



St Andrew's and St George's West Easter 2021 mini mag

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Welcome!

Sunday Worship 10.30am in our sanctuary. Rev Dr Rosie Magee and members of our community lead 40 minutes of words, prayer and music. Join in

in person please book a space online through Eventbrite or by calling 07956 336 953 (phone line open 11am-1pm Wed-Fri)

online the service is livestreamed on our YouTube channel. You can find an order of service and the YouTube link for each service on our website – see our home page www.stagw.org.uk

no internet access? listen to an audio recording on Sunday from about noon on a dedicated local line 0131 297 4717. We can also send you CDs of services– please get in touch to arrange this.

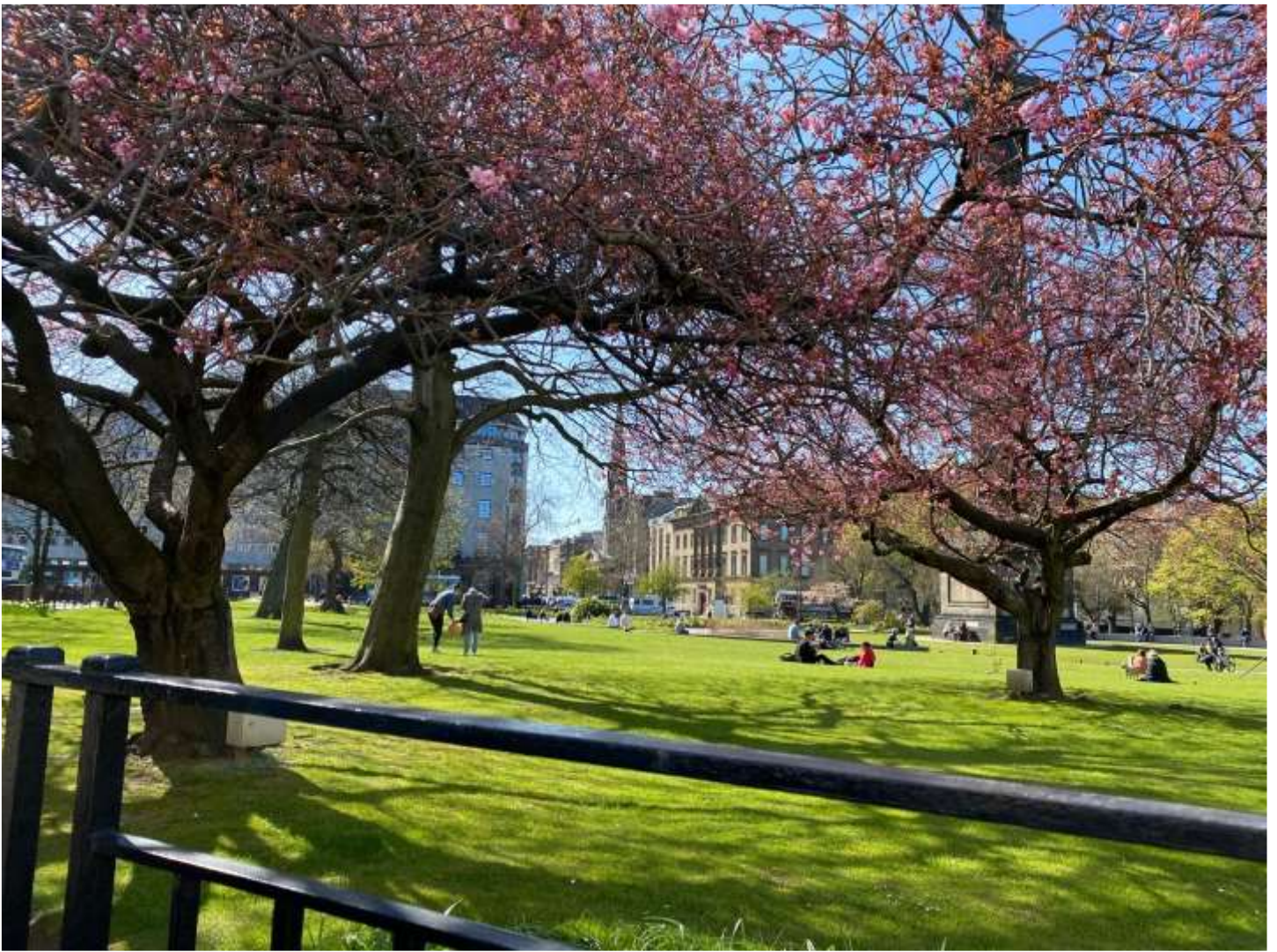
Pause for Prayer Daily prayers to your inbox and on Facebook. Contact us if you would like to receive these by email.

Zoom at Noon Sundays for half an hour. Contact us for details.

Thoughts at Six Sunday evening for an hour. Contact us for details.

Sanctuary and Café open 10.30am-2pm Tuesday-Friday (May 2021)

Thanks to all contributors. You can contact the magazine at magazine@stagw.org.uk



Are you noticing the 'signs of the times'?

A letter from Rosie

There are many, in addition to the beautiful signs of Spring sprouting up wherever growth is nurtured.

At our church building in George Street, it is wonderful to see the posters up for the re-opening of the Undercroft Café. This much missed feature will be returning from 27 April (10.30 am-2 pm, Tuesday to Friday).

Over the past year I have come to more fully appreciate, how the

café, as well as tasty nourishment, provides space and opportunity for unplanned meetings and spontaneous conversations that might not otherwise happen. I eagerly await the opportunity to see new and familiar faces in the Undercroft in the weeks to come. Please share the news with your family, friends and neighbours. In purely business terms this may be not the most auspicious time to reopen, but the added value of our café to our community life and ministry merits our stepping out in faith.

Another 'sign of the times' is the increased activity in the city centre. Scaffolding that has been up for months is coming down as businesses prepare to reopen. It is good to see 'wet paint' signs and 'see you soon' signs.

Perhaps it is because of spending so much time in very familiar surroundings, of late, that I am more aware of my environment as I move about the city. I am seeing with fresh eyes. Whilst enjoying St Andrew Square on a sunny day recently I noticed for the first time a sign which reads, 'It feels like stepping into a bigger world...'

It happens to have been promoting the National Portrait Gallery, yet it could equally apply to a church. I would hope that everyone who crosses the threshold of St Andrew's and St George's West feels like they are 'stepping into a bigger world' where welcome is extended and generous living is encouraged. That is a core part of who we seek to be, as we serve God and neighbour in this city centre and beyond.



Once you start to pay attention, signs of meaning are everywhere. The words above a well-known restaurant chain in George Street, 'Love all, serve all' wouldn't look out of place above our church portico!

You may be familiar with the saying, 'we see what we look for'. It refers to the phenomenon of 'motivated perception' which has been explored in research for decades. Psychologists tell us that the



world, as we conceive, is shaped by our understanding of life and that includes our systems of belief. Our beliefs shape not only our thinking, emotions and behaviour, but also, quite literally, how we see the world.

One way of seeing Christ's resurrection is as the most expansive and profound 'motivation to our perceptions' imaginable. Having recently celebrated Easter, we are called to look at the world with fresh resurrection eyes. We are called to be actively on the lookout for signs of 'new life' in the world as we experience it today. This is not to deny the reality of challenge and hardship, but it is to celebrate that they do not tell the complete story. Easter assures us that 'new life' is a constant, even though it may be 'hidden in plain sight.'

In a world that has appeared so dangerous for so long it would be all too easy to see danger and limitations everywhere we look. There is much more to see. I invite you to be on the look out for hopeful signs in the days ahead – literally and figuratively. You will find what you are looking for.

I am writing this on Earth Day (22 April). The tulips I photographed this morning in St Andrew Square speak eloquently of hope. May we do the same, in all we see as well as all we say. In doing so we help create God's kingdom and nurture the 'bigger world' we seek.

Every blessing to you and yours in the days ahead,
Rosie

Meet Sally Fraser

I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed to the role of City Centre Chaplain with Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland, and I am really looking forward to getting to know the faith communities at St John's, St Cuthbert's and St Andrew's and St George's West which make up the Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together. I have been involved in my local churches together group for a number of years, and I am passionate about the witness it is to the wider community when churches work together.



It feels like such a privilege to have the opportunity to serve people, and to just be alongside them in their daily lives, perhaps even more so at such a time of upheaval and uncertainty.

In the city centre, in our shops and workplaces and indeed our churches, we simply do not know what life is going to even look like going forward. As people of faith, we have so much to offer our communities in times that might seem chaotic, believing as we do in an endlessly creative God, who can make all things new, and who always orders and put things into place in His time. Also as people who know the God, named so beautifully by Hagar, as *He who sees*. He has seen all the pain and mess and downright uncomfortableness of the last year and He sees the fear and confusion now. This is the God who is so very needed in all the places where people are struggling right now, and I look forward to seeing how we will all find new ways of responding, ways we might not have imagined. After all, the discipleship we are all called to was always one which demanded imagining the seemingly impossible.

Over the next while I hope to see as many of you as I can and hear about your visions and hopes for how you can connect with the workplaces and communities around you. If you would like to get in touch with me I would love to hear from you. My phone number is 07944 334659 and my email is sally.fraser@wpcscotland.co.uk



Chef's special

Pete Anderson

Filo Parcels - a recipe without quantities

This was a firm favourite in the Undercroft Café during the summer. It is an easy dish to master and looks great on the plate. First though, I have a confession to make. I don't write recipes and I rarely follow them exactly. A good cookbook or recipe is one that inspires you, that you can learn from and discover new flavour combinations or techniques. It is not about quantities of ingredients, unless you are baking or making pastry. There are two cookbooks I refer to the most at home; *Ratio* by Michael Ruhlman and *The Flavour Thesaurus* by Niki Segnit.

In *Ratio*, recipes are simplified into ratios. It is a system chefs use to remember recipes and easily multiply them to produce larger quantities. One most people know is for salad dressing; 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar, then add whatever extra flavouring you like. One that I use every Shrove Tuesday is for pancakes and it couldn't be easier to remember; 1 part beaten egg, 1 part plain flour, 1 part milk and a pinch of salt. So just crack the eggs, beat, put them in a cup or jug, then measure the same quantity of milk and flour in the same cup. Mix it together and there's your batter.

In the *Flavour Thesaurus*, Niki Segnit shows how to mix and match flavours, as well as classic combinations such as pork and apple. She can inspire you to try black pudding with chocolate or scallops with watermelon. It is this skill of combining the flavours, sweet, sour, bitter, salty and umami (savoury) that turns simple cookery into an art form in the hands of master chefs.

So I come to my recipe. I have chosen it because it's adaptable. You can fill the parcel with any combination of ingredients that take your fancy. I often fill mine with haggis and neeps or with a fishcake mix of smoked haddock, leek and potato. Even leftovers like stew or risotto work well. The only rule is the filling must be cold, not too runny and be careful not to overfill the parcel. For this recipe I have chosen roasted vegetables, peppers, courgettes, red onion, cherry tomatoes and aubergine, but don't worry if you don't like these. Just use what you like or look in your veg basket and use what you have leftover. Try to remember your flavour combinations though. It is for this reason I like to use feta as it adds a saltiness to the dish. I roast the vegetables as this helps bring out their sweetness, but you can cook them in a pan if that's easier for you.

Filo pastry for the recipe can be bought in most supermarkets. They usually sell the Jus-Rol version. I find this a bit too thick but it is perfect for beginners as it doesn't tear easily. If you want the real stuff I would try your local Greek or Turkish shop. I recommend Akdeniz Mediterranean Supermarket at the foot of Leith Walk. It's a shop to get lost in and their flat breads are amazing.



Filo is normally brushed with melted butter which makes the sheets pliable and tasty but if you want to reduce the fat content you can use a watery mix of corn flour and water. Though, if you want that golden finish you need to brush the finished parcel with melted butter. It's important you don't let the filo pastry dry out, while you are working cover the unused filo with a slightly damp dish cloth. Filo freezes well, so freeze any you don't use.

The Recipe (finally) Oven at 180C-ish 350F Gas 4

red or yellow peppers, courgettes, aubergine, red onions - all chopped into pieces roughly the same size

cherry tomatoes sliced in half

garlic clove finely chopped

herbs – parsley or thyme & rosemary or basil – chopped or torn if basil

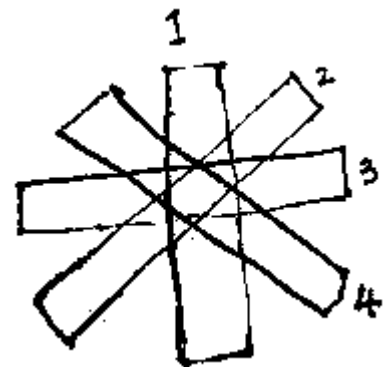
oil for roasting

melted butter for brushing

feta roughly broken into chunks

filo pastry – cut into strips long-ways about 3 inches wide

- Place the vegetables on a baking dish, add a little oil and garlic. If using thyme & rosemary add now. Stir the veg, so that they are all covered in the oil and garlic. Season with freshly ground pepper and a little salt (remember the feta is salty). Roast for about 30 mins.
- Half way through roasting, add the tomatoes, as you don't want them over-cooked. Then let them cool.
- Add the feta and the parsley or basil (if using). Be generous with the herbs and with the feta - about 3-4 chunks per parcel.
- On a clean surface place the first strip of filo in front of you pointing at 12 o'clock, brush all over the side facing you with melted butter. Lay the 2nd strip at about 2 o'clock across the 1st one and brush with the butter. Repeat with the 3rd and 4th strips at 3 and 4 o'clock
- Now place a portion of the roasted mixture in the middle of an 8 pointed star of filo. Take both ends of the 1st strip of filo and twist it together just on top of the veg mixture. Repeat with each strip in order until you get a parcel with a rough bow-like flourish on top.
- Make sure there aren't any holes in it. If there is, just patch with a piece of filo brushed with melted butter.
- Brush all over with the butter and bake until golden brown (about 30 mins).



A Venture of Faith

The 50th anniversary of The Corner Stone Coffee House

May 2021 sees the 50th Anniversary of The Corner Stone coffee house, for which the near-derelict St John's crypt was converted, under the auspices of the then Council of West End Churches (CWEC) which comprised St John's, St Cuthbert's, St Andrew's & St. George's, St George's West, Palmerston Place and St Mary's Cathedral.

THE CORNER STONE



C.W.E.C.
council of west end churches

The proposal for a coffee house emerged from CWEC's earlier projects Cephass Cellar and Cephass, the former a beat club with live bands, providing a safe place for teenagers in the basement of St George's West on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and the latter a large house offering accommodation and support in a community setting to young people with work and other problems, alongside other more settled young people in their first jobs. Out of these projects grew recognition of a need within the West End of Edinburgh for a late-night coffee house where 20–40 year olds could meet at the weekend in the centre of town in a safe and relaxed environment after visiting pubs (which then closed at 10pm), concerts, theatres, cinemas, etc.

And so, on 28 May 1971, The Corner Stone was born, opening every Friday (9 – midnight), Saturday (9 – 1am) and Sunday (8 – 11.30pm) run by a team of up to 100 volunteers from the west end churches and elsewhere. It fulfilled a much-appreciated ministry of hospitality, reaching out with a welcome to a broad cross-section of the community. In pursuing 'mission without strings', exploratory, ecumenical and lay-led, and providing a service to the community, it also proved, for many of those involved, a thoroughly challenging, formative and fulfilling experience in their own personal journey of faith.

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In the early 1980s it was becoming clear that, owing to the changing social context and circumstances, The Corner Stone in its original form was reaching the end of its natural life, and after a time of opening during the day, the difficult decision was taken to wind down the voluntary project and the premises were handed back to St John's in 1985. One reason for declining volunteer support was that specialised needs were being identified among the clientele. Teenagers had already moved to Eclipse, a club in the original Cephias premises, but a number of hostel-dwellers and homeless men, especially, craved a nutritious meal rather than coffee and snacks.

And so a "Steps" project was initiated and run for almost two decades by a small band of helpers who provided a homely evening meal atmosphere from, first a flat in the St. Cuthbert's complex, and then in Kirk House, Candlemaker's Row. But by 1999 a number of other voluntary agencies were providing food and support to street sleepers and loners, and so those committed volunteers reluctantly agreed that Steps would also close permanently. By then, Edinburgh was a very different place from the 1971 era when the Corner Stone first opened. But the original Cornerstone helpers remain as a community, with many enduring friendships over the years and distances.

Thanks to Norman Shanks, Irene MacKenzie (St Cuthbert's) Eileen Mackintosh (St Andrew's and St George's West) Clephane Hume (St John's) and Anne Sturrock (Mayfield Salisbury) for this contribution.



Save the date!

The **Undercroft Amnesty Group** are organising a fabulous fundraising **Amnestea 4-5.15pm on Saturday 5 June**. Focussing on Palestine with music, food demo and expert speakers. It will be held online - keep an eye on www.stagw.org.uk for details.

News from Kirk Session

Crispin Longden, Session Clerk

The summer edition of the 'mini-mag' carried an update on the work of Session in the first half of 2020. Since then, the Court (for that is what it is – a Court of the Church of Scotland) has met 9 times. All meetings have taken place virtually. We have become quite adept at conducting meetings in this way over Zoom. Attendance levels have been good and the quality of discussions high.

Inevitably, the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operational life of St Andrew's and St George's West was a topic for discussion at all of the meetings held in the latter half of 2020. The easing of lockdown restrictions up to just before Christmas allowed first for the Sanctuary to be re-opened for communal worship on a Sunday, then for a limited sale of (art) works to raise funds for Christian Aid, and finally for the Undercroft Café to resume trading. Session scrutinised and endorsed risk assessments for each of these initiatives and sought permission from the Presbytery of Edinburgh on your behalf to resume these important aspects of 'being' St Andrew's and St George's West. What it means to be a community of St Andrew's and St George's West was a question which also occupied Session meetings over the autumn months. Informed by the congregation-wide survey (Roots and Shoots) undertaken in October 2020, Session agreed statements of a new shared Vision for the Future. Parallel to this, Session acted to determine staffing needs on an ongoing basis to support our vision and mission. Details of the outcome of both these substantial pieces of work were shared with you in congregational letters in September and December 2020 (staffing) and February 2021 (Vision and Mission).

Work so far in 2021 has built on the progress made in 2020, COVID-19 restrictions permitting. Places of worship were the first to be allowed to emerge blinking from our winter lockdown, so risk assessments were dusted off and applications submitted to Presbytery (and summarily approved) for re-opening for communal worship (from Palm Sunday) and restarting the Undercroft Café (from 27th April). Permission was also sought and given for the planned Christian Aid mini-Sale to take place in mid-May.

Now that the Vision for the Future is out there as a living statement of faith to be owned and shaped by you, Session is turning its attention to

the practicalities of implementing it. This will involve prioritising activities over the short and medium term. Where we can best focus our energies is at the intersection of our priorities with our aims. This work is being replicated at Presbytery and national level.

The last update from me mentioned the establishment of a separate time-limited Group, the Business Continuity Taskforce. The work of this Group having been largely completed, it has now been disbanded. Where and when there is still a need for prompt action in these times of flux, this responsibility now falls to the Conveners of the Working Groups who continue to meet regularly between Session meetings. Session also sometimes chooses to delegate detail work to this forum. For example, reviewing the remits of the Working Groups and assessing the proposals for the May Christian Aid mini-Sale, including fit with our identified vision and mission.

The business of the Kirk Session has inevitably needed to be flexible at this time of uncertainty but there is one constant every spring: this being the drawing up of our Annual Report and Accounts. This is a very important governance document for which members of the Kirk Session individually and jointly bear responsibility as Trustees of the charity that is St Andrew's and St George's West. The Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending December 2020, having been audited and approved by Session, have now been sent to the Presbytery of Edinburgh who will submit to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Usually, a Stated Annual Meeting (SAM) of the Congregation is called at which the Report and Accounts are tabled, an overview of the previous year given in words and figures, and questions invited. This year, because of COVID, the SAM will not take place; instead, the Report and Accounts accompany this issue of the magazine, and joint Treasurer, Allan Sim kindly stands ready to answer any questions you may have. You can contact him by 'phone 0131 552 9254 or email allansim@blueyonder.co.uk

There are currently 43 members of Session and I wish to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for the dedication with which they go about their work as members of Session and Elders. Together we are discerning how best to continue this 'journey' of *learning and growing in faith as an open, loving community acting for justice and peace in the world* (Our Purpose Statement).



Reflections from lockdown

Sunflowers

In my garden there are nine big tall sunflowers and one small one. What's her name? Sunny. Sunny has 30 yellow petals round a brown centre. The tall sunflowers look at me and I look back at them. But Sunny stands two feet high looking up at the sun. She says 'That is what sunflowers are supposed to do.'

These I have loved

Friends who say 'Phone me anytime',
My rowan tree. Jelly from the berries. The making of it.
Mince and tatties. Devon custard.
Gazing at Iona beach calendar, wild geese, fox friend.
Bright-eyes the robin. Waiting for blackbird.
The turn of the seasons. Creating wee gardens.
Arriving in Edinburgh. My church there.
Arriving in Oban. My church there.
The ramp at my door.
Helen's eyes, 'good life coming'.
Mieze my cat.
Sudden laughter.
Coming back home.
I love them still.

Lorna Cammock

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Sunflower by Ilya Yakubovich

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Forest Impression by Stefan Kapeller

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Heart by Fabrice Keck

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At day-close in November

The ten hours' light is abating,
And a late bird wings across,
Where the pines, like waltzers waiting,
Give their black heads a toss.
Beech leaves, that yellow the noontime,
Float past like specks in the eye;
I set every tree in my June time,
And now they obscure the sky.
And the children who ramble through here
Conceive that there never has been
A time when no tall trees grew here,
That none will in time be seen.

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928)

A lot of access to poetry can come through song. The poems of Thomas Hardy cover a wide range of themes: there is much on the beauty of the countryside and of the sweetness of the natural world, but often with an underlying bitterness or regret. Hardy's depiction of the rambling children highlights our own innocence in being aware only of what we see; instead of considerations of eternity, of the world as it was before human consciousness, and of human transience.

This poem was set to music by Benjamin Britten. Britten's setting seems to put to one side what some might regard as Hardy's regret and to emphasise the reminder of the passage of time from days before vegetation to days when there may be quite different vegetation. It therefore might encompass compassion both for innocence and for our ecology.

Perhaps an occasional concentration on this need for compassion can help us in our present predicaments whether or not our connection is physically to wander through stands of trees or to see them in images or to hear them in poetry or music.

James McNeill

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Sanctuary and Cafe open Tuesday – Friday 10.30am – 2pm

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Edinburgh City Centre Churches TOGETHER

(St Cuthbert's, St John's Episcopal, St Andrew's & St George's West)

TOGETHER Chair **Rev Peter Sutton, St Cuthbert's**
TOGETHER Trustees from StAGW: **Rev Dr Rosie Magee (vice chair)**
George Russell, Diana Thurston-Smith, Alastair MacKenzie

City Centre **Sally Fraser 07944 334659**
Workplace Chaplain **sally.fraser@wpcscotland.co.uk**

**St Andrew's and St George's West Church of Scotland Edinburgh
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