



Programme of Lectures and Events 2016 – 2017

**Cairns Church, 11 Buchanan Street, Milngavie
Orchardhill Parish Church, 12 Church Road, Giffnock**

INTRODUCTION

“If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” So wrote the Apostle Paul.

It’s a verse cherished by those eager to criticise the woolly liberalism of our present age. What is the point, they say, of a church without a clear focus of authority and able to distinguish truth from falsehood. A faith that courts uncertainty and doubt should therefore be side-lined, for as the late Dean Inge once remarked, “a church wedded to the spirit of the age becomes a widow in the next”.

For others, however, faith and uncertainty are seen, not as unlikely bedfellows, but as identical twins! In a society in which there is no longer one accessible language for conveying religious ideas, truth must be felt, reasoned about and discerned within the context of things lived and experienced in our lives day by day.

A theological outlook that is both tentative and thoughtful need not be a sign of weakened convictions and half-hearted commitment. Quite the opposite. As one enthused by this year’s array of Thinking Allowed contributors, I would go as far as to say that the present age needs such voices, and along with them, a programme of events designed to address issues pertinent to the very nature of a free and open society. For at the end of the day, a questioning faith will always prove stronger than one which relies too heavily on some external authority.

We look forward to welcoming you to this year’s lectures.

Rev Andrew Frater, Minister Cairns Church, Milngavie

Thursday 27th October 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Prof. Kenneth McColl, MD; FRCP; F MedSci; FRSE;
Professor of Gastroenterology, University of Glasgow

Lecture: "How Medical Science Makes Progress – and what about the Church?"



In his lecture Prof. McColl will describe the remarkable advances which have occurred in our understanding and treatment of gastrointestinal disorders over the past 50 years as well as the underlying thought processes by which these have come about. The reasons for the persistence of gastrointestinal symptoms, despite curing the diseases causing them, will also be addressed.

He will also ask whether there is a place for the inquiring scientific mind within the church as well as whether there is a place for the church within modern medicine.

Kenneth is a consultant physician in the NHS and Professor of Gastroenterology in the University of Glasgow. In addition to his clinical work he has undertaken extensive research into the causes of upper gastrointestinal disorders including ulcers, stomach cancer and oesophageal diseases

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 3rd November 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

**Speaker: Rev. David McLachlan, BD; Cert Min;
Minister Langside Church, Glasgow**

Lecture: "The Gift Of Doubt"



If you begin a journey by starting out in the wrong direction you are unlikely to reach your destination.

Could it be that one reason so many people find it hard to hold onto (or even accept) Christianity is because they have been told things that are not true?

David poses questions on faith: are doubts and questions a barrier to faith or perhaps the sign of a weak faith? Can we consider questions to be our friends, helping us to grow in understanding?

Born in Argyll, David has lived most of his life in the West of Scotland. He graduated from Glasgow University, and has been a minister of the Church of Scotland for 30 years. He was minister of Gorbals Church for nine years. This was followed by ten years as minister of Elderslie Kirk in Renfrewshire, and he is currently minister at Langside Church in Glasgow.

Issues of justice and peace are close to David's heart. During his ministry he has served with the Church and Nation Committee and as Trustee of the Board of Christian Aid.

David is married to Susan and they have a grown up family. He supports St. Mirren football team and in his spare time David plays in a band, and enjoys reading and drawing

He is also a regular contributor to BBC Radio Scotland's "Thought for the Day".

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pmpm

Thursday 17th November 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Rev. Scott McKenna, BA; BD; MTh; MPhil;
Minister, Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church, Edinburgh

**Lecture: "The Most Important Journey in Life is the
Inner Journey"**



The Church's *raison d'être* is to open a door into the Divine. Scott is concerned that the word 'God' can be unhelpful because it too readily implies an external, supernatural being, up there, out there. His lecture will suggest that our creeds and traditional theologies are human constructs, like photographs from the past capturing a precious moment in time, but in a world that has gone. Scott will argue that for many today, encountering the Mystery, the Sacred, means journeying together with people of other world faiths,

openly engaging with science and, like Elijah, finding inner transformation in the sound of sheer silence.

Rev. Scott McKenna is a minister in the Church of Scotland, who has led "Prayers for the Day" on BBC Radio 4 and who has regularly contributed articles and prayers to Life & Work. For many years he has campaigned for the full inclusion of people who are LGBT in the ministries of the Church of Scotland. Alongside Margo McDonald MSP, he campaigned for the introduction of assisted dying legislation. At Mayfield Salisbury, Scott has led a programme of annual festivals: Meditation & Prayer; Celebrating Ageing & Faith; Science, Reason and Religion; Retreat & Pilgrimage; Sacred Music; and World Faiths. He firmly believes that Scripture is a rich tapestry of carefully crafted faith narratives blending mythology, liturgy, spirituality and fragments of history: he goes further and suggests that reading the Bible literally could be considered a heresy! He thoroughly enjoys Ignatian spiritual practice.

Scott was formerly the minister of Viewpark Parish Church, Uddingston. He is also currently undertaking a PhD at St Mary's College, University of St Andrews.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Wednesday 23rd November 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

Speaker: Reverend Peter Macdonald BD; Cert Min;
Leader of the Iona Community

**Lecture: "The Iona Community Transforming Lives to
Change the World - The work of the Iona
Community and the challenges of the future"**



The Iona Community is an international ecumenical Christian movement associated with the Church of Scotland which empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Its 250 members and 2400 associate members in 47 countries work individually and collectively for peace and social justice issues.

The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian movement seeking new ways of living the gospel in today's world through working for peace and social justice, rebuilding community and in the renewal of worship.

Ordained in the Church of Scotland, Peter Macdonald has served as leader of the Iona Community since 2009. In that capacity, he facilitates the vision and strategic direction of the Community and leads staff and members in the work that makes those plans a reality.

Prior to stepping up as Iona Community leader, Peter was pastor of St. George's West Church, Edinburgh. While minister of Torbain Parish Church, Kirkcaldy, he co-founded The Lomonds Trust to address the needs of homeless youth with a new 20-room facility, rent support and furniture recycling initiative.

Peter and his wife, Leslie Orr, PhD, an historian and feminist activist, live outside Edinburgh with their two sons.

*** Please Note that this talk is on a Wednesday night, not the usual Thursday night ***

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

ADVENT AT CAIRNS "The Bethlehem Story"

Remembering is important, but sometimes our memories let us down. Fixing a list of items in sequence can be helpful: "Thirty days hath September, April, June and November ..." Or, indeed, the way in which we recall the colours of the rainbow: "Richard of York gave battle in vain" – Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet!

However, the most powerful aide-memoire of all is the Story. So significant are stories, they almost remember themselves. From our earliest days of childhood the really important information is preserved and transmitted in story form. They stick in the mind better than anything else.

All communities thrive on great National Myths; big stories shaped over centuries to provide common values and patterns of behaviour, including a shared sense of origin and destiny.

During Advent we will immerse ourselves in the story of Bethlehem as depicted by Luke and Matthew. Hopefully, it will feel as though we have been conscripted into its plot, as if God himself was being written into every step of our lives. And if the tone is right and the atmosphere appropriate, we will feel as though we are riding the waves of a new, and much more significant, experience of faith.

A wise American pundit once said, "God is love, but get it in writing"

Well we have, and during the four Sundays of Advent Cairns provides a quiet space within which to experience such wondrous love.

Sunday 27th November 2016

Sunday 4th December 2016

Sunday 11th December 2016

Sunday 18th December 2016

At 8 pm in the Church

Thursday 12th January 2017

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

**Speaker: Myra MacDonald MA, author and former Reuters
Bureau Chief, India**

Lecture: "Pakistan: Politics and Religion"



Pakistan was created in 1947 as a homeland for Indian Muslims. It was set up in an ethnically diverse region, some of whose inhabitants had no interest in the new country; the new Government therefore relied on Islam as the unifying force. That trend towards the politicisation of religion accelerated after East Pakistan broke away to form Bangladesh. This process intensified as its military rulers asserted their influence in Afghanistan and tried to wrest control of Kashmir from India. Pakistan has become a country somewhat paralysed by religious extremism, and is now unable to provide full security to its own people.

As Pakistanis make up 60% of the Scottish Muslim community, this lecture will be of particular interest here in Glasgow. It will put the politicisation of Islam in Pakistan into its historical context. It will show that religious violence is not a product of Islam *per se*, but the outcome of mixing religion and politics, and as such, it should provide a sound foundation for improved inter-faith understanding here in Scotland.

Myra MacDonald was educated at Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow and at St. Andrews University. She joined Reuters as a graduate trainee and was a correspondent for them for nearly 30 years, including postings as Chief Correspondent, France and Bureau Chief, India.

Her first book, "Heights of Madness", was on the Siachen war between India and Pakistan, fought on the world's highest battlefield in the mountains above Kashmir. Her second book traces the relationship between India and Pakistan since their nuclear tests in 1998. "Defeat is an Orphan: How Pakistan Lost the Great South Asian War" will be published later this year.

Myra moved back home to Scotland two years ago.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 2nd February 2017

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL *TED* talks – ideas worth spreading

Speaker: TED talk – Jody Williams

Lecture: “A Realistic Vision For World Peace”



Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams brings tough love to the dream of world peace, with her razor-sharp take on what "peace" really means, and a set of profound stories that zero in on the creative struggle — and sacrifice — of those who work for it.

In more than 100 years of Nobel Peace Prizes, only a dozen women have ever won. Civil-rights and peace activist Jody Williams, received the award in 1997 as the chief strategist of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which established the first global treaty banning antipersonnel mines.

Williams believes that peace is defined by human (not national) security and that it must be achieved through sustainable development, environmental justice, and meeting people's basic needs. To this end, she co-founded the Nobel Women's Initiative, endorsed by six of seven living female Peace laureates. She chairs the effort to support activists, researchers, and others working toward peace, justice, and equality for women and thus humanity. Williams also continues to fight for the total global eradication of landmines.

TED talks – ideas worth spreading

Speaker: TED talk – Scilla Elworthy

Lecture: “Fighting With Nonviolence”



How do you deal with a bully without becoming a thug? In this wise and soulful talk, peace activist Scilla Elworthy maps out the skills we need — as nations and individuals — to fight extreme force without using force in return. To answer the question of why and how nonviolence works, she evokes historical heroes — Aung San Suu Kyi, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela — and the personal philosophies that powered their peaceful protests.

Elworthy is a three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee and a recipient of the Niwano Peace Prize. In 2002 Elworthy founded Peace Direct, which supports local action against conflict, and in 1982 founded Oxford Research Group, a think-tank devoted to developing effective dialogue between nuclear weapons policy-makers and their critics. Beginning in 2005 she helped set up The Elders initiative as an adviser to Sir Richard Branson, Peter Gabriel and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 23rd February 2017

8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

THE ROY PATERSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

Roy Paterson was minister of Cairns for 29 years. His ministry was considered the very embodiment of the New Testament idea of Christian living, clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Sadly, Roy died five years after his retirement. It is entirely fitting that his ministry be honoured by holding an annual lecture in his name.

Speaker: Rev. Julie Nicholson, Writer and Broadcaster

Lecture: "Crossing Places"



Julie Nicholson's lecture draws on personal narrative and experience in exploring the choices people make about how to live and thrive in the shadow of death and trauma. Julie reflects candidly on challenges faced in relation to the language and rhetoric of faith and in dealing with related concepts of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. The lecture will consider points of transition and change through encounter with people and place, the importance of authenticity in grieving and loss, and the value of embracing experience to make a positive difference.

Julie is an ordained priest in the Anglican Church. Following the sudden death of her eldest daughter in 2005, Julie resigned her post as a parish priest in order to attend to the demands of bereavement and family support in what was a high profile terrorist attack, the July 7th London bombings. The change this wrought has been significant, inevitably shaping her thinking as a person and a priest.

With a background in teaching and theatre, Julie took up a role of Theatre Arts Director, developing arts initiatives in the Bristol Diocese until 2010. Since then Julie has focussed on writing, contributing to articles, books and broadcasting. She has devised "The Most Effective Drum" for theatre, inspired by people's experiences of war throughout the world. Her book, "A Song for Jenny" was made into a BBC drama in 2015. Julie regularly contributes to Emergency Resilience Planning with Police, Emergency Services and Local Authorities and is currently a part-time Health Care Chaplain with the North Bristol NHS Trust.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served after the lecture when the speaker will be free to meet the audience on a more informal level

Thursday 9th March 2017

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

Speaker: The Very Reverend John Miller BA; BD; DD;
Former Moderator of the General Assembly of the
Church of Scotland

Lecture: "What Shall We Tell The Grandchildren?"

In the light of modern literary and historical scholarship, what is 'true' in the Bible? In multi-cultural Britain and in secular Western culture what is the place of such a particular faith as Christianity? What is it to live 'a Christian life'?



John Miller is a retired minister in the Church of Scotland. He was ordained and inducted to Castlemilk East Parish Church, Glasgow in 1971 from which he retired in 2007 from his parish duties, but then, in retirement, went to work for the Church in Zimbabwe.

His unassuming dedication to serving the people of Castlemilk was recognised by the Church of Scotland in his election as Moderator of the General Assembly in 2001.

Miller Primary School in Castlemilk was named after John and his wife, Mary Miller, in recognition of all that they had contributed to life in Castlemilk.

In 2005 the Lord Provost awarded him the Glasgow Loving Cup for his contribution to the City.

John's retirement was interrupted in 2012 when he became Interim Moderator and Locum Minister at Giffnock Orchardhill Parish Church for nearly three years.

As an author, John's books include "Silent Heroes", "A Simple Life" and "Reflections on the Beatitudes".

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Journey Through Holy Week at Cairns

"Easter: Beyond Belief"

Easter began with an experience: an overwhelming sense among the first followers that Jesus of Nazareth could still be experienced as a living reality, even after his death.

He was, of course, no longer flesh and blood, limited in time and space. He was now the living Christ, and by virtue of this, accessible anywhere and everywhere. It also meant that the Praise, Prayer and Worship of the early Christian community now served to make followers "one with God". It was quite a conviction, and has been ever since.

All of this serves as a timely reminder that Christianity requires followers to relate to Jesus, rather than simply believe in him. A mental assent to doctrines and teachings will only take us so far, the real adventure begins when we offer our lives at the deepest level and experience Jesus as a side of God turned towards us. It is our hope that we will be enriched by this new sense of reality during the evenings of Holy Week.

Each Evening

Sunday 9th April 2017

through to

Saturday 15th April 2017

at 8 p.m.

in the Church

Easter Day Celebrations

Sunday 16th April 2017

On Preaching Brae, Barloch Moor at 7 a.m.

Followed by Breakfast at Cairns

And in the Church at 10.45 a.m.

Advance Notice: Thinking Allowed Session 2017/2018 "A Scholar's Spotlight"

Thinking Allowed at Cairns is currently working on an event to be held during the autumn of 2017. The event will be called "A Scholar's Spotlight", a type of "Question Time" with representatives of University Theological/Philosophical depts. The concept is based roughly on the BBC 1 weekly programme. We would ask in advance for questions from our now fairly extensive attendee email address list. The required number would be selected, and the academics would air their views on each question.

We have been in discussion with a number of scholars, well-known to Thinking Allowed, who perhaps have differing views and/or come from different academic backgrounds.

Depending on work pressures and of course finding a date to suit everyone, we are hopeful that Prof. Helen Bond, Prof. Mona Siddiqui and Prof. David Fergusson all from Edinburgh University, and Prof. John Haldane from St Andrews University will participate. Sheriff Seith Ireland has also agreed in principle to chair the event and to keep everyone in order!



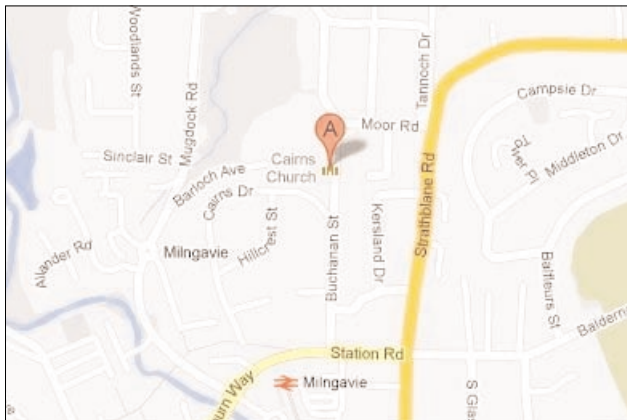
Over the next few months, Thinking Allowed will keep you informed on progress.

For further information on any of the events please contact:
the Cairns Office at 11 Buchanan Street, Milngavie G62 8AW

Tel: 0141 956 4868

Email: office@cairnschurch.org.uk

or on the website: www.cairnschurch.org.uk



OR

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