

GRAPEVINE

St Matthew's Rosslyn – Winter 2019 Issue 93



Vicarage View

As I write this, it is "Bible Sunday"; the last Sunday after Trinity.

The late great Peter Cook ("the funniest man who ever drew breath" – Stephen Fry) in one of his invented guises as EL Wistey (a miserable creature in a grubby mackintosh) was asked on a spoof version of the quiz show "Mastermind" what his specialist subject was. He replied, deadpan, "the Universe - and related phenomena". Well, today, as it is Bible Sunday, I am going to try to write on a big subject, not on a text from the Bible but the Bible itself.

I know a lot of people fought and even died for democracy but right now I am sick and tired of elections and referendums etc. I am sick and tired of the murders apparently done for God and propped up by nutters quoting randomly from the Bible or the Koran. I am sick of the self-righteousness and the hi-jacking of the moral high ground in such a base and self-serving way; in particular those who suddenly start to spout scripture and adopt a fake piety. The Clinton-Lewinsky affair still springs to mind.

Some of you will remember the furore some years ago about The Bank of Scotland's proposed deal with the American Televangelist and sometime American Presidential candidate Pat Robertson. Various groups condemned the alliance, citing Robertson's apparent mysogeny, homophobia and extreme right wing views as unacceptable (a sort of primeval Donald Trump with a bible and a less mad haircut). The bank, somewhat disingenuously, said



that a man's moral and religious beliefs are his own affair and it is not for them to intervene. Although in this case the man's moral and religious beliefs were not his own but the basis for his business with the bank and his career in general. Both sides of the deal appeared to be better at talking than listening. It is often the case, though, that people who want to share their religious beliefs with you almost never want you to share your religious views with them. I am not just thinking of Mormon missionaries or Jehovah's witnesses let alone so-called Jihadists; even in Scotland, an English bishop was banned from preaching by Richard Holloway because he was opposed to the ordination of women. Such draconian liberalism is a bit contradictory to me. Never confuse liberalism with tolerance! It was Ambrose Bierce, in his *Devil's Dictionary* who defined impiety as "you being rude about my God"

What has all this to do with the Bible?? Quite a lot. Firstly Mr Robertson and his ilk wield the Bible, and I use the word wield intentionally for in his hands it does appear to be a threatening weapon, as the *raison d'être* for their apparently deranged ramblings. God is on their side. I always

contrast this arrogance with Abraham Lincoln who, when told by an ardent female supporter in the American Civil War that God was on their side, replied, “Madam I care not - as long as I am on God’s side”.

People like me, old-fashioned high Anglicans, are not held in terribly high regard by those who wield the Bible. We are accused of not heeding what it says, of just being interested in Sacraments and some sort of High Magic. This is not true; the church has always used both The Word and The Sacraments. The confusion perhaps comes in how one uses the Bible.

It is, then, absolutely crucial to understand what the Bible is and what it is about; because you will often hear people like Mr Robertson speak about the Bible as if it was the basis of the Christian Religion, or some sort of book of Spells in which, if you could find your way about, you would find answers to all your questions. I once knew a very zealous fellow who made decisions, he said, by opening the Bible at random and looking for instructions what to do. I felt like telling him that it ought to have fallen open at Matthew 4.7 “Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God” but for once Christian charity prevailed in me. A few years ago now, there was a campaign “Back to the Bible”, and I am sure it was well intentioned. But it did, and does still, seem to me that there is a profound misunderstanding here, because if we are going back to anything (and I’m not usually in favour of going back anywhere) it should be back to Christ. For the Christian Religion is founded on and based in a person, and as its name implies, that person is the person of Christ.

The great orthodox theologian and philosopher Vladimir Solovyov pointed out that there is nothing unique in the teachings of Christ. Brahmins and Buddhists also teach love and reverence for living things. What is unique and central is the *person* of Christ, the Son of the Living God.

There is a great deal of confusion, people talk about, quote from and indeed *brandish* the Bible without asking a very pertinent and fundamental question – where did it come from?? People seem to think it just dropped from heaven on a red velvet cushion bound in black leather with the verses ready numbered and conveniently written in the English of King James the 6th and 1st.

So where did it come from and what is it?

It is the book of the Faithful. The Old Testament was the written scripture of God the Holy Spirit (who, we are told, “spake by the prophets”). It was scriptures for the Faithful by which God aided and directed His people, the church of the Old Covenant, the people of Israel. When we come to the New Testament it is exactly the same thing. Remember, the church was already alive and functioning well before a single word of what is called the New Testament was written, and long before these writings were put together into a single opus. So we cannot really understand what the Bible is about unless we are living members of the church. The Bible is not the key to our understanding Jesus; Our Lord Jesus is the key to understanding Holy Scripture. You all know the phrase “seeing is believing”? I am telling you the opposite; believing is seeing.

When I was a boy, about a thousand years ago, it was school policy for us all to have swimming lessons (unless you had a letter from your mother pleading a weak chest) and in advance we were given a booklet of instruction, written by some Australian former Commonwealth Freestyle champion. I read this cover to cover as this was one of the few things on the school curriculum that I was eager to learn; but until I actually got into the pool the instructions in the book had no meaning. Once in the water they began to make sense but were not necessarily easy to follow as I had a natural gift for drowning. The book was only intelligible to me after I had experienced the water. So it is with Scripture. *In vacuo* it is useless except as an existentialist source book for academics to pore over, or as a doorstop.

There used to be a Sunday school hymn which had the line “The best book to read is the bible; there is nothing you won’t find there”. Not only is that appalling English in the Ernie Wise tradition, with its double negative and assumption that the bible is one book, but it is also untrue, false, a lie. There are lots and lots of things you will not find in the Bible. It is not a scientific handbook, nor is it a façade for some secret code known only to the great alchemists, freemasons and of course the 4000 authors per year who write half-baked rubbish about the Rosslyn Chapel, Knights Templar and other such twaddle. You do not find the truth from the Bible. The Bible illuminates the truth you already have, and that is Our Lord Himself. Our Lord is the key to the scriptures. He said so Himself. In the controversy with the Pharisees when they were throwing texts at Him, He said, “Ye search the scriptures, for in

them ye seek to find salvation, but ye will not come to me that ye may have eternal life”.

Jesus is equally the key to understanding the Old Testament. After His resurrection, on the road to Emmaus, He expounded the scriptures showing how they referred to Him. He effectively said to the Jews if you would really listen to the Word of God in the scriptures you would understand that I am the promised Messiah.

Now of course, the Holy Scriptures are very important in Christian living, provided we understand exactly where they fit in. I don’t derive my religion from the Bible; I derive it from Christ. Christ is preached, one is baptised and becomes a member of the body of Christ. Within that body there are certain treasures bequeathed to the church by God. One is Holy Scripture and the other is the Sacraments of the Church.

The same Holy Spirit, given to me in baptism and in confirmation, is both the inspirer of Holy Scripture and the interpreter of it. As the Ethiopian eunuch understood, it is not a private or unilateral interpretation “How can I understand” he says to Philip in Acts 9 verse 31, “unless some man should guide me?”. Through the Scripture, in which the word of God is embodied, and the Word of God is Christ the second person of the Trinity, - through holy scripture under the inspiration and operation of the Holy Spirit – the third member of the Trinity - the Word of God speaks to me and to all of you. If we read our scripture with care and attention the Spirit will illuminate our minds and give us understanding.

As Thomas a Kempis wrote, “The Dear Lord has provided me with two things for my life and my protection, His Word, which is a lantern for my feet and His sacraments which are food for my soul”.

In my school, the one religious mark of authority of the School prefect was a hardback Hymnbook. These were wielded as instruments of corporal punishment, upon junior pupils perceived to be misbehaving, with quite vicious effect - particularly after their owners had inserted steel six-inch rulers down the book spine. They were intended for the Glory of God, of course, not as combat weapons.

Similarly with Holy Scripture. It is intended as a treasury for us. It is to illuminate our minds not only to the great truths of our faith, but also we will learn personal lessons. It is not to be used as a blunt instrument, either

symbolically or literally to browbeat people who think differently.

If there is a Father God, who created this universe and all the glories therein, redeemed it with the life, death and resurrection of his only begotten Son and sustains it through the action of the Holy Spirit; if there is such a God and He wishes to enlighten mankind, I believe he does this through the scriptures and sacraments of His Holy Church, not, I think, via a medley of oddballs and heretics on cable TV, or machete-wielding savages who confuse martyrdom with murder and traduce the word of God.

Father Joe.

Almighty everlasting Father, who hast promised unto thy faithful people life by thine incarnate Son, even as he liveth by thee; Grant unto us all, and especially to those whom they Providence holy doctrine amongst us, thy good Spirit, always so to believe and understand, to feel and firmly to hold, to speak and to think, concerning the mystery of the Communion of the Body and Blood of thy dear Son, as shall be well pleasing to thee, and profitable to our souls; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the same Spirit, one God world without end.

Amen

John Keble

Vestry Report



As I write this we are now 81 days away from Christmas Day, the year has flown by! The summer and autumn brought us a wonderful world cup cricket win, a drawn Ashes series, an ongoing rugby world cup and further twists and turns on Brexit, all of which have kept many of us enthralled!

The Vestry have been busy through the summer and autumn with the Roslin Fun Day, Harvest lunch and the creation of the new Constitution which will set out how the Vestry will operate in future.

My thanks as ever to the members of the congregation and Vestry that give of their time and make everything work so smoothly including flowers, prayer ministry, stitching group, communications and the social committee. Without you, none of these things would happen. I wish you a healthy and happy autumn and look forward to seeing people at the AGM in early December and then nearer Christmas.

James Cardwell Moore
Vestry Chair

Annual General Meeting Update:

This year's AGM will take place on Sunday 1 December at 12.00 noon at the Original Rosslyn Hotel; the meeting will be followed by a light lunch.

Formal notice of the AGM will be available in the Chapel from 3 November 2019, together with details of the election of Office Bearers.

The AGM agenda, reports and Annual Accounts will be available in advance of the AGM.

**Sunday 10 November is
Remembrance Sunday**

**We will be joining the annual
community service at the Roslin
War Memorial directly after the
service at 12 noon**



Rosslyn Chapel Trust Report



It has been a busy Summer at the Chapel with visitor numbers holding up well and staff managing very well with the extra crowds. We have had notable visits so far this year from Sir Boyd Tunnock, Joanna Lumley, Lord Lyon King of Arms and Hollywood star Vin Diesel! All seemed to enjoy their visits and hopefully will spread the word about the Chapel in different ways.

The Chapel is in good shape and has been thoroughly inspected recently by our stone conservator. Following torrential rain, some stones have come loose from one of the walls at Rosslyn Castle and have fallen into the courtyard garden. The site has been carefully surveyed and a plan to repair the wall is being prepared to prevent any risk to guests and loss of stone.

Reflecting the great geographic mix of visitors we welcome to the Chapel, we have increased the number of our 'welcome' leaflets and souvenir guides, and now have translations in Slovak, Portuguese and Swedish. These were launched last month by VisitScotland's Chief Executive, Malcolm Roughead, during a visit. We are also improving the visitor experience for visually impaired visitors and, earlier in October, we were delighted to take delivery of 3D prints of the Mason's Pillar, Apprentice

Pillar and Green Man from colleagues at Historic Environment Scotland. The features were scanned during the summer and the quality of the 3D printing is quite remarkable.

In the past few weeks, we have improved the lighting inside the Chapel to highlight the ceiling and altar more effectively. I hope that you have noticed the difference! We have plans to improve the lighting on the concourse, outside the visitor centre, and exciting plans to make further improvements to lighting inside the Chapel, so watch this space. The exterior lights will change to red, in the lead up to Remembrance Sunday, in support of this year's Poppy Appeal.

In a sure sign of autumn's arrival, we welcomed this year's group of Junior Guides, and look forward to visits from other schools in the coming months to find out about the Chapel from them. Over the summer, we have also welcomed Sarah Chapman to our team, as Learning and Outreach Co-ordinator; Sarah is taking on responsibility for this work from Fiona Rogan, who retires from the Trust in December.

We have a number of events coming up over the winter with concerts and candlelit visits all on offer, so do keep an eye on our website or ask for more details. Also, remember that our shop might be the very place to find Christmas presents or cards this year.....

Finally, we are keeping our fingers crossed for Thursday 14th November, as the Chapel has been shortlisted in the regional finals of the Scottish Thistle Awards in the category 'best heritage tourism experience'. Getting to this stage is great recognition of the dedication and commitment of our whole team, who work hard to ensure that Rosslyn Chapel provides one of the best visitor experiences in Scotland.

Ian Gardner

Director, Rosslyn Chapel Trust



Wedding Album



Congratulations to these lovely couples as they embark on a life together following their big day



Emily & Graham
5 July 2019

Deborah & Calum
16 August 2019

Tim & Elspeth
Saturday 28 September



A View From My Pew



Scotland has made it illegal to smack your children ... and I'm assuming anybody else's children, but does this law apply to tourists? Clearly I will need to know as I offer a valuable contribution to the overall community policing of the Chapel given I'm here most of the time, and while our Children's Church are impeccably behaved at all times ... some visiting children can be more of a trial. For now I'll assume if someone is clipping a child round the ear in French they are exempt.

I myself was a model kitten but even I got the occasional swipe of my mother's paw ... which was probably deemed "reasonable chastisement" in those days but then cats are by nature quiet and well behaved. They do what they want when they want, with little embarrassment or issues for humans – which is really the issue here isn't it? Dogs, on the

other hand, need to be trained and socialised so that they know how to behave and what is acceptable in human company. For example, dogs left untrained would assume it was OK to chase me round the Chapel or sit on my pew or even wee against it seriously.

A recent TV program, Train Your Baby Like a Dog, had a dog trainer and behaviourist teaching parents to use dog training techniques on their kids. The behaviourist had used the techniques on her own children so decided to share her thoughts (her children were at home rounding up some sheep). She helped a family deal with their three-year-old son's tantrums (no naughty steps involved), as well as an 18-month old child who refused to sleep in her cot. Within about 2 hours the insomniac toddler was out like a light. Laugh, I nearly dropped my catnip as a lot of what she said did make some sense. However, while I can see where the behaviourist was coming from and would agree that toddlers and puppies are quite similar (based on the way I'm treated by them) – how is that going to work as they grow up a bit? Also the whole use of a clicker thing was a step too far ... too close to Pavlov's classic conditioning for my feline liking.

As cats are superior to dogs and infinitely better behaved, I would suggest - now you can't beat your children into submission - that you treat them like a cat. Cats don't react positively to human forms of punishment so smacking us will break your bond with us and we will hate you. Shouting at us makes no difference as we don't really care what you think. However, we are easily distracted - if it's worth our while - and we do like attention. So if I were you I'd try a couple of things (1) stop paying them attention if they are clawing up the furniture or pouncing on the family hamster, as it may make them stop and think they're doing something you don't appreciate, or (2) distract them with something you want them to do but they might also like, which will reinforce good behaviour and discourage bad behaviour. So if you have troublesome children, I would suggest getting a scratching post and one of those amazing laser pointers (as per the Trust guides) – even I have been known to chase the magic red dot up a wall; but not very far.

Keep the faith
William

Christmas Shopping Opportunities

Stitchers Christmas Stall – 8th December



We are delighted to have the Stitchers Christmas stall again this year raising money for charity. If you didn't manage to get there last year – don't miss out! A feast of amazing and beautifully crafted gifts for yourself and your family.

Sunday 8 December after the service.

St Matthew's 2020 Calendar



Our first St Matthew's Rosslyn 2020 calendar is now on sale

A3 full colour – it is priced at £10 and makes an ideal gift for family and friends, as well as adding that touch of je ne sais quoi to your kitchen wall.

Please see Fr Joe or Jacqui Roulston who are taking orders now.

All proceeds to our charities.

Thoughts to be going on with ...

An Episcopalian, Robin Williams once listed his "Top 10 Reasons to be an Episcopalian" rather than another religion

10. No snake-handling.
9. You can believe in dinosaurs.
8. Male and female God created them; male and female we ordain them.
7. You don't have to check your brains at the door.
6. Pew aerobics.
5. Church year is color-coded.
4. Free wine on Sunday.
3. All of the pageantry – none of the guilt.
2. You don't have to know how to swim to get baptized.
1. No matter what you believe, there's bound to be at least one other Episcopalian who agrees with you.

A Poem for the New Year when it Comes

I am the New Year ...
I am an unspoiled page in your book of time.
I am your next chance at the art of living.

I am your opportunity to practice
what you have learned about life
during the last twelve months.

All that you sought
and didn't find is hidden in me,
waiting for you to search it out
with more determination.

All the good that you tried for
and didn't achieve is mine to grant
when you have fewer conflicting desires.

All that you dreamed but didn't dare to do,
all that you hoped but did not will,
all the faith that you claimed but did not have -
these slumber lightly,
waiting to be awakened by the touch of a strong purpose.

I am your opportunity to make all things new.

I am the New Year!

The Bible in 50 Words

God made
Adam bit
Noah arked
Abraham split
Joseph ruled
Jacob fooled
Bush talked
Moses balked
Pharaoh plagued
People walked
Sea divided
Tablets guided
Promise landed
Saul freaked
David peeked
Prophets warned
Jesus born
God walked
Love talked
Anger crucified
Hope died
Love rose
Spirit flamed
Word spread
God remained.

From The Parish Window Swop Shop

Frosted Christmas Raspberry & White Chocolate Cake



Ingredients

- 250g butter
- 250g caster sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 250g self-raising flour
- *For the icing:*
- 700g unsalted butter
- 600g icing sugar
- 350g cream cheese
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 100g crushed raspberries
- 1tbsp cassis
- *To decorate:*
- Grated white chocolate
- Crushed toasted hazelnuts
- 8 whole raspberries
- Caster sugar for sprinkling

Method

1. Cream together the butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs and vanilla, then sift and fold in the self raising flour.
2. Divide the mixture between 2x20cm sandwich tins, greased and base lined with baking paper.
3. Bake for 25 mins in an oven preheated to 180°.
4. Remove and leave to cool in the tins for 5 mins then turn out onto a wire rack until completely cool.
5. Meanwhile, make the icing by beating together the butter and icing sugar until light and airy, then fold in the cream cheese and vanilla.
6. Separate out about a third into a separate bowl and fold in the crushed raspberries and cassis.
7. Carefully split each cake in half, horizontally, to make 4 layers. Put the bottom cake onto a serving plate and spread with a third of the raspberry icing, then repeat until you have 4 layers.
8. Decorate the cake with the remaining icing and smooth with a palette knife.
9. Mix the chocolate and nuts and push onto the sides of the cake
10. Finish with whole raspberries and a sprinkling of caster sugar



**Christmas Services at
St Matthew's Rosslyn Chapel**

Sunday 8 Dec 10.30am

Family Advent Service

Sunday 15 Dec 6.30pm

Community Carol Service

Tuesday 24 Dec 3pm

Family Christingle Service

Tuesday 24 Dec 11.30pm

Midnight Mass

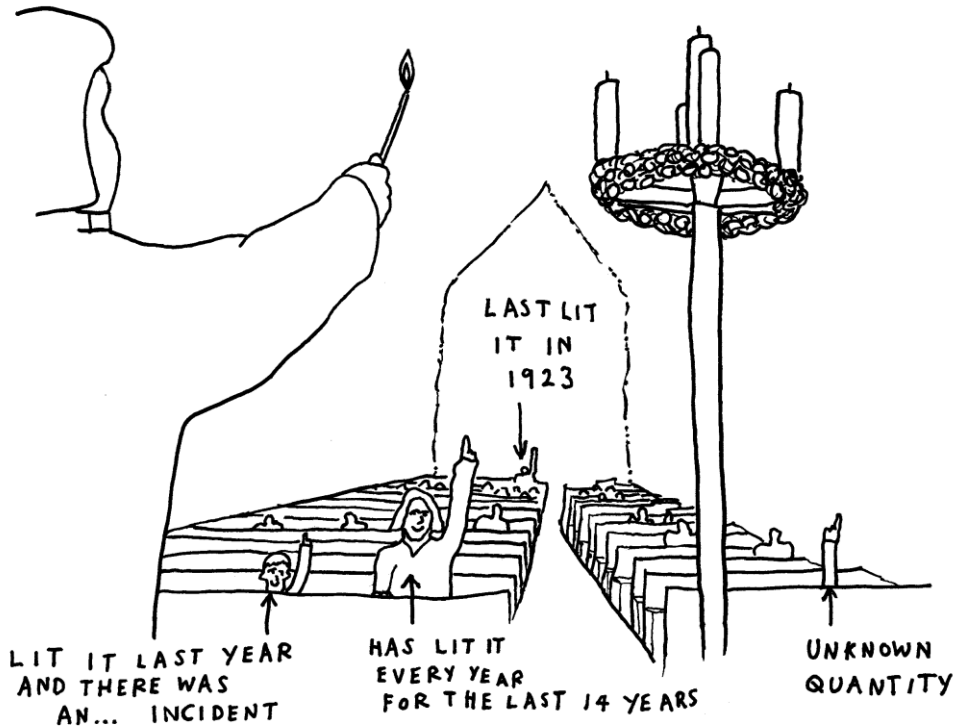
Wednesday 25 Dec 10.30am

Christmas Day Eucharist



ADVENT

DURING THE SUNDAYS IN ADVENT THE VICAR MUST CHOOSE SOMEONE TO LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE. IT IS ONE OF THE YEAR'S MOST DIFFICULT DECISIONS



ADVENT

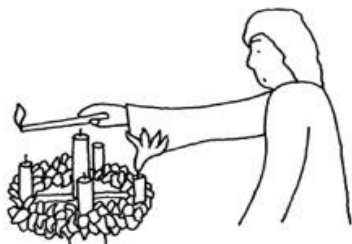
HAZARDS



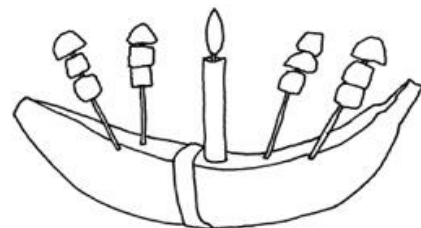
TABLES BUCKLING UNDER SHEER WEIGHT OF MINCE PIES



UNREST OVER THE CORRECT WEEK TO LIGHT THE PINK CANDLE



ADVENT WREATH FIRES



SUPERMARKETS RUNNING OUT OF ORANGES

SERVICES

Date	DAY	SERVICE	TIME
3 November	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i> <i>Thirsting after Righteousness at the Original</i>	10.30 am Noon
10 November	Sunday	Eucharist Remembrance Service at the Roslin War Memorial	10.30 am After the service
17 November	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30 am
24 November	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
1 December	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i> ** AGM **	10.30 am Noon
8 December	Sunday	Family Eucharist Service * Advent play *	10.30 am
15 December	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i> * Community Carol Service *	10.30 am 6.30 pm
22 December	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
24 December	Tuesday	Family Christingle Service Midnight Mass	3 pm 11.30pm
25 December	Wednesday	Family Christmas Day Eucharist	10.30 am
29 December	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30 am
5 January	Sunday	Eucharist <i>Thirsting after Righteousness at the Original</i>	10.30 am Noon
12 January	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
19 January	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30 am
26 January	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
2 February	Sunday	Eucharist <i>Thirsting after Righteousness at the Original</i>	10.30 am Noon
9 February	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
16 February	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30 am
23 February	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
26 February	Wednesday	Ash Wednesday Service	7 pm
1 March	Sunday	Eucharist <i>Thirsting after Righteousness at the Original</i>	10.30 am Noon
8 March	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30 am
15 March	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30 am
22 March	Sunday	Eucharist & <i>Children's Church</i>	10.30am

WHO'S WHO AT ST. MATTHEW'S	
Ministry team	
Revd Dr Joe Roulston <i>Priest in Charge</i>	0131 654 1068
Harry Stoddart <i>Lay Reader</i>	-
Vestry	
James Cardwell Moore <i>Chair of Vestry</i>	0131 448 1935
Mike Fitchett <i>Vestry Secretary</i>	0131 440 4569
Ian McLeish <i>Treasurer</i>	0131 667 6561
Doris Nelson <i>People's Warden</i>	-
Harry Stoddart <i>Lay Representative</i>	-
Shonagh Toulouse <i>Priest's Warden</i>	0131 629 9020
Anne Buchanan	0131 440 2116
Jill Black	0131 443 2116
Belle Dieckfoss <i>Alternate Lay Representative</i>	0131 440 2824
Jo Barrow	0131 440 2136
Joy Norridge	0131 440 2826
Roger Whait	07593 641724
Jill Black <i>Sacristan</i>	0131 443 2116
Domhnull Dean <i>Sacristan</i>	0754 0657 360
Jacqui Roulston <i>Grapevine editor</i>	0131 654 1068
Rosemary Buchanan <i>Flowers</i>	0131 440 0952
Rossllyn Chapel Trust	0131 440 2159