve.



We've all likely heard about – maybe practiced – giving something up for Lent. As children, it was probably candy. I have adult friends who give up wine for Lent. This practice at “resisting temptation” comes from the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness, a gospel passage that the Church traditionally reads on the first Sunday of Lent. Many sermons have been preached over the centuries about staying away from temptation and the 'bad' things that people need to resist.

But the temptations Jesus faced weren't about giving up chocolate for six weeks. They weren't even about the temptation to do 'evil'. In fact, when we think of temptation as the desire to do evil we're actually missing the greater problem. Because the greater temptation is to do what we have convinced ourselves is good, failing to recall that we are always sinners. We tempt ourselves with the conviction that we will do the right thing, that we can be trusted with power, that we understand what God would want – if only God were better informed! Jesus' temptations were about power, its use and abuse – and the temptation to substitute worldly judgment for God's.

The greatest tragedies of the past century came not from the conscious intent to do evil, but from overconfidence in knowing the good. From the millions of



How did the apostles die?

The apostles as we know them were ordinary working men. But it's just extraordinary how Jesus picked these average men to spread the Word across seas and continents. But undertaking what they did, none of them had it easy. However their faith was so unshakeable that even in the face of the most horrific deaths, they stood steadfast in their faith. The New Testament only details the deaths of two apostles – Judas Iscariot who hung himself after betraying Jesus and James, the son of Zebedee executed by Herod. What happened to the others?

Peter

Crucified upside down at his request on an X-shaped cross, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord

Paul

Tortured and then beheaded

Andrew

Crucified on an X-shaped cross using cords to prolong his agony after being whipped mercilessly. He preached to his tormentors until he died two days later

Thomas

Died in India when he was pierced with the spears of four soldiers

Philip

Cruelly put to death by Roman Proconsul Philip for converting his wife

Matthew

Stabbed to death in Ethiopia

Bartholomew

Various accounts retell of how he met his death as a martyr; some say he was flayed and beheaded, while others account that he was hung on a cross upside down like Peter

Nathanael

Flayed to death by whipping

James

The son of Alphaeus, he was first thrown a hundred feet from the southeast pinnacle of the temple but when he survived, he was stoned and then clubbed to death

Simon the Zealot

Killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god

Matthais

Put to death by burning

John

Seems to be the only apostle to die of old age. During his ministry however, he is believed to have escaped unhurt after being cast into a cauldron of boiling oil in Rome





The story behind the hymn –

Crown Him with many crowns



By Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! How the heav'nly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul and sing
Of Him Who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

Crown Him the Lord of love!
Behold His hands and side—
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends His wond'ring eye
At mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of life!
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
Who rose victorious in the strife
For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.

Crown Him the Lord of heav'n!
One with the Father known,
One with the Spirit through Him giv'n
From yonder glorious throne,
To Thee be endless praise,
For Thou for us hast died;
Be Thou, O Lord, through endless days
Adored and magnified.

If there was ever a hymn that suited the Lenten season, it is this hymn. The original six stanzas mention six crowns: "Crown him . . . the Lamb upon the throne" (stanza one) drawn from Revelation 22:1; "Crown him the Virgin's Son" (original stanza two); "Crown him the Son of God" (original stanza three); "Crown him the Lord of Love" (original stanza four); "Crown him the Lord of Peace" (original stanza five); and "Crown him the Lord of Years" (original stanza six).

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894) began his faith in the Anglican Church and then, following the lead of John Henry Newman and many others, became a Roman Catholic in 1848. This was the era of the Oxford Movement, where adherents to the movement studied the church's ancient history, doctrine and the liturgy, discovering a wealth of Greek and Latin hymnody from the early Christian Church.

Crown Him with many crowns was published in Bridges' second edition of *Hymns of the Heart* in six, eight line stanzas. In 1868, the hymn appeared in the Appendix to the first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the monumental hymnal of the Oxford Movement, assuring its future in the genealogy of Christian hymn genres.

However, in the 1870s, objections were made to Bridges' reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary in stanza two, resulting in Godfrey Thring, an Anglican priest composing a new version. This was published in his *Hymns and Sacred Lyrics*. The hymn eventually became popular with a combination of a stanza of Thring's text and three of Bridges' original hymn. The popularity of the hymn also emerges from the magnificent march like joyful tune of *Diademata*, written by Sir George Job Elvey, which seemed best suited for the triumphant tones of the lyrics that continues to stir many a heart even today.

Bridges lived his latter years in Quebec, Canada, returning to England before his death.



Good Friday traditions around the world

With Christianity having spread across the world in just over 2,000 years, there are traditions and customs that have been adopted by various countries to remember the day that Christ gave himself up for humanity on that cross.

Bermuda



Bermuda has one of the most unique Good Friday traditions, with locals flying kites and eating a feast of codfish cakes and hot cross buns. The high-flying kites are meant to symbolize Christ's ascension to heaven.

El Salvador



During Easter Week, members of Catholic churches in El Salvador haul buckets of dyed sawdust to the streets and on Good Friday, transform the sawdust into colorful scenes called alfombras or carpets, which depict the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

England



Thousands of Britons gather in Trafalgar Square to watch a 90 minute passion play depicting the crucifixion of Jesus.

Germany



The annual Good Friday procession in Bensheim, Germany, is one of the biggest and most elaborate in the world, reenacting the betrayal, sentencing, scourging, and death of Jesus in an elaborate performance.

Ireland



Being predominantly Catholic, for 90 years all pubs were ordered closed on Good Friday but in 2018, the ban was lifted although some pub owners continue to keep their shutters down.

Israel



In Jerusalem, Christians in Israel walk the very same path Jesus did on that fateful day, with many trying to ritually bear the same weight Jesus did by carrying crosses on their backs.

Philippines



In Pampanga, Philippines, between three and 12 men are literally nailed to a cross every year to recreate the crucifixion of Jesus, remaining on the cross until they feel cleansed of sin.

Malta



All of Holy Week is a major holiday with celebrations peaking on Good Friday and the story of Good Friday and Easter retold during long processional walks.

Spain



All across Spain, priests hold elaborate processions with the most intense being in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, in which disciplinantes choose to self-flagellate as an act of faith.

Mexico



In Iztapalapa, Mexico, 4,000 actors reenact Christ's walk to his death. One man, chosen for his character and strength, goes the extra mile by playing the role of Jesus. He wears a crown of thorns and is flogged in the streets, all while carrying a 200-pound cross.

Vatican City and Italy



A massive cross made of torches burns in the sky and people hold their own candles as the 14 Stations of the Cross, which depict Jesus' path from sentencing through crucifixion to entombment, are read.



The Music Makers at St. Andrews

"We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams."

- Arthur O'Shaughnessy

No church is complete without the energized scores of orchestral resonance that makes joyful noise to the Lord. Voices unite to harmonious melodies that are emotionally moving, explosively expressive and touchingly healing. As Grammy award winning musician Billy Joel said, "No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music."

St. Andrews has been fortunate to have music as a vital component of its DNA. There have always been music makers giving of their talents to make our services richer and our church life fulfilling. We have had choirs, soloists, pianists, violinists, cellists and brass – led by some amazing music directors all of who add vivid dimensions to the tapestry of our inter-denominational church. Here are two, who willingly volunteer to spread their infectious love of music, a magic that entices us to join in with all our hearts and souls.

Organist - Nieranjan de Silva



Funny in a tongue in cheek kind of way, (he hardly cracks a smile when he jokes), Nieranjan de Silva's prowess on the ivories gives him legendary status in Sri Lanka. Interested in music for even longer than he remembers, sitting at the church organ began at fifteen when he decided to join the choir at S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia where he schooled. "The sound of the church organ fascinated me and all I wanted to do was play the organ."

A great supporter of St Andrews, he volunteers at numerous churches including at Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour whenever a choral performance dictates his expertise, surely adding to the Cathedral's musical offerings which has the church bursting at the seams whenever any of these performances do take place. His interaction with St. Andrews began when the church purchased a Yamaha FC-4 double keyboard organ thirty years ago playing for special services and whenever the regular organists at the time David Ratnanayagam and Denham Pereira were unavailable.

His serious demeanour belies his humorous persona. When asked what his choice of music would be for special occasions, the answer is given with a straight face. "There are favourites for specific occasions. Large solemn processions calls for the theme from The Muppet Show, Three Blind Mice at communion time (not applicable to St. Andrews but where in some churches people push their way through polite queues to receive communion), Abba's Money, Money, Money for the offertory, Wake me up before you go-go after a boring sermon and Rosa Polla Geneng* for the entrance of the Groom's intended mother in law at a wedding service."

A most affable conversationalist, Nieranjan however gets most joy sitting in his verandah on his favourite chair overlooking the garden, day dreaming. "Some of the most creative ideas evolve from these dreams," he deduces.

*Rosa Polla Geneng is a popular baila song



Choir Master - Sanjeev Niles



He's a rock star! He loves very heavy metal music although classical music is his core. He's collaborated with Suresh de Silva from Stigmata and eastern drum virtuoso Pabalu Wijegoonewardene on original compositions (the latter based on Sonali Deraniyagala's Wave).

But Sanjeev Niles' has been praising the Lord with his rich reverberating voice ever since his father, a priest at the Methodist Church, placed the little boy in the choir stands. His exposure to choral singing began in the choir at S. Thomas' Preparatory School Kollupitiya and he continued singing with the Colombo Philharmonic Choir, Camerata and the Merry An Singers. In fact, Mary Anne David was his vocal trainer. His talent has now extended to writing his own composition, (he has released four songs), and much joy ensues when he hears young musicians performing and recording his music.

It was former music director at St. Andrew's Denham Pereira who "blew me away with his rich organ music," says Sanjeev of his initial visits to worship at St. Andrew's. "Rev. Bill Davnie and the Elders approached me several times and asked if we could start up a choir with the members of the congregation. We began practicing weekly and we hope everyone involved would be inspired and continue to be a part of this effort to add flavour and colour to the Sunday services."

Some of Sanjeev's favourite composers from the past are Puccini, Schubert and Edward Elgar, while John Williams and Finnish composer Tuomas Holopainen are from the more contemporary options. "I also listen to very heavy metal (a genre generally frowned upon by the church for no valid reason)," says Sanjeev. "My favorite singer is the German Tenor Jonas Kaufmann." Sanjeev's voice though tackles multiple genres from operatic arias, art songs and modern classical crossovers sung by the likes of Andrea Bocelli.

Married to Mariangela (Mari for short) with seven year old Andreo giving him the most joy, Sanjeev is a revolutionary at heart, the reason he composes his own music. "Classical style combined with contemporary sound is very powerful and can reach out to modern audiences compared to classical music written for eras gone by, though not a popular view that's embraced," he surmises.

Meet our congregation - Maureen Seneviratne



My first love was to be a musician - a concert pianist, but at that time this profession was not thought of as a promising field to aspire to. I am an accomplished pianist obtaining the highest qualifications in the Royal School and Trinity College examinations and also an 'A grade' radio artiste.

I proceeded to study Law at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya and completed my studies at the Law College in Colombo with a qualification to practice Law. After further exams, I served my apprenticeship with the eminent lawyer N K Choksy QC as an advocate. I was then awarded the prestigious Smith-Mundt scholarship by the US State Department which took me to Yale Law School to read for my Masters in Law. I was the first Sri Lankan woman to obtain a Master of Laws.

I met some wonderful people at Yale and also had time to indulge in my passion for music, but returned to my roots in Colombo as my family were here. I joined the Bar practicing under N K Choksy QC.

I was most privileged to have the best Senior to work under. He encouraged me and moulded me to handle controversial matters on my own. I was lucky enough to appear before judges who were men of integrity and were always open to hearing my arguments. Finally, I achieved what was thought to be impossible; the first woman in Sri Lanka to be conferred with Silk, an appointment made on merit.

My father was an accountant with the Railways and my mother was a very firm and organized woman who made me focus on my studies. She stayed home to look after the family.

Working as a Lawyer in Sri Lanka is very challenging and I had little time to relax, but whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would stay home listening to music. I was always comfortable with life if I felt happy and satisfied and that I had done the best I could in any circumstances.

My best friends are in the USA from my time at Yale and I enjoyed traveling in the USA and Canada. Many people looked after me, always expressing their concern and inviting me to their homes, treating me like one of the family.

I like to attend worship at St Andrew's Scots Kirk because the atmosphere is very friendly and everyone is treated equally.



Bringing back memories from 1944

who lives in Scotland, decided to visit the country they had heard so much about. Alasdair contacted Church Officer Kanapathy Sandrakumar and the brothers visited the Church on January 28th and saw the original entry in the church register for their parents' marriage.

"It was very moving to see where our parents exchanged their vows," said Alasdair. "We very much enjoyed meeting Kumar who took time on his day off to meet us and show us the register. We also met the interim minister William Davnie as well as Scotsman Eric Mailler and his wife Gillian who both attend the church. I'm sure my parents would have been delighted that we visited. They had a very happy marriage and produced a very loving family. As well as the three sons they had six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren."

Alasdair and his wife Sue and David and his wife Maureen toured Sri Lanka for two weeks including visits to the tea growing region around Kandy where Christina's friend Jock Morrison managed a tea plantation. They also stayed at the Galle Face hotel in Colombo where their parents had their honeymoon after the wedding. Hotel historian and assistant front desk manager Mohamed Siddique took them on a tour of the hotel.

"Mohamed gave us a fascinating picture of what the hotel would have been like at the time mum and dad stayed there," said Alasdair. "We were so pleased to see that it not only survived but it is a thriving establishment and a credit to Sri Lanka. Another emotional moment was when a bagpiper in full Scottish regalia played at sundown at the hotel while the Sri Lankan flag was being lowered. It couldn't have been more appropriate for our memories of Mum who was so proud of being a Scot. We loved our stay in this wonderful country where the people are so friendly and hope to return one day."

From time to time, we herald the return of past members of our congregation, with tales to tell and memories to share. For brothers David and Alasdair Northrop, the visit to St. Andrew's Scots Kirk was surely an emotional one. Their parents Christina and Edgar Northrop married at Scots Kirk in 1944, during World War II.

Scottish born Christina Graham was a member of the Royal Navy (WREN) when she met Englishman Edgar Northrop who was a telecom engineer with the Admiralty in Sri Lanka in 1944. The romance blossomed on that first encounter, when Edgar gave Christina a lift in his lorry when her transport broke down. There was no looking back from then on and within three months of meeting, they were married at the Kirk on December 30, 1944.

When Christina was expecting her son David, she returned to the UK. David, who was born in October 1945 also welcomed two brothers, Eddie and Alasdair.

Sadly both Edgar, who died in 2000, and Christina, who died in 2007, never returned to Sri Lanka but they both spoke fondly of their time there.

Realising the memorable moments their parents spent in this tropical isle, David who now lives in Canada, and Alasdair,





What they say about The St Andrew

Another lovely Newsletter Gillian, thanks and congratulations!

Norma

Many thanks for the newsletter Gillian and the fine article covering my retiral.

Good to see the Communion Cups in their new home too. Interesting new residents in the Netherlee Cottage roof space! Hope they can be persuaded to move on soon.

Tom

Thank you, Gillian.

I greatly enjoyed reading the newsletter. It is very professional indeed.

Looking forward to seeing you and Eric when you are back in Scotland.

Best wishes from
May McFadyean

Dear Newsletter team

Congratulations on what I think is your best yet - and certainly among the best of ANY parish newsletters I have read. The recipes made me hungry! But I was so pleased to have news of Maureen and to see how well Chandra (at Netherlee Cottage) looks now that she has started a job. Hoping and praying for your new minister.

We have now got a home in France and it is taking much of our time to put it in order. It is in Quillan near the Pyrenees mountains. Thinking of you all and sending Christmas blessings to all at St Andrew's.

Stewart & Lara



Happy Easter



Dates for your Diary

Sunday	April 14th	9.30 am	Palm Sunday Worship
Thursday	April 18th	6.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Communion Service
Friday	April 19th	6.30 pm	Good Friday Service
Sunday	April 21st	9.30 am	Easter Morning Worship, followed by Easter Brunch in the Church Hall

Services at St Andrew's Scots Kirk are held every Sunday at 9.30 am.
Communion services are held every first Sunday

Events

Saturday April 27th 6.30 pm Colombo Philharmonic Choir Easter Concert

Mission work

The Thrift shop is open every Tuesday between 11 am and 1 pm.

Lunch is served for the needy in our neighbourhood in the Church Hall between 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm. Volunteer servers are urgently needed each week.

The monthly visit to Ward 8 at Mulleriyawa Hospital is on the third Wednesday of each month, leaving the Church at 9.30 am.



73, Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka

T: +94 11 2 323765

<http://www.scotskirk.lk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/standrewsscotskirk/>

Editorial Committee:
Savithri Rodrigo
Gillian Mailler

Layout: Rohan Jayasekara

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee.