

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF PARISH ACTIVITIES IN 2014-15

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PART 1: THE LITURGY

The parish survey in 2013 revealed that our Sunday Liturgy was enjoyed by parishioners and visitors alike, drawing praise for our service across the board. We are fortunate to have a daily opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist here in St Peter's but perhaps one of our most rewarding Liturgy services takes place away from the church at our late-Spring and Advent Masses for the sick and elderly at Gillis Centre.

Obviously, we cannot have the Mass without the presence of the celebrant, Monsignor Kerr, but it is surprising that on a typical Sunday at least 40 other people are on hand to assist him. A glance through this part of the report shows why this is - from the opening of the doors long before Mass is due to begin, to locking them up again more than two hours later.

The Sacristy - Margaret Addly, John Anderson and Rosemary Rogerson

The Parish Sacristans open and close the church whenever required, and prepare the altar and the sanctuary for services. To share out the workload, a rota of daily Sacristans has been in place for around a year now. Each weekday, a team of two people, drawn from a pool of twelve, undertake the main Sacristan duties but also organise the reader and the Eucharistic Minister for the day's service.

In addition, a 5-strong team of ladies ensure that the altar linen is changed and laundered on a weekly basis to maintain a high standard of presentation.

Welcoming and passkeeping - John Wastle

To be a welcomer at Sunday Mass, you need to be able to give everyone who comes into church a newsletter, a hymn book, a mass book and a warm welcome with a big smile. To be a passkeeper, you just have to look busy!

We have a long-established team of four, with additional support as required from willing members of the congregation and some enthusiastic primary school pupils. We aim to provide a welcoming, friendly and safe environment; to ensure that all the necessary arrangements for Mass are in place; and to give help and advice whenever it is needed.

Altar Server Ministry

The parish is very well served at present by 21 altar servers, 13 girls and 8 boys. We currently aim to have six servers each Sunday so that most are able to serve, on average, one Sunday in three. To maintain a healthy gender balance, recruitment in the autumn of 2015 will be targeted mainly towards boys of Primary 5, but it will also be open to both girls and boys in more senior classes.

Training of potential servers is offered over four sessions, usually on Friday afternoons, but alternative arrangements may be made when necessary. Our training takes place in accordance with Archdiocesan Safeguarding Guidelines, parents taking it in turns to be present throughout. It links closely with P4-P7 themes of "This is our faith", the Scottish Bishops' guidance for religious education in Catholic Schools (2011).

We would welcome additional adult help with the organisation of all aspects of the Altar Server Ministry.

Music Ministry - Thérèse and Ian Stewart

The Music Ministry continues to give of its best in the service of the parish, both in the regular liturgy and in other services, events and special occasions such as the Masses for the sick and elderly, the bereaved, First Communion, Confirmations and the Family Carol Party at Christmas. The aim is always to encourage and lead the different congregations, not to "perform" **for** them.

We are fortunate to have a strong and loyal group of musicians, both instrumentalists and supporting singers. We are fortunate, too, to have composers in the Ministry and also experienced members who are prepared to assist the younger parishioners of Youth Rock in that group's musical ventures.

There is currently no resident organist in the parish but "guests" are called upon when required to play the organ (now in working order again after its long "illness"). This is usually for funerals.

Between them, our musicians play many instruments (including violins, cellos, flutes keyboard, trombone and guitars - acoustic and bass) which all blend well.

Some members of the Ministry are "lost" each year as they move away, usually to study, but we welcome new recruits. Another problem in organising the group is posed by our Sunday Mass time which can be difficult for families, but the group plays on!

We would like to thank sincerely numerous parishioners for their comments to us and for their constant support. Music is important in the liturgy and life of the church and it was very pleasing to see that, in parishioners' responses to the parish survey, approval of the parish music topped the list of comments made - thank you!

Reader Ministry - Peter Nicholson

The most significant development in the Reader Ministry in the last 12 months has been the change to sharing the reading duties at Sunday mass between two readers. This was agreed by the Parish Pastoral Council after I noted the view expressed in bishops' guidelines published elsewhere that it assists the reception of the Word of God by the faithful present if more than one person performs the duty. Not all the readers then on the list agreed with the change of policy, but it appears to be working in practice and I have not had any adverse comment since.

Also during the year, training evenings were held at the request of the PPC, following suggestions that some readers were not being heard clearly enough. I believe the opportunity to experiment with the microphone system has proved beneficial.

Six readers have resigned or retired in the last year and three new ones have offered their services. The current complement is twelve, and we would welcome two or three more, especially now that we have two duty slots per week.

Offertory Procession - John Wastle

On most Sundays the passkeepers invite a family to carry up the Offertory gifts - the Offertory collection, the ciborium and the wine decanter - in a procession led by the altar servers. However, the current arrangements also allow for the gifts to be carried by:

- children selected by the Children's Liturgy Team on the first Sunday of the month during school term
- children participating in our Family Masses
- people whose intentions are being remembered at the day's Mass
- representatives of parish organisations to mark appropriate occasions eg on Education Sunday, Fair Trade Sunday etc.

While it is convenient to ask families to take up the gifts, the passkeepers would like to hear from individuals who would like to participate with others in this important aspect of the Liturgy.

Eucharistic Ministers - Caroline Moffat and John Wastle

Our growing team of Eucharistic Ministers continues to serve the Parish by assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion at daily and Sunday Mass and by taking the Eucharist to those in hospital and to the sick and housebound. For Sunday Masses and other major occasions we need five Eucharistic Ministers to hold the ciborium and chalices, drawn from a pool of 20 who sign up in advance for a 3-month duty roster.

Candidate Eucharistic Ministers approved by Mgr Kerr are given a short introduction to the available guidance, followed by hands on practical training sessions. The candidates are then formally commissioned by Mgr Kerr at Mass. As soon as possible thereafter, the new Ministers are encouraged to take their turn distributing communion, both host and wine, at Mass on a Sunday.

In May we had an evening of reflection on the Eucharist and sharing of experiences of acting as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, to give us our proper name.

Liturgy Links - Ian Stewart

The Liturgical Liaison (or Liturgy Links) Group is a sub-group of the Parish Pastoral Council, existing to facilitate communication and co-operation between parishioners, the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Priest on matters concerning the parish liturgy. Its membership reflects a varied and representative cross-section of the parish community; very few of the members are actually on the Parish Pastoral Council itself.

Among the successful initiatives proposed by the group last year were the provision of new Parish Mass Books and additional Hymn Books for parishioners' use, especially at Sunday Mass; support for the creation of one joined-up Music Ministry in the parish, the recommendation that Sunday Readers should provide additional information for the congregation in their "welcome" remarks, and a number of other improvements.

The Group collated and analysed feedback from the major parish survey conducted in late 2013 and the responses were grouped for Parish Pastoral Council follow-up. Of parishioners' responses to the survey, some 130 referred specifically to liturgical matters/issues, almost 25% being favourable comments on the parish music, the next highest percentage (15%) questioning critically the timing and frequency of our Sunday Mass provision.

All responses to the survey relating to the Liturgy have been noted and considered and the group has happily supported complimentary comments/suggestions concerning music, the Children's Liturgy, Family Masses, Passkeeping and Welcoming, Altar Serving, Reading at Mass, the Parish Prayer Group and several other matters which fall within its remit.

A more recent report on altar serving in the parish was approved and supported; and the Group's recommendation that the standard of reading should be reviewed for audibility and clarity was also taken up. Indeed virtually all our suggestions and recommendations have been adopted by the Parish Pastoral Council and the parish priest, which is very encouraging.

The one major exception has been the timing and frequency of Sunday Mass in the parish. However, parishioners will recall that Mgr Kerr addressed this issue in a Sunday sermon, highlighting the shortage of priests in the Archdiocese and making the point that the current provision of Sunday services in South and Central Edinburgh offers vigil, early and later morning and evening Masses, a provision better than many enjoy elsewhere.

The Liturgy Links group will continue to welcome comments and suggestions on liturgical matters from individual parishioners, families and groups; and will continue to consider in detail matters referred to it by the Parish Pastoral Council. Our "Liturgy" is extremely important to us all.

PART 2: REACHING OUT

So many of St Peter's parishioners are committed to organisations and initiatives which strive to benefit those who are not members of our own parish community. As this part of the report shows, our outreach activities begin on our doorstep, stretching to other parts of the city and far beyond.

St Vincent de Paul - Fran Good

The past year has seen the eight members of the Saint Vincent de Paul (SVDP) Parish Conference busy visiting the elderly and housebound of the parish who either stay in our local residential homes or in their own homes. At the maximum these parishioners numbered 33. Ideally, SVDP members visit in pairs, with one person visited by a pair of members counting as two "contacts". A total of just over 600 "contacts" were made over the past twelve months.

Our ageing population often have families that are scattered around the UK or living abroad. Being visited every 2-4 weeks by SVDP members is an attempt to make them still feel a part of the parish community when they are no longer able to attend Mass. All current members of the Conference are able to take Holy Communion to those who wish to receive it. The Conference also continues to assist the Chaplain at the weekly Mass at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital - transporting patients to and from the service and helping to ensure the smooth running of the Mass. To this end we have been assisted by several parishioners who are not active members of the Conference itself.

Conference meetings have been held every 3-4 weeks, usually with Mgr Kerr in attendance. Preparation for a fruitful meeting takes the form of prayers and a short, pertinent reading. Confidential updates on those we visit and business matters follow, including a financial statement and decisions about allocation of funds. Being part of an international society, financial donations by our conference over the last year have included international appeals for Iraq, Gaza and Syria. Our local and overseas twin conferences have also been supported

along with 'The Space' facility in Govanhill, Glasgow which provides desperately needed support and help for those experiencing extreme poverty and social hardships.

Saint Peter's Primary School has also been given financial help to part-finance a few pupils who would otherwise be unable to attend residential trips (St Columba's SVDP matched our donation). Basic food parcels have been distributed before Mass to those who request them and SVDP has continued to arrange the bi-annual Mass and afternoon tea at Gillis Centre for the elderly and sick of our parish. Without the help and support of other parishioners (transport and help) and the Ladies' Group (afternoon tea and baking) these functions would not be the success they are. Thank you.

The Conference is supported spiritually by Mgr Kerr and we were grateful that Sister Helen held a Morning of Reflection at the start of Advent 2014 which was very much appreciated by the attendees. Most importantly however, without the great financial generosity of St Peter's parishioners the Conference would be unable to provide the support it does. Over the past twelve months a total of £3,570.91 was received in the box collection at the end of Mass. This includes the marvellous sum of £421.43 collected on Homelessness Sunday which was given to the Brothers at Jericho House who provide a hot meal for the homeless every Sunday. Any monies collected by SVDP are distributed in a timely manner with relatively small balances kept. For example, at the end of the last financial year the Conference balance was £144.79.

SVDP would be happy to hear from any parishioners interested in becoming members of the Conference. The degree of commitment can be negotiated to suit individual circumstances.

Eco-Congregation - Liz Brown

Eco-Congregation Scotland is an ecumenical movement helping local groups of Christians to link environmental issues to their faith, to reduce their environmental impact and to engage with their local community. There are 335 eco-congregations in Scotland, with 119 holding the Eco-Congregation Award.

As an Eco-Congregation, St Peter's parish is committed to considering and implementing initiatives to show that we care for the world that God has created. St. Peter's was given its first Eco-Congregation Award in May 2014. This award lasts until May 2016, and was achieved without any conditions. This means that the work we had done to achieve the award, and the plan we had in place for future activities, were considered to be outstanding from the outset! You can see the Award proudly displayed on the gates to the Church. And do have a look at our new garden!

The Open Door - Ivor Clarke

The Open Door at 420 Morningside Road, opposite the clock, was founded thirty years ago as a Christian Community Centre providing day care and support for the elderly and vulnerable in our community. Its Board of Directors and its volunteers include representatives from all local churches. Parishioner Archie Cairns has recently taken over from Eileen McCamley as our representative on the Board of Directors.

Volunteers help in two principal ways: by serving in the community cafe, as Eileen has done for many years, working 3-4 hour shifts on a rota basis, Monday to Friday; or by providing support on one day a week at one of three clubs for the vulnerable elderly.

The Tuesday "Good Neighbour Club" offers companionship and a variety of interesting activities to the elderly who seek an alternative to isolation and loneliness and can make their own way to The Open Door. "I've had a great day. I don't know what I would do without the club", is a regular comment of its members. Parishioner Ivor Clarke is a volunteer worker with this club. The Thursday Club is for those who have been assessed and referred by medical or social work personnel as having special care needs. "The Saturday Break", another assessment and referral club, offers care to dementia sufferers so that their carers may have a short period of respite. Transport to and from both these clubs is provided.

If you would like to volunteer for any of the above or if you know someone who would benefit from the support offered by The Open Door please call 447 9757. For more information visit the website at www.theopendoor-morningside.org.uk.

Hospital visitors - Liz Brown

Visits to patients in the Astley Ainslie Hospital have been made, on request, by Eucharistic Ministers Liz Brown, Jim Wallace, Cathal McCarthy and Shelagh McGhee. The number of visits required has declined following the permanent closure in October 2014 of wards in the Balfour Pavilion and Millbank Pavilion.

Jericho House - Anne-Marie Douglas

The Jericho Soup Kitchen & Clothing Store is no longer open on weekday evenings so St Peter's is no longer involved in serving food there or in manning the clothing store. However, the Jericho Brothers still provide lunch there on a Sunday so St Peter's continue to support the Brothers' work by providing food, toiletries and clothing on a fairly regular basis.

FreshStart - Patricia Cairns

FreshStart's Mission is 'helping people make a home for themselves'

FreshStart was born in 1999 when a group of people from Edinburgh's churches came together to find a way of tackling the evil of homelessness in Scotland's capital city.

A group of homeless people were consulted and the challenge of creating a new home was recognised. As a result the Starter Pack project was launched, initially among seven Edinburgh congregations. St Peter's is one of over a hundred churches now involved and we have increased the frequency of our parish collections from once or twice per year to monthly.

Our congregation have responded magnificently to the needs identified by FreshStart and there is usually a good carload of items such as bedding, towels, pots and pans, cutlery, crockery, cleaning materials and other basic essentials to be dropped off to the warehouse in Pilton. In addition, the proceeds of our Christmas raffle this year, over £400, was given to FreshStart and used for their Cookers for Christmas Appeal.

The charity has grown and developed in response to need and now also offers:

- hit Squads of volunteers who help to decorate up to two rooms
- staff development opportunities for businesses by volunteering
- cooking and budgeting classes for former homeless people
- growing fruit and vegetables in the Harrison Place allotment
- training initiative, PAT testing skills and qualifications
- Food Starter Packs.

We are delighted that our efforts on behalf of FreshStart were recognised and rewarded as contributing to our Eco–Congregation status as we are saving tonnes of goods from landfill.

Cardinal Winning Pro-life Initiative Group of St Peter's - Agnes Dolan

The Cardinal Winning Pro-Life initiative of St Peter's was set up to help women facing a crisis pregnancy. The help is as required, whether spiritual, emotional or material. For this purpose, some of our Group always attend Mass on the third Wednesday of each month to pray for the unborn and for the protection of life. This is particularly important as euthanasia is on the “menu” of the political agenda. The number of people attending the Mass is changing as the members of the group have to go to work or stay at home with children or other family members.

I would say The Cardinal Winning Pro-Life Initiative Group has become “established” in the parish. We now have regular donations from parishioners. Our supporters keep our activity in their mind and have collected goods from as far away as Fife. We have taken six big bags of clothes to the Nuns in Glasgow who run the Initiative. In March when the Initiative most needed prams (as reported on their website) we were able to supply one to them.

Christian Aid - Liz Brown

Liz Brown is St. Peter’s representative on the Morningside and Fairmilehead Churches Christian Aid Committee. With the support of the Outreach team and other parishioners, St. Peter's has assisted where possible with local events. All events are publicised in the newsletter and on our notice boards. The most important of these activities is the door-to-door collection during Christian Aid Week in May - the team at St. Peter’s currently comprises 5 parishioners who make a loyal and valuable contribution. New collectors are always needed and would be most welcome. This year, three significant donations of second hand books were collected direct from parishioners’ homes. These were very gratefully received for the Christian Aid Book Sale at Holy Corner which last year raised £13,500. An article on Christian Aid also featured in the Parish Magazine to try to raise the profile and attract extra volunteers from St. Peter’s.

St Peter’s SCIAF Support Group - Anne-Marie Douglas

Last year we had an exceptionally successful fundraising effort and I did not really think, or expect, that we could match it this year - but we have in fact exceeded it by more than £1,000! By the end of June, we will have donated a total of £13,078.55 to SCIAF - a truly amazing amount.

We have already donated £3,000 to our Parish Project and we will hand over a cheque for at least £4,250 at the end of June. This year's SCIAF Lenten Appeal raised £4,828.55 in St Peter's and this truly exceptional sum was matched by the UK Government. Following an impromptu retiral collection at Mass on 3 May, we sent £1,000 to the emergency appeal for the victims of the earthquake in Nepal.

Our aim is not only to raise money but to raise awareness of the problems faced by so many in other parts of the world, by the choices we make every day in our lives here. Hopefully we have succeeded in this too.

There has been a lot of fun as well as hard work involved in our fundraising and we as a parish should be proud of our achievements.

Outreach Justice and Peace - Norma Daniels Emm

Under the umbrella of Outreach Justice and Peace we work together to promote the social teachings of the Church. We do this through focusing on our role as a Fairtrade Parish and as an Eco-Congregation. Throughout the year we planned events in support of SCIAF, FreshStart and SVDP. In addition we have: hosted an Alternativity Meal during Advent and a Lenten Lunch; promoted Poverty and Homeless Action Week and Christian Aid events. In January, at Sunday Mass, we celebrated the contribution migrants and refugees make to our parish by having the bidding prayers read in a variety of languages. The offertory gifts were taken up by parishioners who themselves, or their families, were born other countries.

Fairtrade - Norma Daniels Emm

As a Fairtrade parish we are committed to using Fairtrade products - tea, coffee, wine etc - at parish meetings and social events. St Peter's has maintained its Fairtrade status this year. We achieved this through the continuing support of the parish's hospitality team in using Fairtrade products. The Christmas hamper raffled in aid of FreshStart consisted mainly of Fairtrade goods. Fairtrade Fortnight was marked by a beauty evening where Fairtrade wine was served and a Fairtrade Easter Egg was raffled. Throughout the year appropriate items have been contributed to the newsletter, and bidding prayers have been said with a Fairtrade theme.

PART 3: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people form a welcome, prominent and seemingly ever-growing presence in St Peter's, from babes in buggies upwards. This part of the report focuses on three important activities specifically geared to the young but, as we have seen earlier, they also play a significant role in the Liturgy as altar servers and members of the music group.

Children's Liturgy - Joyce Cullen

The Children's Liturgy team has had a busy and enjoyable year, with a fairly large group (generally somewhere between 30 and 40) of pre-school and primary school children joining us to share the Sunday gospel at Children's Liturgy each Sunday during school terms. We are happy to have children between about 4 and 10 years of age attending Children's Liturgy, the hope being that most children will be ready (and encouraged by their parents) to stay in church for the full Mass after they have received the sacrament of Holy Communion.

We currently have eight Children's Liturgy team members, with one new volunteer and one having "retired" in the course of the year (many thanks to Patricia Dolan for her service to the team over a number of years – she is now concentrating her efforts to supporting Youth Rock). We work together in teams of three and we are therefore "on duty" approximately 2 or 3 times each term. We have also been delighted to have additional support and assistance from three young adults who have each volunteered to help at Children's Liturgy over a number of weeks, as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award activities.

In August 2014 the team organised the annual Summer Parish Picnic, which took place after Mass in the playing field behind St Peter's Primary School and to which all parishioners were invited, whether or not they had children attending Children's Liturgy. We enjoyed a lovely sunny afternoon, with races for all ages, games and prizes. It was a great opportunity for the team to get to know the parents of the children who attend, and for the parents and children to enjoy a relaxed social event.

At Christmas Morning Mass the children performed a short Nativity, dressing up and performing “Away in a Manger” for the congregation, with great enthusiasm. They handed over a cheque to Monsignor Kerr, to be donated to SCIAF, representing the money collected by the children in the course of the year in the Children’s Liturgy “wee box”.

We would like to encourage new volunteers to join the team this year. All volunteers are offered guidance and on-the-job support to undertake the role, and we have regular team meetings/social events in the course of the year, when there is an opportunity to discuss ideas and to share experiences. We require to follow the guidance issued by the National Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults from the Bishop’s Conference of Scotland and new volunteers must complete the Archdiocesan volunteer application forms and join the PVG Scheme. Advice and assistance is provided for the application process and there is no cost involved.

Family Masses - Steve Hand

Over the last year, the children of the parish have continued to have a greater involvement in our series of Sunday Masses geared towards children and their families. This time our Masses celebrated the Feast of Christ the King on 23 November, Mothers Day on 15 March and the weekend of 6/7 June when our P4 children receive their First Holy Communion on the Saturday and return to celebrate with the wider parish community on the Sunday.

Typically these occasions give the younger members of the congregation the opportunity to take the lead with the readings, bidding prayers and the Offertory Procession. But on Mothers' Day, a record number of younger children and Youth Rockers took part, taking up the Offertory Collection itself for the first time and leading the musical contribution to the Liturgy. As always, we are grateful for the support of the music group, the Children's Liturgy team and the passkeepers and also to Scott Moffat for capturing on camera a wonderful parish celebration.

Youth Rock - Trish Dolan

Youth Rock, our group for young parishioners in S1-S6, has continued well, with the support of eight adult volunteers. Whilst some ‘older’ members have moved on, an influx of new S1s replenished the group after the summer, so that on a busy evening we might expect twelve to attend, whilst a quieter evening can see as few as 3 or 4 attendees.

Previous activities

Activities over the past year were all chosen by the young people and have included: outdoor activities; board games; film night; Christmas party; Scottish night; card-making and sale of cards which raised £20 for SCIAF and £20 for YR funds; music sessions; tenpin bowling. Our Christmas party was the best attended session with nearly 20 young people participating.

The young people also participated to great effect in a number of Ministries as part of the Family Mass on Mothers' Day, the 4th Sunday of Lent/Laetare Sunday. They were very fortunate to receive an anonymous donation of £40 after this Mass, which was combined with the £20 they had previously raised to defray the costs of a successful tenpin bowling night.

Some current volunteers have signalled that they wish to step down from their duties and so an appeal for adult volunteers to support the group – a minimum of two PVG approved volunteers must attend every meeting, even if very few young people attend - was made after Mass on 10 May. We are delighted that this resulted in at least two firm offers to volunteer.

Looking ahead

An end-of-term summer party is scheduled for 14 June. We will invite P7s to attend as part of our on-going recruitment and outreach. We will also continue to work with the young people on identifying what they would like the group to be involved in, as we are always striving to maintain a 'youth-led' ethos for the group.

The Diocesan office has made us aware of its Diocesan Youth Forum, which might provide a useful support and inspiration for developing the group moving forward. Our experience with Youth Rock so far has established that many of our young parishioners have a number of interests and commitments e.g. sports teams and clubs which, as well as necessary homework and study, compete for their time and attention. An on-going challenge for Youth Rock is to ensure it meets our young parishioners' needs and expectations.

PART 4: FAITH FORMATION AND PRAYER

We are fortunate to have a number of dedicated and skilled parishioners to help us along life's way - and even at a point before life begins! As this Part of the report demonstrates, care for our spiritual wellbeing is in good hands.

Baptism preparation - Josephine Beech-Brandt

The Baptism Team assist Monsignor Kerr with preparing parents who wish to have children baptised.

The preparation classes are held three times a year and the format is two afternoon sessions on successive Sundays. The course not only provides an opportunity to learn more about baptism and reflect on the start of the child's spiritual journey, but it also provides an opportunity to meet other parents within the parish.

The Team is made up of parents drawn from the parish and we are always happy to have new members join us. Most members assist with two courses a year so the commitment involved is usually four afternoons. Over the past year or so, 33 couples have attended the courses mounted by the Team.

Christian Initiation of Children - Mgr Kerr

Over the past year, we have held a series of events at Sunday Mass relating to the preparation of St Peter's primary school children in P3 and P4 for their first celebration of the Sacraments of Penance, Confirmation and Holy Communion. This annual cycle of events, which runs over the course of the academic year, is known as the Christian Initiation of Children (CIC).

The Archdiocese has made clear the need for parishes to become more involved in this, rather than leaving all the preparations to the schools, emphasising that "...parents are their children's primary educators into the life-long journey of faith" and that "...it is important that parents and their children are committed to gathering for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist". Schools and parish communities are there to support parents in this. So, in St Peter's, these events are accompanied by a series of preparatory meetings with parents of the children throughout the Primary 3 and 4 years along with associated celebrations in church for parents and children.

So, before their celebration of First Penance, Primary 3 children celebrated two Rites in the parish at Sunday Eucharist:

- *Signing with the Cross* recalls that the children were marked with the cross at their baptism; and reaffirms parents' central role as first teachers in the ways of faith
- the *Rite of Illumination*, again connects with infant baptism in praying that the children continue to walk in the light of Christ.

Then, before Confirmation and First Holy Communion, Primary 4 children celebrated another four Rites with the parish community at Sunday Eucharist:

- the *Rite of Enrolment*, when the children are called by name to take part in the preparations for the sacrament
- *Presentation of the Gospels*, where the children are presented with a copy of the Gospel of the current liturgical year
- *Presentation of the Creed*, when the children have the opportunity to confirm all that we believe
- *Presentation of the Lord's Prayer*, where the children receive the prayer as the model of all Christian prayer, said each time the community gathers.

This year, after this important programme of preparation, our P3 children celebrated First Penance on Wednesday 29 April, and our P4 pupils were confirmed by the Archbishop on Friday 29 May in the Sacred Heart before receiving their First Holy Communion on the morning of Saturday 6 June at a joyous celebration in St Peter's.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) - Mgr Kerr

Over the past year we have received one young man at a private ceremony into full communion with the Catholic Church earlier in the year as he had to leave for Canada before Easter. At present we are meeting fortnightly on Monday evenings at 7.20 pm and we have one young woman who is interested in the Catholic Faith.

Bereavement befriending - Rosemary Rogerson

Our befriender is available to lend a listening ear to any parishioner who wishes to talk. Plans are in hand for a workshop session at Gillis Centre to support our two new volunteers for this Ministry. The annual Bereavement Mass on Saturday 8 November 2014 was very well attended.

Evening retreats - Juliet MacKellaig

I ran the following evening retreats at St Peter's using scripture and images to pray with:

2014

- Parents retreat for P3 and P4 around reconciliation
- Film of St John's Gospel
- Film of the Passion of the Christ
- Advent evening

2015

- Three Lent Café evenings on the present at day stations of the cross

- Parents retreat for P3 and P4 around the Eucharist
- May 2015 Pentecost Café – around the promise, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Group - Douglas Hunter

St. Peter's Parish Prayer Group meets on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm in the Parish Room. Our main purpose is to pray for the needs of the Parish and to offer fellowship to anyone who wishes a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith.

We start with a decade of the Rosary asking for Our Lady's intercession, followed by a time of praise and worship which includes readings from the Psalms. After offering God our praise, we enter into a time of silence where we individually listen to what the Lord is saying to us through Scripture and words of knowledge. After approximately 10 minutes we break the silence and share the passages of scripture while someone writes and discerns the overall theme. We never cease to be amazed at the very clear way the Lord speaks to us through the discernment.

We then have 15 minutes of teaching on an aspect of church life from Scripture, Catechism or the life of a Saint. At 8.45pm we have intercessory prayer for the Parish when we pray for the intentions placed in the box at the back of the Church. We also pray for personal intentions, the wider community and the needs of the world. At 9.00pm, we have a time of sharing when those who wish can share their experiences of what the Lord has been doing in their lives over the past week.

When asked we can offer Prayer Ministry to anyone in need of emotional or physical healing.

The Prayer Group regularly attracts about 10–15 people. We never know who will come through the Parish Room door on a Thursday evening. People come from other parishes, from overseas, from hospitals - or just out of curiosity. This offers the prayer group a wealth of interesting people with many different gifts to share.

In August, some of our members travel to Walsingham for the annual New Dawn Conference where we offer the parish prayer requests for the intercession of Our Lady of Walsingham and request a Mass to be offered for our priest and parish. Some of the prayer group also organise and attend our own New Dawn in Scotland Conference in July each year in St. Andrews

The Prayer Group contributes to parish evangelisation by occasionally offering a CaFe course (Catholic Faith Exploration) where we show a DVD series on an aspect of our faith, in a cafe setting. Also, with the help of Juliet MacKellaig, we offer more reflective programmes during Lent and Pentecost.

Over the years we have been privileged to experience many miracles as the Lord hears and answers our prayers.

PART 5: ADMINISTRATION

While our parish priests administer to us admirably on spiritual matters, a parish of some 1,200 souls also needs the more mundane administration. Here is the work of the people who attend to that for us.

Parish Secretary - Mary Wastle

The parish secretary carries out general secretarial and administrative duties as required by Mgr Kerr. As part of her duties, she prepares the weekly parish newsletter (see Part 6 below), maintains the parish records in good order. She also keeps a central diary of forthcoming liturgical and social events in the parish and should be consulted when such activities are being planned to avoid clashes. The diary is updated and distributed regularly to interested Ministry leaders and a copy is posted on the parish website.

In Mgr Kerr's absence, the parish secretary is able to undertake certain tasks, such as providing copies of baptism certificates, in cases of urgency.

Gift Aid Scheme - Andrew Thackrey

This is an important source of revenue for the parish. If you pay income tax and are willing to use weekly envelopes to record contributions (anonymously) or pay by standing order or direct debit, the parish is able to claim back the tax on your donations. There is no cost whatever to the taxpayer.

At present we have just under 150 tax-paying parishioners who have signed a Gift Aid declaration. Contact Andrew Thackrey, 447 3232 thackreystrath@hotmail.com.

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection - Joyce Cullen

The Parish has a substantial number of volunteers undertaking work with children and vulnerable adults. Along with Monsignor Kerr, as St Peter's Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, part of my role is to ensure that the Church's guidelines are complied with and that the appropriate Parish and Archdiocesan forms are completed by all new volunteers, as well as ensuring that all volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults (both new and those who have been volunteering over many years) become members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

Over the past year, as well as assisting new volunteers with the recruitment processes, we have been "catching up" with applications for our existing volunteers, and all volunteers within St Peter's who are working with children and vulnerable adults have now either been accepted as members of the PVG Scheme, or their applications are in process.

In April each year the Parish requires to undertake an audit and provide an annual audit return to the Archdiocesan office, confirming numbers of volunteers working with protected groups; confirming the progress and status of membership of each volunteer; and confirming that appropriate training has been offered. This year training for all volunteers is to be provided at St Peter's in September, by an Archdiocesan trainer qualified to provide expert input and guidance. Details of the training date will be published shortly.

Along with Monsignor Kerr, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the primary point of contact for any parishioner who has a concern about the welfare or safety of any child or vulnerable adult within the Parish. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is obliged to report such concerns to the relevant contacts within the Archdiocese (or in cases of urgency direct to the relevant authorities). There has been no need for any such report to be made for St Peter's in the course of the past year.

Parish Pastoral Council - John Wastle

The Parish Pastoral Council comprises up to 12 members, either elected by parishioners or co-opted by the Council itself. Their names and portraits are on the picture frame on a pillar at the back of church. Mgr Kerr, as parish priest, is *ex officio* President of the Council.

The Council meets up to six times a year between September and June when the Annual General Meeting is also held to deal with a wide range of business relating to the life of the parish. In recent times the Council has formed a number of sub-groups to enable more detailed consideration to matters relating to the liturgy and to the results of the parish survey.

The agenda for Council meetings and the minutes are posted in the parish room and on the parish website along with other papers of interest. Paper copies of these documents are also available from the Council Secretary on request. An account of Council business is set out in its *Annual Report for Session 2014-15*, also available in the parish room and on the website.

PART 6: COMMUNICATIONS

"Communication, communication, communication" as the Blair fellow might have said for all the good his alternative slogan did. Anyway, perhaps to the regret of some but to the relief of others, St Peter's has not (yet?) embraced digital social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Apart from Juliet MacKellaig's terrific website - the illustrations alone are worth a visit - we rely on the more traditional means of communication - paper!

Parish newsletter - Mary Wastle

The parish secretary is the editor of the weekly newsletter as part of her administrative duties. Priority is given to providing information on all aspects of parish life in St Peter's but, space permitting, news is also given of events in our local community and beyond. Our newsletter is a 1-sheet double sided production but, from time to time the editor is prepared to extend that to accommodate a particularly interesting or valuable article.

The newsletter is available to parishioners from Saturday Mass at 12 noon and, to allow time for composition, editing and reproduction (some 200 copies), contributions are need by the end of the previous Wednesday. The newsletter is clearly popular but in some cases only for the duration of Mass! Please take your copies away with you and recycle them in due course.

The editor is very pleased that when she is away on holiday Trish Dolan has kindly - and seamlessly - stepped in as "guest editor" of the newsletter.

Parish website - Juliet MacKellaig

After asking all Ministries to review the content of their pages and volunteer role descriptions, a new website launched in February 2015. It is built using a content management system and a Wordpress template. The website now has 67 pages and a new search facility, and is illustrated by pictures of the church showing off many of its beautiful stained glass windows.

There are approximately 650 people using the site each month with the six most popular pages being as follows:

- Home page
- Newsletter
- Mass times
- This week's gospel
- Prayer
- Archbishops' tweets.

Why not join them at www.stpetersrcchurchedinburgh.org.uk and browse to see what is happening in St Peter's and beyond.

Parish Magazine - Caroline Moffat

The Parish Magazine has now reached its fourth issue and is growing into an interesting forum for parishioners to share their views on both sacred and secular topics, ranging from baking recipes and book reviews to articles on prominent Catholics. Regular items include reports on parish SCIAF projects, the Eco-Congregation initiative, guidance on prayer and a light-hearted section of informative quizzes for young children. The Magazine has also provided a showcase for some of the amazing creative talent we have in the parish including poetry, music and art.

Parish Library - Anne Donnelly

Over the past year, the Library has essentially been put in order with books arranged under broad subject headings, all clearly labelled, that have been informed by the existing stock. There is some room, perhaps, for further weeding of older stock and also breaking up some of the larger categories into more meaningful smaller ones. I have yet to make a decision on the retention and/or organisation of a few remaining publications and pieces of ephemera.

There is now a catalogue, in the form of an Excel spreadsheet which is regularly updated, that is available both within the Library and on the Parish website. Use is currently being made of the Library by a small readership who also donate additional titles from time to time.

With regard to the Library's future direction, I am considering a small survey, primarily aimed at those who currently use the Library – although open to all – to elicit ideas as to how its content might be further developed. Once we have a clearer picture as to what is needed by parishioners, some thought will then need to be given as to how this might be achieved.

PART 7: CHURCH PROPERTY

Dating from 1906-08, St Peter's is a quite remarkable church, its architect Sir Robert Lorimer, the leading Scottish architect of his day. The church, house, offices, boundary wall, gatepiers and railings are all A Listed, the highest rank in the statutory national list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. So we have a duty to cherish it, for ourselves certainly but also on behalf of the wider community.

Church cleaning - Tina O'Donoghue

As the main body of the Church is now professionally cleaned the work carried out by the "Holy Dusters" consists of keeping the parish room, kitchen and toilets 'spick and span' for the use of our parishioners and visitors to the parish. Six teams of two work on a six- week rota, normally on a Thursday mornings from 9.30am for approximately 45 minutes. Other days can be arranged to suit the requirements of the specific teams i.e. Saturday at 11.15am before Mass. Two major cleans, involving all the teams, are also arranged for Christmas and Easter.

New volunteers, who wish to join the Holy Duster rota, are always welcome therefore if interested please contact me by phone on 0131 447 4840 or by e-mail on christinaodonoghue@yahoo.co.uk.

Church buildings - Alan Chudziak

The beauty of the St Peter's speaks for itself, but we should recognise the efforts of those who enhance it by keeping the sanctuary bright with flowers and crisp linen; by decorating the whole interior at Christmas; and by planting flowers, bulbs and shrubs outside all year round. But the priority must be to keep the fabric of the building clean and tidy, wind and watertight, and in top condition in line with modern safety standards.

Even the those who come to church on a daily basis are unlikely to have noticed the vast amount of repair and maintenance work that has been carried out on the property in the last year or so - from major roofworks and maintenance of boilers and heating systems, to carpet cleaning and a repair to one of the cypress trees in the courtyard. In addition, an extensive and rigorous inspection regime is now in place in accordance with health and safety, fire risk and fire precaution legislation.

A report on work completed and in progress is submitted to each meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council. These have been brought together into a comprehensive account - too big for this report - of works carried out during 2014-15. Copies have been posted in the parish room and on the parish website.

PART 8: SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The ancients among us will remember the days when we regularly organised dinner dances in local hosterries and "Golden Oldies Discos" - popular with the young as well - in the old L-shaped parish room in the convent building. Nowadays, we are fortunate that the whole parish gets invited to the Children's Liturgy picnic in the school field and to the traditional Family Carol Party at Gillis Centre, although we are quite content to let Youth Rock organise

their social own social events! Otherwise, we are sedate in our social ambitions, relying on the occasional talk and a refreshment to draw a few of us out on a winter's evening.

Hospitality - Ann Royan

The Hospitality Team serve tea and coffee after 11:30 Sunday Mass, and other refreshments at occasions throughout the year. The co-ordinator maintains a rota of some 18 volunteer helpers, as well as a larger network of people who can be pressed into service as the need arises.

Refreshments after Mass

The congregation, and especially visitors and newcomers, were invited to stay after Mass for refreshments on some 45 Sundays during the year. This is a major contribution to the welcoming ethos of the parish, and is particularly appreciated by children and the elderly. Refreshments are served both in the parish room, and in the courtyard, and up to 80 parishioners and visitors are catered for each week. There is no charge for refreshments, but donations are used to cover cleaning materials, plants for the courtyard and catering supplies (Fairtrade) including occasional treats: for example, themed home baking after Rites of Initiation and Family Masses, and wine and nibbles on days of celebration (sometimes just to celebrate that the sun is out!)

Parish events with hospitality hosted by the Team included:

- 28 September Rite of Enrolment
- 5 October Harvest Festival
- 2 November Halloween goodies
- 9 November Poppy cupcakes
- 14 November “In Flanders Fields, a personal journey to the Western Front”
- 16 November Presentation of the Gospels
- 23 November Christ the King Family Mass
- 30 November Christmas Fare
- 14 December Seasonal Refreshments
- 21 December Parish Carol Party (Gillis Centre)
- 1 February Rite of Illumination
- 6 March World Day of Prayer
- 22 March Simnel Cakes
- 29 March Mothers' Day Family Mass
- 5 April Easter goodies
- 7 June First Holy Communicants' Family Mass
- 21 June Fathers' Day
- 28 June Patronal Feast.

In addition, hospitality organised by the St Vincent de Paul was provided at the Masses for the sick and the elderly at Gillis Centre on 13 December 2014 and 30 May 2015.