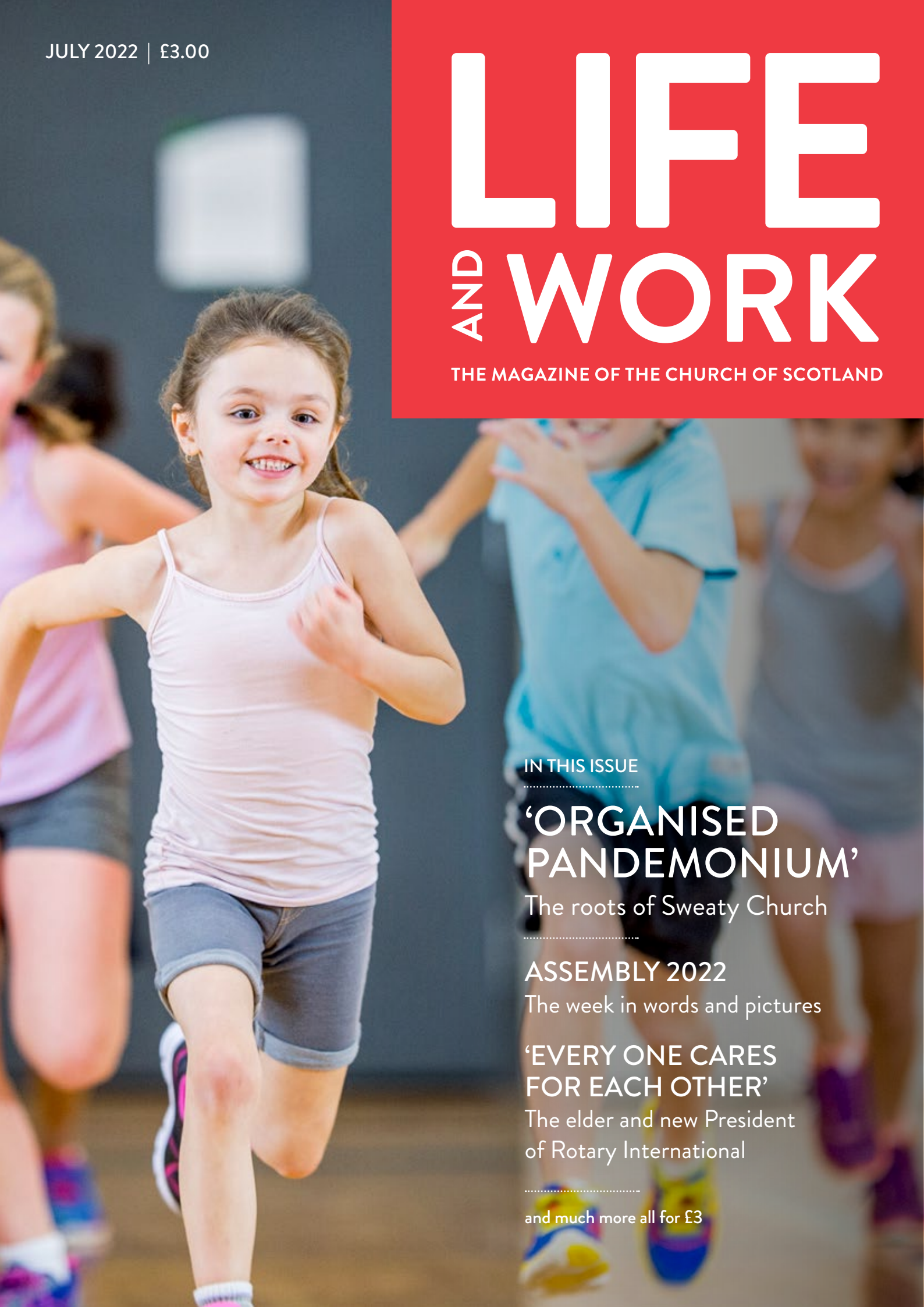
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LIFE AND WORK

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



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The roots of Sweaty Church

ASSEMBLY 2022
The week in words and pictures

‘EVERY ONE CARES FOR EACH OTHER’
The elder and new President of Rotary International

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From The Editor



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MISSION planning is very much on the minds of all congregations within the Church of Scotland at this time.

Each presbytery has to finalise plans by December 31 for the future of mission in each area.

There have already been many headlines (particularly locally) about buildings closures with communities complaining loudly about the potential loss of presence and place.

Our buildings are tied up with memories of the rites of passage of life where family and friends gather to celebrate and mourn, but as we are called to reform and evolve, how important are they – particularly when it comes to future sustainability? The model of one congregation with a building, hall and manse is about to evolve as the Church adapts to the challenges of today (including climate change).

For some congregations and communities buildings are comforting and symbolic. For others the maintenance of buildings becomes an all-consuming draining burden – sometimes necessarily propping up buildings at the expense of engaging in new work and outreach.

There will always be a need for places to gather for worship and prayer, but the big question for the future is where should they be?

Yet if you look at the New Testament, the first followers of Jesus met him where they could – indoors or outdoors. There were no buildings.

Now the climate of the Middle East lends itself to outdoor gatherings, but it does beg the question, is a building an absolute essential for the people of a church?

> “
>
> There will always be a need for places to gather for worship and prayer.

There are undoubtedly some amazingly symbolic buildings – old and new – still at the heart of communities and with the physical tools to grow and reach out to the people of the 21st century.

But there are a proportion which have drained resources – financial and otherwise – and perhaps the time has come to let them go. For being freed of such financial worries can offer a new freedom.

Being without a building does not prevent innovation or growth.

In moving forward, buildings may disappear but perhaps it may be possible for congregations to continue with ecumenical partnerships or leasing space in other buildings at the heart of communities – or participating in digital or online church.

Plans for those buildings which will continue are expected to be drafted by the end of this year. Difficult decisions and days lie ahead. But the biggest resource of the Church is its people – and the fellowship and community created by working together. The words of Matthew 18:20 may offer some insight and encouragement into the way ahead: ‘For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them’ ◘

Lynne McNeil
Editor

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Praise for the second month
As the year turns
And the light changes
The summer shortening of days

Praise for the turning of the seasons
For bairns and buckets
And puddling and guddling in burns
The holding and holidaying days

Praise for the greening of creation
For fullness and fruiting
And grain goldening in sunlight
The watching and waiting days

Forgiveness for the soiling of the land
For wanton-ness and wasting
And seas suffering in silence
The warming and worrying days

Forgiveness for the darkening of skies
For destruction and devastation
And panicked peoples in flight
The desperate and despairing days

Thanksgiving for the seedlings of hope
For welcome and kindliness
And hands and hearts in solidarity
The healing and helping days

Praise O Creator
For creatures who care
For workers in the harvest
For warmth and willingness
For chances to change
For love to lead
In the power of the Spirit.

Amen.



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Manse Energy Concerns

The Kirk Session of New Kilpatrick shares the concerns of Cairns Church expressed in the May issue.

During lockdown we raised the possibility of paying the tax free allowance introduced by the government to alleviate the increased costs incurred by working from home, but, like our brothers and sisters at Cairns, were told that we could not do anything locally, and that the National Church would not be doing so.

Since then we have to recognise that many ministers will be hard hit by rising energy costs as many manses will not be equipped with the most up to date and efficient energy saving systems. We acknowledge that it would be invidious for us to recognise these challenges independently, but call on the National Church to recognise them and take steps to address these unforeseen and additional costs. I am sure we would be willing to contribute to a national solution, and would hope that others might also be able to do so with us.

Alistair Burrow, Session Clerk, Bearsden New Kilpatrick Parish Church of Scotland (see General Assembly reports page 16)

Assembly ceremony

I am one of those who always thinks of what to say after the event or meeting and it was thus after hearing Rev Seòras Orr speak to his motion at the General Assembly on Saturday May 21.

Instruct the Assembly Business Committee… to have discussions with the Lord Lyon, expressing the desire of the General Assembly for overly ceremonial elements to be absent from future meetings of the Assembly. (Not accepted by a small majority (171-209))

As it happens, there was less ceremonial this year because the Lord High Commissioner, Lord Hodge, was unable to attend in person at the beginning, so 'the throne on high' wasn't occupied. Maybe a nudge from our Lord himself?! The thrust of the idea was that we should model welcoming everybody on an equal basis; that our ceremonies at General Assembly model the wrong idea of Church to the public.

The Rev Scott Rennie opposed this saying that these occasions enabled us to speak truth to power. It came to my mind (afterwards of course) that St Paul, and Nelson Mandela and others did this much more effectively from their prison cells.

I quite like a bit of 'visual drama' from time to time and what better occasion than the General Assembly? But, as Church, who should be the focus of any such ceremony – our Lord Jesus Christ.

How about this? The youth delegates carry a big but simple cross and lead our delegates from overseas and other denominations, the Lord High Commissioner, staff, Moderator's family and chaplains across the quad and up the steps together in no particular order, possibly singing some praise.



Cartoon: Bill McArthur

They are welcomed by the Moderator, go into the Assembly Hall together, where commissioners stand to welcome them and join in the singing. They could then be guided to seats all over the auditorium and allowed to talk with 'neighbours' for 15 minutes, thus allowing at least some wider mixing before official proceedings started.

Might our Sovereign be encouraged to authenticate her representative and write to her trusty, well-beloved subjects in more succinct 21st century prose?

Just some thoughts! And I declare an interest – Seòras is my minister.

Margaret King DCS, Fochabers, Moray

Listen to God

Many thanks to both John Chalmers and Lesley Taylor for the recent correspondence in June Life and Work. It is wonderful when a passionate response is drawn from a meditation as was Lesley's from the meditation in the April issue of John Chalmers. Such exchanges help us to think deeply about Christ's life and what He means for us today.

Lesley is correct to worry about a secular society because secularism is all around us but not, in my experience, in Life and Work!

The life of Jesus is so precious and essential to the future of

humankind that we need to be able to inflame others with its glory and lead people to understand His relationship to a glorious Father and to each of us.

Lesley says this passionately in purely religious language and I agree with her beliefs about Christ and God. However, John Chalmers, with courage, is attempting something different and difficult showing, in his meditation, the aspects of Christ's life which all people can embrace, whatever religion or none. This is absolutely crucial to do successfully if His love is to reach all of mankind.

John Chalmers mentions Carl Jung who worked all his life in many cultures and at the end, in a TV interview in1959, by John Freeman was able to say: "I do not need to believe in God, I know!"

Modern generations should learn to listen to God speak in wisdom conveyed by our recent thinkers, writers, theologians and scientists and also by those within our own communities.

John Chalmers brings Jesus' life into a realm to which people of today can relate with all the current suffering and injustices and this relationship can lead to a fuller understanding of the Resurrection and of belief in God.

Both Lesley and John together can be a healing whole.

John Kusel, Cumbernauld

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The Big Question

This month's question is:
'What part does sport play in your church?'



Robert Thomson, Mission Pioneer, Irvine Active Connections

"Irvine Active Connections is a missional community launched by the Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock in 2021.

"We aim to use sport and physical activity as tools to engage with, nurture and support the people of Irvine.

"For some, our activities were their first real social contact post-Covid, others have found support for bereavement, and many have had conversations about faith that they would have found difficult to have in any other context.

"We have found that sharing experiences, going on adventures (sometimes getting lost on a bike ride) and being shoulder to shoulder stimulates conversation in a unique way.

"People are also much more comfortable inviting a friend to take part in a sports activity with Christians than to a more traditional Church event.

"This has given us opportunities to engage with people who may otherwise never set foot in a Church (the offer of a post-run cup of tea and biscuit really helps).

"In addition to the direct relationships, we are exploring ways to use sport for community outreach such as providing sports equipment for school children to keep them playing over the summer, free PE kits for children who regularly attend school without and a bike recycling service.

"God is at the centre of everything we do as a missional community, the joy of sport is a gift from Him that we want to share with our town."



The Rev Stuart Finlayson, probationer minister, Elgin: St Giles and St Columba's South

"Being a probationer minister has given me many opportunities, like using sport to connect with people. In summer 2021, at Elgin St Giles and St Columba's South, we began a group called 'Sweaty Church' where youths came to play games, have fun, and learn a little about Jesus.

"The format was simple; lots of games! We asked the youngsters to choose the games, and at water breaks, we asked simple questions on things like Teamwork, Fairness, Listening, Friendship, Failure/Success – things Jesus spoke about.

"The important thing though was to just listen and encourage participation. We found this often made space for God to come in and do His thing.

"In a very sceptical world, sport is a soft approach to getting to know someone. Our families knew we were from the church but honestly the games were the bridge and the relationships with the young people and their parents flourished which was awesome. We hope to do it again this year.

"I'm also a Sports Chaplaincy Scotland chaplain to Highland League Club, Forres Mechanics FC. I've found just being around the club, especially on match days, has opened doors to some surprisingly positive faith conversations. Once again sport is the way to begin a conversation which can often go deeper.

"I really believe that authentic and honest relationships are the way to reach people with the Good News – that and listening ears – so sport will always play a vital role in my ministry going forward."



The Rev Neil Urquhart, minister, Irvine: Fullarton

"Sport is important to many in our church and to our mission strategy.

"We've bowlers, walkers, hikers, swimmers, boarders, curlers, skaters, footballers, rugby players, park runners, triathletes and even an Iron Man. I'm a 'rubber rev' in comparison, but love cycling and five-a-side fitba'. We encourage everyone to exercise, play their sport(s) as best they can, learn to love their neighbour (including opponents), be positive influencers, and share faith, hope, and love with friends and fellow athletes/activists.

"We employed a sports development worker to help us encourage sports and fitness (body, mind, and spirit) in church and community. Thus, we have positive partnerships with local sports clubs and agencies. We helped start Walking Football, diversionary sport for teenagers and special needs school programmes, and run kids' Champions Sports playschemes. We have a team in a churches football league.

"Pioneer mission project, 'Active Connections', uses activities like cycling, walking, and running to encourage church and pre-church friends, family, colleagues, etc to grow faith, fun, friendship, and fitness together. We are establishing a team of sports chaplains to work with local sports clubs.

"Sport gives great opportunity to evangelise and grow one another up in Christ. 'Competition' originally meant 'strive together'; so we "strive (compete) together' as one for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27b)."



The Rev John MacGregor, Bishopbriggs: Cadder

"From an early age, I chased dreams of professional football. I had brief spells with Hamilton Accies, and Svendborg in Denmark. At 19, the Christian faith took me in a different direction.

"So, in later life, when I was invited by Stranraer FC to be their chaplain, I was delighted; and five years later, their manager moved to Dumbarton FC, and took me with him. Now, I'm chaplain with Rossvale FC, the local junior team. My football experience is useful as I can identify with the highs and lows that young lads face when chasing their dream.

"Sir Alex Ferguson said: 'Chaplains can be of help to all sorts of people involved with sport, when crisis, need, or difficulty comes. I commend the idea of sports chaplaincy.'

"That in a nutshell is what we do, we are a positive support and influence around a club for all the players, management or directors who need a listening ear. Every professional club in Scotland has a Christian chaplain and chaplaincy has expanded into many different sports.

"We are not there to preach, just to offer Christian love and grace. I have had some really special moments of praying with players before important games, not praying for a win, but that they would give of their best and know God`s peace.

"Sport and faith can go hand in hand; Eric Liddell, the Olympic gold medallist and missionary is one of our greatest examples."



Anthea Bircham, Community Development Co-ordinator, the Madoch Centre, St Madoes and Kinfauns Parish Church

"Sport plays a big role in the life of our congregation.

"When we were developing our church centre (the Madoch Centre) we researched local interests and discovered that sport was important to the people who lived in our area. A Go for It research grant let us look further into how we could use sport as outreach.

"We now run an inclusive sport and fitness programme for all ages and abilities and employ a full-time sports outreach worker.

"Sport allows us to:

- make connections and build relationships with people who would otherwise not come into a church.
- serve our community by giving opportunities for physical activity for vulnerable groups.
- serve our community through increasing physical activity across all age groups.
- ensuring that we provide an active programme as we grow in our faith together.

"In our church we now know many more people in our area, we are fitter and healthier, and we look for opportunities to engage in faith discussions in different contexts."

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Pulling off the impossible

The Very Rev Albert Bogle draws on Paul's story in the book of Acts in considering the importance of vision – and acting on it.

THE email title read: 'Don't Jump the Gun'. I was replying to a friend who was weighing up the chances of a project succeeding. I knew the chances of making it happen were slim but it was not impossible. Often it is the impossible ideas that God seems to pull off in front of our eyes.

It's never easy to know where you put your energy and resources when time is short and resources are limited. But I believe that God stirs our hearts and gives us insights into what could be. It's then that we need to understand the power of the vision and seek to embody the text in Hebrews 11:1 where the writer says: 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen'.

We need to be open to more vision-casters in the church and we also need vision-catchers. Paul was both a vision-catcher and a vision-caster. He was convinced he had to be obedient to the vision he had been given on the Damascus road. For him, the experience was no illusion or psychological trick. He had a real encounter with Jesus of Nazareth and his life was changed. It's these personal encounters that no one can deny which create the passion to make a vision grow. This is the reason why so many of our church leaders are being encouraged to spend time in prayer seeking to encounter the living God.

I love the passage in Acts 26 where Paul is described standing before the Governor Festus sharing the good news of the gospel. Festus listens to Paul and as he listens he can't see a reason for Paul to be detained in prison. But Paul had exercised his right as a Roman citizen and had 'appealed to Caesar' while he had been detained under the previous Governor Felix. Now Festus had to send a charge sheet to Rome with Paul and he didn't know with what to charge him, so he invites the Jewish puppet King Agrippa to listen and give him advice.

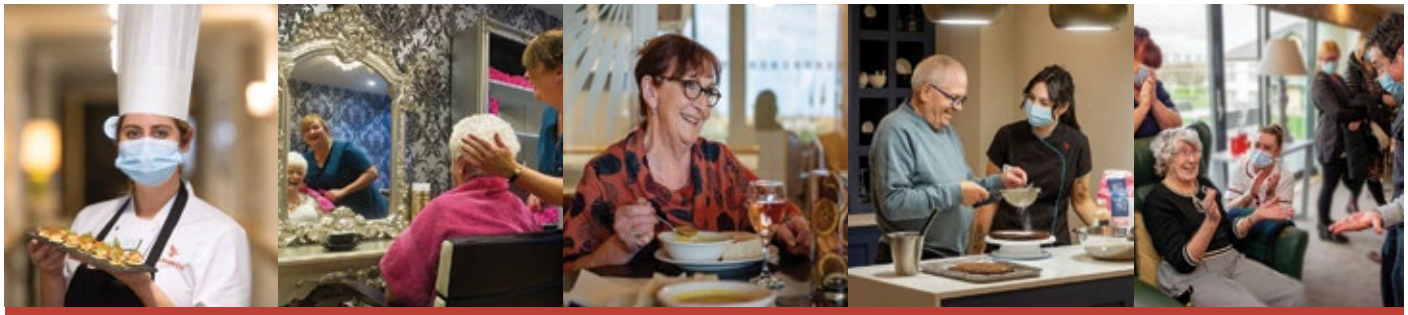
It's a great little bit of dialogue in the book of Acts. You see something of the passion and backstory of Paul. He tells Festus and King Agrippa a great deal of his life story. It's a fascinating story of how this persecutor of Christians ended up a follower of Jesus. And how it is his writings and influence that helped shape the theology of the first Christians. Paul would not be the last antagonist to Christianity to find himself converted. It is perhaps a dangerous thing to be too overtly outspoken against the things of God, he might just step in and silence you by revealing himself to you.

The line in the story I love is from the King James Version where Paul says about his change of heart: "Whereupon Oh King Agrippa I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision". I love the response that Paul draws out from the King: "Paul Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian?" And Paul answers to the effect, not only you do I want to persuade but all who will listen.

This surely is the calling and passion of all of us who follow Jesus. We are people with a vision to help others see who Jesus is. Almost, is not enough. Agrippa had a wonderful opportunity but he turned it down. He couldn't bring himself to see that the Jewish professor in front of him had an amazing life-changing offer to give to him. Paul, of course, would not be daunted and he did go to Rome – and in doing so shaped the Christian church forever.

> "We need to be open to more vision-casters in the church and we also need vision-catchers. Paul was both...

It's hard to believe a vision. To know what is the right thing to do can be confusing. Over the years I've learned to wait and test the vision. Push doors and see if they open. Look to see if God brings like-minded people into your life. The Bible tells us that if we come with the right heart and the right approach of humility and expectation we will hear a voice say to us in our ear: 'This is the way, walk in it." Taking time not to jump the gun but to listen is the way of the vision caster and dare I say it, the vision catcher. ◘



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‘Organised pandemonium’

Thomas Baldwin learns about the roots and growth of ‘Sweaty Church’.

WITH the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this month, the nation’s eyes will again turn to the achievements of its athletics stars. Yet we know that as a country we are getting more sedentary, with increasing health problems associated with inactivity.

Meanwhile, it’s a common lament among the churches that children’s biblical knowledge is dropping as fewer either go to church or are exposed to the Bible in school.

About ten years ago, a pair of Church of England lay people based in York, Johnny Wooldridge and Ian Mayhew, came up with an initiative that addresses both problems: Sweaty Church.

“They wanted something that was going to engage with families but neither of them particularly liked crafts,” says the Rev Glyn Diggins, vicar of St Michael’s Church, Malton in Yorkshire, and the National Development Manager for Sweaty Church. “So they struck on the idea of something along similar lines to Messy Church but instead based on physical activity.”

Sweaty Church works on the principle of circuit training, where small groups move round a series of exercise stations, each with a different activity. Except here each exercise is associated with a learning outcome, tied to a theme based on a biblical story introduced at the start. The learning outcomes can be discussed after each activity or together at the end.

Glyn describes it as ‘organised pandemonium’.

“It’s very adaptable, very active, very high-energy,” he says. “It’s primarily designed for Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) but through experience we’ve found it works extremely well at engaging whole families. In a church environment it’s a great way of getting people introduced to the Bible who don’t necessarily have an engagement with it, or alternatively to have a completely different way of engaging with scripture.”

Glyn has been running Sweaty Church in his local primary school for six years. “I knew I wanted to do something that was going to be physically active but I wasn’t going to be able to run it in my local churches because of the configuration of the buildings. So I contacted Johnny and Ian and said I’m really interested in bringing Sweaty Church to Malton but I want to do it in a local primary school.

“The school is not a church school but they were very open to working with the church. I’m really blessed because they allow it to take place during the curriculum timetable, but it could be done as an after school club.

“I have a group of older children that act as station leaders, and a further group that acts as team leaders. So when you have a larger group of up to 40, they can be broken into groups of eight and then can be further broken into teams of four in the groups.

“The thing about sweaty church is it’s overtly competitive. We don’t shy away

> So they're doing really fun activities but they've got something to learn about the theme as a result of it.

from competition because that's what the kids want to do. We talk about competing appropriately, we talk about losing appropriately and winning appropriately, but we very much encourage competition – they might be racing each other, they might be doing an activity against each other."

He emphasises though that Sweaty Church is 'not just a thrash around for the sake of it'.

"For instance, I've got one based on fear and pressure, and the biblical story I link it to is David and Goliath. So for that we might have a target-based activity, throwing javelins or beanbags or whatever, and at the end of it you can have a discussion about what did you do, did you just start hoicking this stuff or did you think about what you're doing, take your time and take aim?

"And then you can say well, if you look at David he spent years looking after flocks of sheep and goats, he was in training for what was going on before he ended up facing Goliath. So you can start talking about training, preparation, discipleship things like that, and how going through that prepares you for the unknown that's going to come up.

"Another one that's very popular is human buzzwire, where we get the group to link together and the player has to take a big hoop over them all without them separating their hands and without touching any part of their body, and the hoops get smaller and smaller so when you get to a small one and there's a 6'2" dad that's entertaining.

"And when they get to the end of it, they dive into a ball pool with lots of passages of scripture in it (from psalms and proverbs), all about encouragement in times of difficulty. And the learning outcome from that one is when you find yourself in difficult situations the bible's a really good source of information and encouragement.

"So they're doing really fun activities but they've got something to learn about the theme as a result of it."

Sweaty Church materials are available through Scripture Union, and Glyn is happy to speak to anybody interested in setting one up. "We've been very giving in the way that people use it, in that we familiarise them with the concept and then say 'off you go, you're on your own, shout if you need any help'."

While Glyn admits that there's 'not a cohesive network' of Sweaty Churches, a number of churches in Scotland have set something up. (See the Big Question, pages 10-11).

One Scottish church which has started up a group is Fullarton Parish Church in Irvine.

The minister, the Rev Neil Urquhart, says: "It was a natural progression of doing sports and physical activities together as an expression of worship. The response was very positive – lots of families and kids who don't regularly attend church services attended."

Neil adds that they are hoping to develop the Sweaty Church into a new worshipping community: "Presently, we are using cycling, walking, jogging and wild swimming as a form of sweaty church, trying to attract pre-churched friends, family, colleagues, etc into a sweaty church community, as a new expression of church and potential new church plant." ◘

Glyn can be contacted on 01653 690974 or glyn.diggins@btinternet.com



Messy Church at Fullarton Parish Church, Irvine





General Assembly 2022

Thomas Baldwin reports on the key debates at this year's hybrid General Assembly.

SAME SEX MARRIAGE

The General Assembly gave final approval to the legislation that will allow Kirk ministers and deacons to register to become celebrants of same sex marriages if they wish.

In the debate, holders of the traditional view that marriage should be between a man and a woman continued to argue that same sex marriages are unscriptural. The Rev Scott W Burton said the position against same sex marriage was 'about a faith that says it's more important to be in line with God and his Word than what my community, my nation or my world might say otherwise'.

The Rev Philip Gunn said: "Quite simply put, this overture is not biblical and we see the scriptures, old and new, that point to God's teaching on marriage and human sexuality."

In response to a question on whether the church would financially support a minister who was taken to court over refusing to officiate a same sex marriage, Procurator, Laura Dunlop QC, said that she considered the protections built into the scheme, under which ministers are legally banned from officiating same sex weddings unless they 'opt in', to be sufficient.

The legislation was drawn up by the Legal Questions Committee in response to an instruction of the General Assembly of 2018. Delayed due to the cancellation of the 2020 Assembly, it was approved last year, and by a majority of presbyteries under the Barrier Act.

Asking the Assembly to pass the proposals, the Rev Craig Dobney said: "I have seen the heartbreak of those in same sex relationships in our congregations who are unable to marry in their home church, devout Christians though they are. To be married in front of their church families would mean everything to them."

And the Rev Lezley Stewart pointed out that the debate had been going on for years, and at every point the church had continued its trajectory towards allowing same-sex marriage. "It's General Assembly 2022 and we need to take account of that collective voice over many years," she added.

The Assembly passed the Act by 274 to 136.

Later in the week, there was a question about an amendment to the Marriage Services Act resulting from the decision. The Rev Michael Weaver said there was concern among ministers holding the traditional position about the removal of the words 'husband and wife'.

Mrs Dunlop said that the inclusive language contained in the Act, which meets the legal requirements for the solemnisation of marriage, did not preclude the use of additional wording.

Legal Questions Committee convener the Rev Dr Grant Barclay said: "The wording is sufficient and is not prescriptive. It both protects and permits."

MINISTERS AND FUEL POVERTY

The Assembly voted to introduce a scheme to support parish ministers facing hardship due to rising energy prices.

On the opening day of the General Assembly, ministers spoke of deciding not to put the heating on in winter, only heating one room of the manse, or even skipping meals as the cost of heating large, often old and poorly-insulated buildings rises by thousands of pounds.

The Rev Iain Majcher said he feared for his family this winter. The Rev Peter Johnston said that he and his wife had already turned the heating off last winter, and had still faced a monthly direct debit of £572. The Rev Bryan Kerr said that while Church of Scotland ministers were not poor, worries about fuel bills were for many 'overtaking their ability to minister'.

Later in the week, the General Trustees accepted new measures aimed at making sure manses are energy efficient.

Congregations were instructed to provide an Energy Performance Certificate with the Manse Condition Schedule from the end of this year, and to ensure the Energy Performance Rating for the manse is within categories A-C by 2025 – either by making improvements or replacing the manse.

The Assembly also called for a windfall tax on energy companies (two days before the UK Government announced one) and urged the Government to grant no further licences for new fossil fuel exploration or extraction.

CHURCH REFORMS

The Assembly heard several reminders of the need to keep up the pace of reforms.



Photo credit: Andrew O'Brien for the Church of Scotland

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, in his final General Assembly as Convener of the Assembly Trustees, said in his speech: "The task is and remains redesigning the architecture of the whole system in order to build a Church of Scotland which is relevant and fit for purpose."

And the Rev Rosie Frew, convener of the Faith Nurture Forum, acknowledged there had been pain over the past year as the Church grapples with Presbytery restructuring and Presbytery Mission Planning, but said: "We're currently living in an in-between world – in between an old system and a new system. It's like being in a chrysalis, a dark and difficult place of transformation before the beauty of the butterfly emerges."

The Assembly agreed further reform of the central structures, under which the work of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums will be brought together under a single Active Faith Leadership Team with four Programme Groups: Mission, People & Training, Public Life & Global Justice, and Resource & Presence.

The process of merging presbyteries continued as the General Assembly approved the creation of four new presbyteries: Lothian and the Borders (merging Duns, Jedburgh, Lothian and Melrose & Peebles), Perth (merging Angus, Dundee, Dunkeld & Meigle, Perth and Stirling), Forth Valley & Clydesdale (Falkirk joining the existing presbytery of that name) and the North East and Northern Isles (merging Aberdeen & Shetland, Gordon, Buchan, Kincardine & Deeside, Orkney and Moray).

The Assembly approved the proposed arrangements for a Pioneer Mission Fund and the Seeds for Growth Fund, which will support the establishment of new worshipping communities and work with the under 40s.

DECLARATION OF FRIENDSHIP

The General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a Declaration of Friendship with the Catholic Church in Scotland.

In the Declaration, to be named the Saint Margaret Declaration, the two Churches 'recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and… wish to express our friendship and respect for one another as fellow Christians, citizens and partners in announcing the kingdom of God in our land'.

The Rev Sandy Horsburgh, convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, said that friendship was 'a key biblical concept'. He added: "Friendship is a very deep relationship, a relationship of conscious and deliberate choice, in which individuality is respected and there is room for disagreement, but a relationship in which we stand alongside one another, support one another, rejoice together and weep together, pray for and with each other, and do things together.

"We regret that our two churches have not always been friends, that we have not always recognised one another as children of God in Christ, because we should have done. We recognise our need for repentance and forgiveness for the hurts and harms we have caused one another. In making this Declaration of Friendship, we are decisively and deliberately putting these things behind us."

Archbishop Leo Cushley, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, told the Assembly that the Declaration meant that the two churches 'stand shoulder to shoulder before an unbelieving world'. He added: "By acknowledging all the good we hold in common, we can walk and pray together as friends, deepen our affective unity and be a more authentic Christian witness in the land."

The title Saint Margaret Declaration was suggested by the Rev Dr Grant Barclay, who said that St Margaret, the 11th century Queen of Scotland, was 'a figure of unity in political and church life in our nation', and closely associated with Scotland's newest city, Dunfermline. The suggestion was warmly welcomed by Archbishop Cushley and the Moderator, minister of Dunfermline: St Margaret's Church.

BOOK OF CONFESSIONS

During the Report of the Theological Forum, the Assembly agreed to approve in principle the creation of a Book of Confessions, retaining the Westminster Confession of Faith as a subordinate standard of the Church, but adding other confessions that 'express the range and depth of Reformed thought'; and the



creation of teaching materials on the confessional position of the Church and the vows of office holders.

Convener, the Rev Dr Liam Fraser, told the Assembly that the reforms would mean Church office holders who disagree with the Westminster Confession would no longer have to subscribe to it; that those for whom the Confession is important could be reassured that it was being retained as a subordinate standard; and that the new teaching resources would ensure that 'the Reformed identity of the Church of Scotland will be maintained'. He added that it would 'resolve a disagreement over the role of the Westminster Confession that has continued for centuries, allowing us to move on to other pressing matters'.

The Rev Mike Goss, who admitted he had been 'deeply suspicious' of the proposals for reform of the Church's confessional position, praised the proposals. He said: "I think the work that has been done to try to do something coherent that could be assented to by the whole church and gives us a confessional basis is to be welcomed… I am also hugely grateful for the emphasis on education, training and learning. All of this can only be deeply helpful."

CHAPLAINCY PRAISE

In a sometimes emotional session, the convener of the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces recalled praying with a bereaved refugee while she was serving as a chaplain.

The Rev Dr Marjory Maclean said that in 2016 she had been on the Navy vessel HMS Enterprise as it rescued migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean from Libya.

She said: "On that unforgettable day, with over 700 migrants squeezed onto our quarterdeck, we discovered that two women had died in the lower layer of humanity crammed two deep onto one of the inflatable craft. Each of the two was travelling with family members who were distraught. The sister of one of these ladies was an East African woman, French-speaking and wearing a wooden cross round her neck.

"I was called to pray with her, and I brought with me a young Catholic officer whose recent degree happened to be in French.

"I extemporised a prayer, with my young colleague at my shoulder translating as best he could. And then, suddenly, the sorrowing figure took a breath and began to pray; desolate, lamenting prayer, desperate, fast prayer, too fast for the young lieutenant beside me to keep up with the translation. He looked at me in panic, and I waved him away. It didn't matter to me what she was saying; she was praying now her own sorrow and need, and I only needed to keep holding her hands."

As usual there were several Church of Scotland armed forces chaplains in the hall for the report of the committee, and they heard a succession of speeches praising their work.

The Rev Craig Dobney, who served in the RAF before being called to ministry, said: "When I joined up I was lost to God. Throughout my career my faith slowly came back, mainly through the support and care we got from our chaplaincy teams."

And the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, whose son JJ was seriously injured while on service in Afghanistan, said military chaplaincy was a key point of ecumenical work: "When we arrived at the hospital it was a Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Michael Sharkey, who held our hands… in that moment all that matters is you have someone holding the hand of God when you don't know how to do that."

As is customary on 'Chaplains' Day', the General Assembly was addressed by a senior member of the British military. Lieutenant General Nick Borton, Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, said the Chaplains Department have 'a long and glorious history of providing pastoral care, spiritual support and moral guidance'.

KEY DECISIONS AND SPEECHES

- The General Assembly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and called for an immediate ceasefire and 'just and peaceful solution which respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law'.
- The Faith Impact Forum introduced work on a Jewish-Christian glossary intended to aid understanding between the two faiths. Rabbi David Mason, who is working with the Forum on the glossary, praised the Church for its commitment to interfaith work, and said the glossary offered a way that the two communities can express passionate opinions without offending each other. "Harmony doesn't mean we will agree, it means we will disagree well. There is no attempt to change the other, just to understand the other in a deeper way."
- The chair of Christian Aid, Archbishop John Sentamu, challenged the Church of Scotland not to resist change, and to continue its work in challenging poverty. He said: "The harvest is ripe and you as a national church have the greatest delight to make Jesus Christ visible and known in many different places, tackling poverty, and always rejoicing that He who called you is faithful and he will do it. Believe it, practise it, live it and you will be surprised at what He can do."
- The outgoing Principal Clerk, the Rev Dr George Whyte, urged the Church of Scotland to show humility and listen to others in future. He said: "Any group which lacks humility doesn't listen and doesn't learn, either to the God who might have new plans, or to the neighbour who might have new needs, new questions or – heaven forbid – new insights."
- The Rev Fiona Smith was sworn in as Dr Whyte's replacement, becoming the first woman to hold the post permanently.
- Professor Jason Leitch, the National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government, thanked the Church for everything it had done during the Covid-19 pandemic: "Whether you run the tiniest, tiniest church in Scotland or one of the largest fellowships, the work you've done for those you serve has been absolutely without precedent."
- The Assembly passed a motion from the Rev Professor Susan Hardman Moore recognising the 'terrible harm caused to all those who suffered from accusation and prosecutions under Scotland's historic witchcraft laws' and apologising for the role of the Church of Scotland in such persecution.
- A section condemning conversion therapy, and calling for it to be banned, was passed after some debate. An attempt to persuade the Assembly to accept a different definition of 'conversion therapy' which would not have included such



practices for people struggling with gender identity was defeated.

• The convener of the Social Care Council (CrossReach), the Rev Thom Riddell, said that 'thousands of lives have continued to be transformed over the past year' by CrossReach services. He urged the Assembly to get involved and make their voices heard as the Scottish Government presents legislation for a National Care Service in the next few weeks.

• During the report of the Iona Community, there was applause for the musician and worship leader John Bell, who retires later this year. Community leader Ruth Harvey said: "For over 40 years John Bell, along with the late Graham Maule and others, has brought light, challenge, depth and joy to the lives of millions."

• The General Trustees encouraged Commissioners to the General Assembly to write to their MSPs to protest against new rules which will require church office bearers to be named on the Land Register. Convener Graeme Lees told the Assembly that under the rules, the public listing of building's legal owner must also include a list of the owner's 'associates'. For the General Trustees, that will mean having to submit details of each congregation's minister, treasurer and session clerk, and updating those details every time they change.

• During the report of the Safeguarding Committee, ministers of the Church were instructed to undertake safeguarding training. The convener, Adam Dillon, said: "I appreciate that this might be an unwanted burden at this time, but why would we not want to avail ourselves of the highest level of training to protect the weakest of our folk?"

• Members of the Church were urged to put themselves forward to serve on the national committees. The convener of the Nominations Committee, the Rev Julie



Rennick said: "If you have served, tell others how it broadened your view, share the highs and lows…and if you haven't taken that step yet, please consider it… it's not just a privilege, it's often enjoyable too."

• The Assembly agreed that next year's gathering will again be a 'hybrid' event, meeting in Edinburgh but with some Commissioners participating online. It voted against a countermotion which would have made next year's Assembly in-person only while a 'critical review' of this year's hybrid arrangements was carried out. Several online Commissioners said they would not have been able to take part in person, and the Assembly Business Committee convener, the Rev Donald McCorkindale, said that there would be a 'critical evaluation' of this year in any case.

• The National Convener of the Church of Scotland Guild, Margaret Muir, said the last two years have proved the movement is 'not afraid of challenge or change'. She said: "If you had asked what would happen to the Guild if a global pandemic closed everything down for 18 months not many people would have thought we would survive, but survive we have."

• The Lord High Commissioner, Lord Hodge, said that the week had given him 'a strong sense of the energy and vibrancy of initiatives being taken at a local level' across Scotland, and that he had been inspired by ecumenical co-operation between the Church of Scotland and other denominations in Milton, an area of multiple urban deprivation in Glasgow. "Most of all, what I will take away from this week is what a drug addict in Milton, who had no active connection with the church, said to (parish minister) the Rev Christopher Rowe on meeting him in the community: 'You give us hope that God has not abandoned us'.

• In his closing remarks, the Moderator, the Rt Rev Iain Greenshields, praised the Assembly's willingness to work together to find a way forward through difficult debates. "If the Church is to do anything it has to work together on mission," he said, "And it has to work together to bring Christ to the people and the people to Christ, and surely that is our greatest privilege."

A free to download four-page supplement summarising the key decisions of the 2022 General Assembly is available at https://www.lifeandwork.org/resources/general-assembly-2022-special-supplement

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Moderator joins South Sudan peace pilgrimage

THE Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will join the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury on an historic 'Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace' to South Sudan this month.

Pope Francis, the Most Rev Justin Welby and the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields have been invited by President Salva Kiir Mayardit and will meet with him and his five vice-presidents in Juba, the capital of the world's youngest country, which has been blighted by civil war.

They will also meet local church leaders and people living in a displaced persons camp, and lead a large open-air prayer vigil for peace.

The purpose of the visit from July 5-7 is to renew a commitment to peace and reconciliation and stand in solidarity with millions of ordinary people who are suffering profoundly from continued armed conflict, violence, floods and famine.

Dr Greenshields said: "I am genuinely humbled at the opportunity to assist our brothers and sisters in South Sudan in the search for peace, reconciliation and justice.

"It is a privilege to be joining the Holy Father and the Archbishop of Canterbury on this historic Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace and we come as servants of the Global Church.

"We call on all people in South Sudan to



give expression to Jesus' words that 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God.'"



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The Big Picture

Right photo: Royal Yacht Britannia by Walter McGillivray
Below: Loch Lubnaig from the path to Ben Ledi by Eric Ness
Bottom: Trinidad Cuba by Douglas Moore







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FAITH IN ACTION

The seventh in a series of features which will offer updates from the **Faith Action Programme**.



Rev Dr Scott J S Shackleton
Head: Faith Action Staff
- Ministries & Mission Support

One of the oldest blessings we use in the Church is known as the Aaronic Blessing: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace". This is particularly special, I think, when, as a Minister, one has the honour of carrying a newly-christened baby around the church as the congregation sings its blessing upon the bairn. May the sun in the sky shine on you all this summer month and may God's countenance give you peace.



Rev Rosie Frew
Convener: Faith Nurture Forum

Lord, we know your heart rejoices, In each work divine,
You did ears and hands and voices, For your praise design;
Craftsman's art and music's measure, For your pleasure all combine.

Music plays a big part in worship – whether traditional or modern, organist or praise band, for meditation or accompaniment. The Psalmist exhorts us to

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn– shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

Martin Luther wrote, 'Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God. Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.'

Jim Marshall, organist at Melrose Church for 56 years, died very suddenly in early April. He was playing at our Sunday service just two days before. His life was devoted to the church and the community and to music. Music sets the tone for the many different facets of worship – it echoes the joy of the newlyweds walking up the aisle; it evokes memories and brings comfort at a funeral service; it helps the congregation 'raise the roof' in songs of praise; it brings peace as we gather in the presence of God.

Thank God for the musicians in your midst. Thank and encourage them too!



Suzi Farrant
Young People and Young Adults Development Worker
Intergenerational Church

In my lifetime, the number of children and young people participating in the life of the Church of Scotland has been declining, some 73% since 1984. Such a rapid reduction suggests that our current methods are not engaging today's children and young people. The Radical Action Plan, agreed by the 2019 General Assembly, outlined a need to focus on under-40s to stem the pace of decline and the work of the Faith Action Programme is being approached with this as a priority.

Focusing on under-40s is not just about tinkering at the edges, hiring a youth worker or adding another programme to try and attract more people into our buildings; it is about reshaping the whole culture of our Church. For me, being intergenerational is part of the core of what it is to be Church, it is in our DNA so to speak, so by separating all Church activities according to age we have made Church into something that God did not design it to be. Christine Ross, co-author of 'Intergenerational Christian Formation', defines Intergenerational Church as one that "intentionally brings the generations together in *mutual* serving, sharing or learning within their core activities, in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community". But what does that look like?

To explore this, we recently ran an Intergenerational Church webinar series. The first webinar outlined some of the theology behind this approach to being Church. It suggested



Being Intergenerational is part of our Church DNA

four key principles:

- Church should primarily be about doing rather than learning
- The Church should primarily be intergenerational not age-segregated
- Relationships are important in themselves – not tools for influence
- Relationships should not be one way but be characterised by mutual sharing

The second webinar featured a panel openly and honestly sharing stories of their journey towards Intergenerational Church. The third and final webinar explored the scriptures for further insights. Recordings of these webinars with questions for discussion can be found on the Church of Scotland's Youtube channel, just search for the Intergenerational Church webinars.

We are writing a book on the subject, to be published next year, exploring the theology and practice of Intergenerational Church.

If you have questions, thoughts or stories to share or would like a conversation to explore things further, please get in touch, I'd love to hear from you at **sfarrant@churchofscotland.org.uk**



Phill Mellstrom
Worship Development Worker

Worship underpins all that we do

What do we mean by this?
Our gathered worship and personal faith-formation should foster meaningful connections between ritual and life, Christian living and culture, and should enliven us and empower us to engage in whole-life worship ('discipleship').

Our worship and the words we pray, sing and say together all paint our picture of God, they reinforce and shape our theology – which shapes our world view and in turn our ways of being, behaving and practising. We can readily recognise when we assent or disagree with teaching and preaching, but in the same way that 'we are what we eat', we could say that 'we are what we pray', 'sing' or 'say'. What picture of God are we intentionally or unintentionally cultivating in our worship through the language of our prayers, our hymns and songs, and in our rituals, and how is this helping people to form and reform a faith and worship life that underpins all that they do?

Worshippers should be equipped to experience worship that is fit for context and 'contemporary'. Think about recent shifts within culture, the things that have deeply imprinted on society: from local experience, to national politics, international movements and global pandemics. How does all of this affect us as human beings? How does our worship help us to explore healthy rhythms of life that allow us to pray, lament, seek justice, and be peacemakers in our communities? How might our worship unlock and open up the possibility of encountering God and experiencing life in all its fulness?

As we continue to ask these questions together, we can explore meaningful ways to develop worship that seeks God's realm here and now. Isn't that at the heart of our desire to be a Church that seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities?



Hannah Sanderson
Congregational Learning Development Worker

Innovation

In March we were thrilled to welcome Rev Lorenzo Lebrija, Director of TryTank, to speak to us about developing cultures of innovation. TryTank is an experimental laboratory for Church growth and innovation for the Episcopal Church, USA. As the name suggests, TryTank encourages trying – not just thinking about things. Since our workshops with Lorenzo we have already heard of plans for a new drugs recovery programme hosted in a community garden; a zero-waste station raising funds for a "Trees for Life" project; and the vision for a fresh expression in a children's soft play centre.

> "TryTank is an experimental laboratory for Church growth and innovation for the Episcopal Church, USA."

What might a culture of innovation feel like? Lorenzo says:

"Be open, have fun, if you are not having a good time you will not come up with good ideas to try. I'm serious – if you are not laughing then just STOP and come back to it tomorrow."

"Failure is an important part. If we fail we are not going to break this thing called Church – so go and try with abandon."

"Ask yourself, are we being as bold as we can be, are we a little bit scared?"

"Feel the excitement, the energy and the emotion – that's the Holy Spirit in this."

Please join us on this creative journey by searching 'ChurchesInnov8' on Facebook or contact **hsanderson@churchofscotland.org.uk** for more information and don't forget to ask about the Order of the Llama!



Rev Dr Rory MacLeod
Minister of Strath & Sleat

For our Gaelic readers

Cha bu chòir dha obrachadh, ach obraichidh agus, nuair a dh'obraicheas e, 's e sealladh math a th' ann. Tha mi a' toirt iomradh air an Eaglais, a tha a' tional ri chèile daoine bho àitichean diofraichte, dòighean-beatha eadar-dhealaichte, às iomadh dùthaich agus ginealach. Is e co-chomann na h-Eaglaise fianais làidir de rèite an Tighearna, an taca ri saoghal anns a bheil iomadh seòrsa de sgaradh airson adhbharan bho eachdraidh gu fasan. Gus còmhnaidh còmhla ri chèile ann co-sheirm, tha agam ri bhith foighidneach agus fialaidh. Chan eil e furasta idir; 's e sin a tha a' ciallachadh a bhith a' leantainn Ìosa.

For further information visit:
www.churchofscotland.org.uk

‘Everyone cares for each other’

Jackie Macadam meets the Church of Scotland elder soon to become President of Rotary International.

“I PROBABLY became a dentist thanks to my Bible class teacher.”

Gordon McInally, church elder and soon-to be President of Rotary International, laughs at the memory. He’s only the second Scot to ever hold the prestigious post and is keen to promote Scotland to the world leaders he’ll meet during his tenure.

Talking about his Bible class teacher, he says: “I always thought he was a ‘cool’ character with a nice lifestyle and, as an impressionable teenager trying to make a career choice, that probably pushed me in the direction of dentistry. Interestingly, although several years older than me, he and his wife remain great friends to this day. Heather and I enjoy their company greatly and we meet up regularly – and he is still ‘cool’!”

Gordon says he’s always had a personal, Christian faith.

“I was born in Edinburgh in July 1957 and was educated at the Royal High School. The family home was in Portobello where my mother owned and operated a private nursery. My father was in the licensed trade, working for McDonald and Muir, the parent company of Glenmorangie Whisky.

“My parents were members of Leith Methodist Church and I was christened there and went on to attend Sunday School, Bible Class etc. My first connection with the Church of Scotland came in the early 1970s when I was a member of Old Restalrig Parish Church Youth Fellowship. At the time the Rev Donald Caskie, ‘The Tartan Pimpernel’, was a locum minister and I remember being enthralled by his tales of helping people in wartime France. The Youth Fellowship at Old Restalrig was very strong and had an active programme – we had regular weekend retreats to St Ninian’s in Crieff which I recall to this day.

“I became a member of the Church of Scotland in1980 when I married my wife, Heather, in Craigsbank Parish Church, Corstorphine, Edinburgh, where the minister was the late George Grubb (who had also, previously, been a member of the Methodist Church!).

“My parents instilled in me and my late brother a sense of helping and caring for others that has remained with me for life.

“My personal faith, and my upbringing within a family with a similarly strong faith, has definitely impacted my life choices and career. As a Christian, I believe I should be willing to help and care for people to the best of my ability and that is why I chose to become a dentist where, I would like to think that in my 37 years of practice, I was able to care for my patients, many of whom I treated for my entire career, along with their children and in some cases their grandchildren as they came along.

“Similarly, the opportunity I have had through Rotary, which as you can imagine, is a major part of my life, to help and care, and to work to improve the lives of people around the world, is driven by my personal faith.

“I think that is why I am particularly impressed with the work of the Church’s CrossReach programme which sees it support people to achieve the highest quality of life which they are capable of achieving at any given time, together with the work of the Church overseas – aims not dissimilar with that of Rotary where we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe in our communities and in ourselves.

“Following our wedding in 1980, Heather and I set up home in South Queensferry and decided that we should join a local church rather than travel into Edinburgh each week. That led us to attending Dalmeny Kirk where we were made extremely welcome. It was a small congregation and we always put the warmth of the welcome down to the fact they were desperate for new members!

“I was ordained as an elder in Dalmeny in 1982.

“Our two daughters, Sarah (born 1984) and Rebecca (born 1986) were christened in Dalmeny but, as they grew up, the absence of a Sunday School there, saw us take the hard decision, that had been taken by a number of other families before us, to leave Dalmeny and join Queensferry Parish Church, where I became a member of the Session and the Congregational Board, which I ultimately chaired. Heather, a professional classical musician and music teacher, ran a Junior Choir at Queensferry for many years.

“Ultimately, Queensferry Parish Church and Dalmeny Kirk became a linked charge and, for a number of reasons, Heather and I chose to return to worship at Dalmeny.


Gordon McInally

> My parents instilled in me and my late brother a sense of helping and caring for others that has remained with me for life.

"One of the proudest moments in my life came in 2014 when I walked Sarah down the same aisle to be married as I had carried her almost 30 years previously to be christened."

It was the Dalmeny Church connection that brought Rotary into Gordon's life.

"A farmer friend, who was also a member of Dalmeny Kirk, invited us along to a Rotary Club of South Queensferry event which we enjoyed and subsequently he invited me to join the club. Initially I saw it as a great way to make friends in the town and to do things in the area that would benefit the wider community. As time went by, and I realised the work done by Rotary all round the world, I was hooked!

"I also found my involvement with Rotary a great release from dentistry and a great help in creating a good life/work balance. I think my involvement with Rotary probably made me a better dentist – but I guess only my patients could answer that question!

"I think it is in everyone's nature to be caring and to want to help make things better for other people – this nature might be more apparent in some than others, but I am convinced it is there.

"I have found Rotary to be a great vehicle for being able to care and help for others. It provides a worldwide network to identify and meet the needs of the less fortunate and, though its charity, the Rotary Foundation, it provides the wherewithal to make a real difference in the world. I have often said, "how could a dentist, living and working Scotland, provide clean water to a village in South Sudan, or provide safe, clean toilet facilities to schoolgirls in India, or improve healthcare facilities in rural Brazil?" – by being one of 1.4 million like-minded individuals all over the world, I have been able to do that and more – much more.

"Rotary has also given me friends all over the world and, as a consequence, a better understanding of the world in which I live. All that, together with the personal development to which I have referred elsewhere is what makes it continue to appeal to me and what makes me want to share it with others."

Being a member of Rotary has given Gordon untold opportunities to put his faith and personal ethos into action. They have ranged from helping manhandle a new organ up to the loft in Dalmeny Church to working with the Rwandan Government to transition orphans into families and communities.

"Through Rotary, I have carried out humanitarian work in South Africa, Kenya

I think it is in everyone's nature to be caring and to want to help make things better for other people – this nature might be more apparent in some than others, but I am convinced it is there.



Gordon McInally at the Rotary Club Vocational Centre in Macau

and especially in Rwanda," he says.

"Working alongside the charity, Hope and Homes for Children, I have spent time in Rwanda working with the orphans of the 1994 Genocide and HIV/AIDS. I first went there in 2004 when I was the incoming President of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland to establish a project known as 'Rotary's Africa Hope' which helped support child headed households through education towards a sustainable future.

"Hope and Homes for Children has been operating in Rwanda since 2002. Since 2010 it has been supporting the Government of Rwanda in the eradication of institutions throughout the country and on the development of a national child protection system that minimises family separation and provides family-based alternatives when necessary.

"Over the last seven years, working closely with the Government of Rwanda, it has helped build a strong national social workforce, assisted with the closure of 13 orphanages across the country including Rwanda's oldest and largest institution Orphelin at Noel de Nyundo and helped transition over 1,300 children into families and communities. It achieved this through the development of a range of community-based services including eight community hubs, 175 child development networks and the development of family-based services like foster care and community-based living for children and people with special needs. In total it has successfully worked with over 55,000 children and their families and is currently in the process of closing one further orphanage.

"Over the years, over 13,300 participants benefited from training programmes across Rwanda, and were equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the deinstitutionalisation process.

"In Rwanda, Hope and Homes for Children is working in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, UNICEF and other national partners, to ensure all children will be safely transitioned into families and communities with access to health, education and jobs. It will continue working closely with the government and civil society in the development of policy, service standards and national action plans to underpin and consolidate reform of the child protection system.

"In South Africa, in a project which was

also part of 'Rotary's Africa Hope', I have also worked with orphans of HIV/AIDS to help them in a similar manner to that in Rwanda.

"I have travelled to Kenya on a number of occasions and have worked with the Gloag Foundation at Kenya Children's Home in Nairobi where the Rotary Club of which I am a member, South Queensferry, refurbished the children's nursery and sent a team out to redecorate some of the residential accommodation.

"Internationally, in addition to the work I have done in Africa, I have had close involvement with Rotary's Polio Eradication campaign. Rotary is the driving force behind efforts to eradicate polio. With our partners, we have achieved a 99.9 percent reduction in polio, with just five cases of wild polio reported in 2021 compared with 350,000 a year in the late 1980s. Members of Rotary have contributed over $2.2 bn to protect nearly three billion children from this paralysing disease and with the infrastructure we have helped create to end polio, we have built a lasting global health legacy that is now being used to protect millions of people from other diseases – including Covid-19.

"Most recently, not long before the pandemic struck, I travelled to Kenya again to volunteer with the Nyumbani Trust, as part of a North East Scotland Rotary, led initiative, where I carried out dental screening in Nyumbani Village, a self-sustaining eco-village in the district of Kitui, which has been purpose-built to provide homes and full supporting services for destitute grandparents and their dependent grandchildren."

But it's not all been overseas travel for Gordon, and he feels that the work Rotary does 'at home' is every bit as important.

"Locally, the Rotary Club of South Queensferry raised over £1m over the past ten years or so, through its annual abseil from the Forth Bridge. As part of Rotary's work with youth, I was able to help establish a 'Young Musician and Young Singer of the Year' competition which has grown to be a national event, giving school students the opportunity to perform and challenge themselves, and improve their performing skills. Many of the former winners of the competition have gone on to become professional musicians, some performing on the world stage. A number of years ago, I was part of 'The Auld Alliance Challenge' which saw two cars leave South Queensferry one morning in November and, whilst one headed north to visit as many distilleries as possible in five days, the other headed south to the Beaujolais region of France to bring back a quantity of Beaujolais Nouveau wine. On our return to Edinburgh, the whisky and wine was auctioned to raise money for the Sick Kids Appeal, to improve facilities in the city's Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

"My late father died suddenly and unexpectedly in church, of a heart attack at the age of 56 in 1985. At the time, it was recognised that had equipment such as a debrillator been available, he might have survived. On a national level, whilst President of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, was able to lead an initiative to provide defibrillators in public places. Many Rotary Clubs throughout Great Britain and Ireland provided defibrillators in public places and I am delighted that many lives have been saved as a result."

Gordon and Heather fulfilled a lifelong ambition to relocate to the Scottish Borders when Gordon retired from full-time practice in 2017. They settled in Yetholm.

"There is a real sense of community here and the way we have been welcomed us into the village, and into Cheviot Churches where we now worship, has been one of the great benefits of our move. Whether incomers like ourselves or people who have been here for generations, everyone cares for each other – something that has been brought home to us all over the course of the past two years with the various restrictions placed on us all by the pandemic.



Gordon McInally carrying out dental screenings in Nyumbani Village



Gordon McInally planting trees as part of the Rotary Environmental Project in Hong Kong

Making connections

David Moodie, a young member of Granton Parish Church in Edinburgh, highlights the work of the Church's Acorn group.

LIKE many people, one of the big struggles I have with faith is "is it relevant?".

There's a time and place for the big questions, but if being a Christian doesn't have an impact on the way I live and the people around me, it's easy to question what is the point?

One thing that's really helped give my faith a sense of purpose has been joining our church's Acorn Group. The basic idea behind an Acorn Group is that God is always prompting us to make connections with other people, so it's our job to listen and act. All of us who are part of the group commit to asking "God, who do you want me to make a connection with today?", and every two weeks we meet together on Zoom and feedback how it went. Did God answer and give us the name of someone to connect to? Did we speak to them, and if so, how did it go?

What's been great is that you don't have to be a super confident person to take part. One of our members calls it a 'support group for people who are bad at talking about their faith'. We are a really diverse group, we are different ages and even live in different countries, but what we have in common is that we want to become more confident in speaking about our faith. And there's no pressure, some meetings I won't have anything new to report, so I just enjoy listening to other people's stories.

And the stories we've had have been incredible. Often one of us has sent a message to a friend out of the blue only to hear back, "that was just what I needed to hear today." Sometimes it's chance encounters. One of our folks was almost run over by a cyclist, she stopped to speak to them and within five minutes the cyclist was sharing their life story. And most encouraging of all, one of our members was at dinner at their neighbours and heard their son was interested in visiting a church for the first time. She took the initiative and asked if they wanted to come to our church with her. Within two weeks he was recruited into the music group and just recently he was baptised and joined our congregation.

Being part of an Acorn group has been really encouraging. Every week someone has a positive story to tell of a connection made. Every meeting I come away with more evidence that God is at work in the world and is calling us to participate. If I ever start to worry if faith is really relevant, I only need to think of the stories I've heard and experiences I've had through Acorn, and I am reminded that God's Spirit is always at work.

So I'd encourage you to give the Acorn method a go. There's more info online but starting is really simple. Just pray: "God, who do you want me to make a connection with today?" and listen for the answer. When you get a sense of a name, connect with the person. That can be as simple as asking, "How are you? No really, how are you?" Then, if possible, try to find a group of people you can share the experience with or create one. And that's it. It's really simple, but I've found that over time I've become bolder in making connections with others and much more excited to share my faith. ◘



David Moodie

> "The basic idea behind an Acorn Group is that God is always prompting us to make connections with other people, so it's our job to listen and act.

New chaplains to Queen appointed

Thomas Baldwin reports on the appointment of three new Royal Chaplains

Four Church of Scotland ministers have been appointed as Royal Chaplains.

It was announced in separate statements in May and June that the Rev Dr Grant Barclay, the Rev Dr Marjory MacLean, the Rev Professor John Swinton and the Rev Moira McDonald were to formally join the Ecclesiastical Household as Chaplains in Ordinary.

All four said they were 'honoured' to be invited to take on the role.

Dr Barclay, who has ministered in Kilmarnock and Giffnock, is currently Interim Clerk to the Presbytery of Glasgow and convener of the General Assembly's Legal Questions Committee. He said: "I am honoured to be invited to serve as Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland and am humbled to stand in a tradition of Christian service to the monarch which has continued for nearly 600 years."

Dr MacLean is the minister at South Ronaldsay and Burray Parish Church in Orkney, a former Royal Reserve Naval Chaplain who served in Afghanistan in 2010, and now convener of the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Armed Forces. She was the Depute Clerk of the General Assembly from 1996-2010 and served as acting Principal Clerk in 2002, 2003 and 2009.

She said: "The service of our national life by the national Church has always been important to me, so to be asked to join the Chapel Royal is not only an honour but an opportunity to be useful in a new way. It is lovely to have this small new aspect of ministry alongside my parish role."

Professor Swinton is an eminent pastoral theologian, particularly in the areas of disability and healthcare, and the current Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. A former nurse in the fields of mental health and learning disabilities, he now sits on the disabilities sub-group of the Church of Scotland's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group. He also worked for a number of years as a hospital chaplain.

> "It is lovely to have this small new aspect of ministry alongside my parish role.

He said: "It is a tremendous honour to be invited to take up this role.

"In these difficult times the role of chaplaincy and ministry is vital, and it will be a pleasure to be a part of this aspect of God's work."

Mrs McDonald is the minister of Corstorphine Old Parish Church in Edinburgh. She said: "The things of life where I thought I would be out of my depth have been the happiest and most fulfilling times I could have asked for. So here is another call – or a nudge – to do something that feels daunting.

"But that the few people whose counsel I've sought have all said 'go for it' says to me that I should stop worrying about being out of my comfort zone, and enjoy the adventure."

There are 10 Chaplains-in-Ordinary in the Ecclesiastical Household in Scotland, in addition to the Dean of the Chapel Royal and the ministers of Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh and Crathie Kirk near Balmoral. All chaplains are personally chosen by the Monarch. ◘


Rev Dr Grant Barclay


Rev Dr Marjory MacLean


Rev Professor John Swinton


Rev Moira McDonald

JOHN SENTAMU HAILS 'INCREDIBLE' CHRISTIAN AID SALE

The chair of Christian Aid, Dr John Sentamu, has described the annual sale for the charity at St Andrew's and St George's West Church in Edinburgh as 'incredible'.

The former Archbishop of York opened the Christian Aid Week sale, in its 50th year, on Saturday May 14.

Dr Sentamu walked round the sale and chatted to volunteers including the sale convener, Lady Mary Davidson, before ringing the bell to officially begin the sale.

The sale has grown from a single book stall in 1973 to one of the largest charity second hand events in the country, completely taking over the George Street church and a large area outside. In addition to books it sells music, antiques and collectables.

"I think it's extraordinary," said Dr Sentamu, who took over as chair last winter. "It began when somebody said 'what about selling books, that would be a good idea' and Lady Mary has been running it now for 50 years.

"And you go into the church and every section is properly displayed so you're not meandering like you do in some bookshops, you know exactly what is in every section. That kind of work is not an easy thing: to classify books requires a lot of skill, and all of these volunteers have been at it quite a while, and it's a huge, huge amount of books and a lot of money.

"It's incredible, incredible."

During his visit to Edinburgh John Sentamu spoke on BBC Radio Scotland and preached at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church.



From left: the Rev Rosie Magee, minister of St Andrew's and St George's West; Lady Mary Davidson, book sale convener; Dr John Sentamu, chair of Christian Aid; Sally Foster Fulton, head of Christian Aid Scotland on the opening day of the sale.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING PRINCIPAL CLERK

Tributes were paid to the Rev Dr George Whyte as he prepared to retire as Principal Clerk to the General Assembly in May.

Dr Whyte, who has been Principal Clerk since 2017, was particularly praised for his response to the Covid-19 pandemic, when he helped guide the Church of Scotland through new ways of worshipping and conducting its business.

The convener and vice-convener of the Assembly Business Committee, the Rev Donald McCorkindale and Susan Pym, said: "All Principal Clerks face challenges in their day-to-day work.

"But very few will have had to face the enormity of supporting the Kirk through a global pandemic whilst facilitating and encouraging presbytery reform.

"In these worrying and demanding times, he has held the Church together, helped and encouraged us all with new methods of communication such as Zoom and Teams meetings, culminating with the first ever online General Assemblies.

"The legalities and technologies of such were bewildering but he pressed on with determination and vigour."

And the convener and vice-convener of the Legal Questions Committee, the Rev Dr Grant Barclay and Victoria Linford, said that the Church at all levels had 'good reason' to be glad that he was the Principal Clerk during lockdown.

"George brought the knowledge and experience gained through a lifetime of service and willingly placed it at the service of the Kirk," they said.

"His swift, assured and knowledgeable response through this period has enabled the Church to continue to function securely and effectively in worship, service and mission."

Raised in Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, Dr Whyte was a minister in Argyll, Glasgow and Edinburgh before becoming Clerk of the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 2008. He was convener of the Board of Ministry between 1996 and 2000 and Depute Clerk to the General Assembly between 2010-2017.



He said: "Looking back on 41 years of ministry, I would say it has been a privilege to serve the Church in many different settings and alongside so many wonderful people.

"I have always been surprised at what I have been called to do and where I have been asked to serve.

"I am glad that I answered God's call to the ministry even if, at the time, I had no real idea of what I was taking on.

"I am also pleased to be laying down the responsibilities of being Principal Clerk.

"I have no idea what the future holds but, as that has always been the case, I am very comfortable waiting to see what is in store."

CHARITIES APPEAL FOR MORE HELP FOR THE POOR



As a May report showed that more than two million adults in the UK had gone without food for a day in the previous month, Christian anti-poverty charities appealed for more support for the country's poorest people.

The survey published by the Food Foundation thinktank estimates that 7.3 million adults and 2.6 million children now live in households that are food insecure, up from 4.7 million adults at the start of the year – a 57% increase. With food and fuel expected to get still more expensive, the charities launched urgent appeals, as well as calling for more to be done to help with the cost of living crisis.

Appealing for donations to support *Your Local Pantry* projects, Church Action on Poverty said: "Millions of people face being swept into poverty this year, by soaring living costs and squeezed incomes.

"Make no mistake: people will go perilously cold, go hungry, and become isolated and destitute on a scale none of us has seen before.

"In a compassionate, rich country, this should be unthinkable and we must not stand by."

The Trussell Trust, the largest provider of foodbanks in the UK, warned that people are increasingly facing 'impossible decisions' between paying bills and feeding themselves. They have started a petition calling on the UK government to 'urgently increase benefits payments to keep pace with the real costs of living'.

And Bethany Christian Trust, the Scottish homelessness charity, has launched an appeal for funds to help them reach people before they lose their homes. Bethany highlights the story of Mercy, a single mother who is struggling to feed her three children: "Everything is hand to mouth at the moment, which is hard. How are you going to survive with a family of three?

"As I'm speaking my energy bills are going up. I wanted to swap provider to save money, but because of my debt, I can't. I just went shopping this morning and prices are going up but my salary is not."

Luke Wilson, manager at Bethany's Gateway service, said: "Now more than ever, people who are on the margins can't afford the basics."

Releasing the report, the Food Foundation said that foodbanks were increasingly being asked for food that doesn't need cooking, as users can't afford the energy bills. They call on the Government to increase benefits, ensure everyone is paid at least the Real Living Wage, and expand free school meals and other initiatives such as breakfast provision and Healthy Start.

Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation, said: "The extremely rapid rise in food insecurity since January points to a catastrophic situation for families. Food insecurity puts families under extreme mental stress and forces people to survive on the cheapest calories which lead to health problems. The situation is rapidly turning from an economic crisis to a health crisis. Food banks cannot possibly be expected to solve this. The government needs to realise the boat is sinking for many families and it needs to be fixed. Bailing out with emergency food parcels is not going to work."

For more news follow us at
www.lifeandwork.org

PARTNERSHIP COVENANT SIGNED

Easter Sunday saw the signing of the BEK (Burntisland Parish Church of Scotland, Erskine United Free and Kinghorn Parish Church of Scotland) Partnership Covenant at a united service of worship in Burntisland Parish Church.

Discussions about forming a partnership between the three Fife churches to maximise ministry and mission opportunities began in 2019. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 brought about closer working relationships as the three churches jointly planned, prepared and delivered weekly livestreamed Sunday worship services.

The BEK churches are looking ahead to the future of working ecumenically in their local context and are in the process of employing a BEK Children's and Families Worker.



Pictured l-r: the Rev Alexander Ritchie, minister, Erskine United Free Church; Ena Hudson, Session Clerk, Kinghorn Parish Church; Bill Sweenie, Session Clerk, Burntisland Parish Church; Bill Cairns, Session Clerk, Erskine United Free Church; the Rev Jim Reid, minister, Kinghorn Parish Church; and the Rev Eileen Miller, locum minister, Burntisland Parish Church.

PRINCIPAL CLERK RETURNS TO HIS ROOTS

Barrhead St Andrew's Parish Church held a special service to ordain four new elders and to recognise the contribution of their existing Kirk Session.

Special guest the Rev Dr George Whyte, then Principal Clerk of the General Assembly (who retired following May's General Assembly), was invited to preach and to hand out long service certificates to those who had completed at least 25 years of service. Dr Whyte grew up in the church and was a member of the 1st Barrhead Boys Brigade.

The service featured a ceremony of ordination for four new elders: Claire McKie, Fiona Mineard, Janice Rooney and Malison Ndau. In addition, Dr Whyte handed out 18 long service certificates to elders who have served a grand total of 728 years between them – an average of 40 years each.

Picture of the session with Dr Whyte, taken by Rhys Jackson.



CROSS 'RESURRECTED'

A 'resurrected' cross was dedicated at Bridge of Don Oldmachar Church, Aberdeen, on Easter Sunday.

The cross was made from wood from the old cross from the roof of the building, which had to be brought down after it was found to be crumbling and the metal support corroded. One of the church members, after consultation with the property convener, used the wood he could salvage to construct a new one, which was then hung by contractors in a new location on the wall of the church.



LONG SERVICE

Seven long-service certificates have been presented to elders of St Mary's Parish Church, Motherwell. Irvine Brown, Alex Craig, and James Murray have served for 40 years and June Graham, Anne Johnstone, Neil McCallum and Sheila Sinclair for 30.

The presentations were made on behalf of the congregation by young people from the Junior Church Y Zone. Also in the picture are minister, the Rev Bryce Calder, and session clerks Alan Joyce and Stewart Maxwell.





CHURCH FAMILY EXPANDS

An Edinburgh congregation welcomed 12 people into their church family on Sunday April 10.

Granton Parish Church celebrated ten professions of faith, one profession of faith to adherent and a transfer from another parish.

The new members ranged in age from 17 to over 80.

60 YEARS' SERVICE

An active elder at Dreghorn and Springside Parish Church, North Ayrshire, has been presented with a certificate recognising 60 years' service.

Over the years John has served the church as Sunday School Superintendent, Session Clerk and Chairman of the Nominations Committee, as well as being one of the first officers of the 2nd Dreghorn BB Company.

John Halbert received his certificate on Easter Sunday from minister, the Rev Jamie Milliken. John and Jamie are pictured with Session Clerk Sheena Henderson.



Supporting refugees

Thomas Baldwin describes how an Edinburgh church is playing a role in supporting refugees from Ukraine.

AN Edinburgh church has opened its doors to Ukrainian refugees staying temporarily in the city, providing a safe place for them to gather and showing them the sights.

As of mid-May there were around 600 refugees in the city, a changing group accommodated in hotels at the airport until they can be moved to permanent homes elsewhere in Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh Council has asked St Cuthbert's Parish Church to act as a safe hub in the city centre at weekends.

The church and its partners are also putting together a programme of Sunday afternoon visits, supported by volunteers not just from St Cuthbert's but also from other parishes who provided interpreters, the school pupils who help set up the church's homeless outreach, and Father Vasyl Kren from Edinburgh's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Our Lady of Pochayiv and St Andrew.

On Sunday May 8, a group of 45 refugees were accompanied on a visit to Edinburgh Castle, and the following weekend they were taken to Holyrood Palace.

Minister, the Rev Peter Sutton, who has also hosted Ukrainian refugees briefly at his manse, said: "I have been asked by the council and the third sector agencies to help provide a secure hub in the city centre for the refugees in the transit hotels out at the airport. This particular group changes on a regular basis as they move onto the more permanent homes, many heading over to the west of Scotland.

"It is at the weekends when the council need the most help with this particular



group as many of them like to come into the city centre.

"The council has now provided travel passes and is using St Cuthbert's as a safe place from which the refugees can gather and explore the city.

"To date this involves about 25 refugees on a Sunday afternoon coming into the city centre. Along with the Council, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, and Sabine Chalmers of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, we are trying to put together a Sunday afternoon programme. We meet at the start of the week to plan for the next Sunday afternoon.

"Local contacts in the parish and outside have been most generous in supporting our efforts, namely the Castle, the Caledonian Hotel, the Van Gogh experience in Festival Square and the Zoo."

He added that the Castle trip was 'an uplifting afternoon, and the support agencies helping the refugees ensured that the logistics worked well with coaches from the airport dropping off in St Cuthbert's kirkyard'.

Prior to that, on April 23, St Cuthbert's hosted an art auction and sale in aid of the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal. Pupils from James Gillespie's High School and Loretto School donated artwork for the sale, which raised over £3000. ◘

JOURNALIST KILLING CONDEMNED

Church organisations in the Middle East have condemned the killing of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. The prominent Al Jazeera reporter was shot while reporting on an Israeli military raid on the town of Jenin on May 11. Al Jazeera and the Palestinian Ministry of Health reported that she was killed by the Israeli Defence Force, although this was disputed by Israel.

A statement from ACT Palestine Forum and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) read: "With shock and great sadness, the Middle East Council of Churches headquartered in Beirut, the Ecumenical Palestinian organisations, and members of the ACT Alliance working in Palestine and the region, received the news of the murder of the beloved journalist Ms Shireen Abu Aqleh. Shireen was killed by a bullet fired from the Israeli occupation forces in Jenin, a city in the northern part of the West Bank, while she was on the job. She is not the first nor will she be the last voice silenced by the violence of the Israeli occupation, as her death is, unfortunately, one among many in the world of Palestinian journalism.

"All of us in Palestine, Lebanon, and throughout the Middle East are devastated by this news. Shireen's death impacts all who fight for freedom of speech across the globe. Shireen was not just a journalist, she was a clear voice of the pain and hurt that we have all felt as a result of Israeli occupation here in Palestine. On this tragic occasion, we once again reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to a state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"We salute Shireen and what she represented through her persevering and thorough journalistic work. Shireen aimed at exposing the truth of the occupation and conveying the oppression and persecution of us Palestinians.

"We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Shireen, and to the Palestinian people at home and in the diaspora for this heavy loss."

The statement was also signed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land, the MECC Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees and East Jerusalem YMCA.

WEA/UN MEETING

World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Secretary General Bishop Dr Thomas Schirrmacher led a delegation of WEA leaders in a recent meeting with United Nations (UN) Secretary General Mr António Guterres at the UN headquarters in New York. They discussed some of the ongoing and newly emerging crises in the world, including the war in Ukraine and the ensuing refugee crisis, issues surrounding freedom of religion and belief as well as the environment.

Guterres thanked the WEA for its long-term engagement in a wide area of topics and fields and shared that he had got to know the WEA more during his tenure as UN High Commissioner for Refugees. As a person of faith himself, he urged the WEA to increase its engagement and encourage other like-minded faith actors to join the collaborative efforts at grassroots.

Schirrmacher applauded the UN for elevating the co-operation with faith-based organisations in various branches and entities. He highlighted the UN Environment Program (UNEP) as the first branch that did not subsume religions under 'non-state actors' but included them as important partners in identifying and implementing global solutions.

"The hundreds of millions of Christians belonging to the many national Evangelical Alliances around the world are not always 'easy-going' actors when it comes to collaboration with others, as they are highly critical of issues such as corruption, racism, economic inequalities, or the suppression of freedom of religion or belief," Schirrmacher noted. But he also emphasised that "they are not critical simply for the sake of criticising. Instead, they seek to co-operate and engage meaningfully for a peaceful, just, and livable world, which is in accordance with the will of Jesus Christ."
(WEA)

FOOD CRISIS GROWS IN HORN OF AFRICA

International development charity Christian Aid has warned "the cost of living crisis is global and demands urgent action" as people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia face rising hunger and acute water shortages amidst the worst drought in 40 years.

With a report recently published by the Global Network Against Food Crises calculating that the number of people experiencing crisis-levels of hunger or worse across the globe rose by 40 million in 2021 alone, concerns for the region are growing.

In the report, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns the war in Ukraine is "supercharging a three-dimensional crisis – food, energy and finance – with devastating impacts on the world's most vulnerable people, countries and economies."

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The church in a city valley

John R Hume considers the beauty and history of an Edinburgh city centre church.

THE west end of Princes Street in Edinburgh is marked by the pinnacled tower of St John's Scottish Episcopal Church. It is easy to fail to notice another church in the valley below, approached by a staircase immediately to the east of St John's.

Walk down the steps and turning right you come to a fine marble funerary monument on the base of the clock tower and spire, to find the entrance to the church on its south side. Because the building is tucked into the end of Princes Street Gardens it is difficult to appreciate it as a whole.

The best view of the tower and spire (the oldest part of the building) is from Lothian Road. The lower part of the tower was originally attached to a plain eighteenth-century church; the elegant spire, designed by Alexander Stevens, was added in 1789 The body of the eighteenth-century building was replaced in the 1890s by the present elaborate church, in Byzantine style, by Hippolyte J Blanc, an Edinburgh architect whose best-known work is the Thomas Coats Memorial Church – the 'Baptist Cathedral' – which dominates the centre of Paisley. He also designed Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church and Christ Church Scottish Episcopal Church in Morningside. His designs are characterised by remarkable architectural embellishment.

Because of its setting in a valley St Cuthbert's immediate external visual impact is limited. Blanc therefore reserved his greatest elaboration for the interior, which is laid out for Scoto-catholic worship, typical of much of the Church of Scotland when it was built. From the west end of Princes Street Gardens the large semi-circular apse dominates and it is this feature (the chancel of the church), which is the focus of attention inside the building. Just below the half-dome is a magnificent low-relief marble frieze depicting the Last Supper, above the Communion Table. To the left of the chancel arch is an elaborate marble pulpit, and most remarkable of all, an immense marble font in the form of a basin with a figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus with her child, in its centre. Complementing this rich interior are stained glass windows, including one by the celebrated New York designer Tiffany. To add to this extraordinary magnificence is a little war-memorial chapel off the entrance vestibule, with a gold mosaic semi-dome. The impression made by all this splendour is that the Edinburgh society that created it was exceedingly wealthy.

Round the church is an extensive graveyard, with some fine monuments, and in its south-west corner a cylindrical watch-house of 1827, built to protect new burials from the activities of the 'body-snatchers' who in the early nineteenth century stole corpses to sell them to anatomists.

Earlier I described the extraordinary building that is the present-day St Cuthbert's. During Covid I have looked in some detail at St Cuthbert's life and influence. He was born in Berwickshire. As a young man he joined the missionary base of Old Melrose, at the time in the Kingdom of Northumbria, whose king, Oswald, had brought St Aidan from Iona to convert his Anglo-Saxon people. The Kingdom of Northumbria extended north to the south side of the Firth of Forth. The first church in Edinburgh was probably established here in the mid 6th century during Aidan's mission. There may have been an even earlier church on this site, at the time when the Lothians were Welsh-speaking. Cuthbert became Northumbria's most revered saint, which is presumably why his names attached to this particular site.

When, as I hope you will, you visit St Cuthbert's, do remember that you are almost certainly on the site of the earliest church in Edinburgh, and remember, too, Cuthbert, a much-loved man, in whom people truly saw the presence of the Holy Spirit. ◘





Photo: iStock

The glory of God

In the final part of his study of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:13), David Searle considers the last words.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever Amen.

QUESTIONS arise when we discover that no translations of the New Testament (except the AV), record the Doxology other than in a footnote. Why? It is not found in the best of the earliest manuscripts, though it is included in some very ancient ones from the 2nd century such as the *Didache or Teaching of the Apostles*.

There has been much scholarly discussion about this, but all are agreed that the Doxology is both appropriate and biblical in its contents and intentions. One suggestion is that in the early church, following OT practice, each of the seven prayers was said aloud by the congregation while the person leading the service added a doxology after each petition; then the full doxology would be pronounced after the final petition. This could be why only what was spoken by the worshippers was recorded. Possible but cannot be proved!

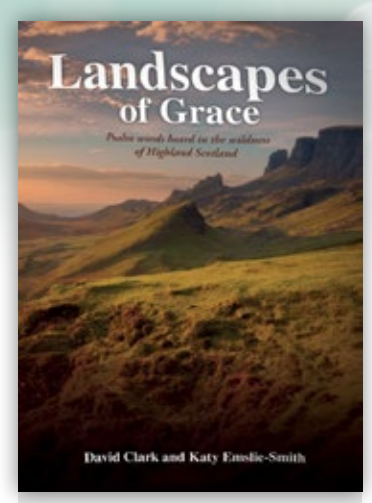
Bishop Ryle wrote: 'Let us examine ourselves and see if we really desire the things we are taught to ask for in the Lord's Prayer.' His point was that if we care little or nothing for *the kingdom, the power and the glory* of the God, then it is unlikely that we will have any sense of our dependence upon him, or of our need for his forgiveness and protection from evil. John Stott emphasises the Trinitarian nature of the Prayer and our dependence on the Father's provision for daily needs, the Son's forgiveness of sins and the Spirit's protection in the dark hours of trial — hence the appropriateness of the Doxology ascribing glory to God, that is, to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

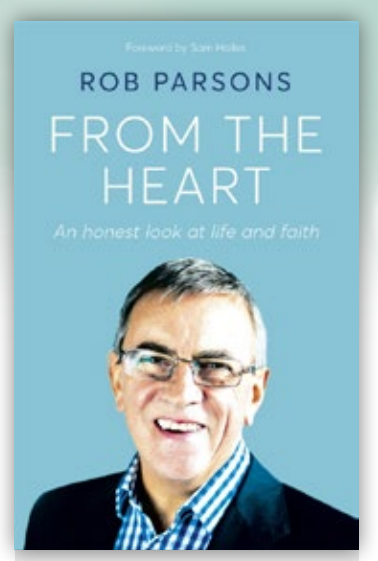
The Christian Scriptures are replete with doxologies. See for example Psalms 146 to 150 where the call to 'Praise the Lord' occurs thirty-six times. The necessity of giving glory to God was heard from Christ's lips (eg, John 8:50; 17:4, 5). And, of course, the hymns of praise used by the 1st century church are to be found embedded in various passages in the New Testament book of Revelation (eg, 4:8, 11; 5:9-10).

> “
>
> Let us examine ourselves and see if we really desire the things we are taught to ask for in the Lord's Prayer.

Calvin comments at the end of his exposition of the Lord's Prayer: 'This doxology was added not only to warm our hearts to press towards the glory of God, and warn what should be the goal of all our supplications, but also to tell us that all our prayers, here set down for us, have no other foundation but God alone, in case we should put any weight upon our own merits.'

Totally in accord with the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer are the words of Psalm 24 used for centuries in our presbyterian communion service: *Ye gates lift up your heads on high, Ye doors that last for aye, Be lifted up that so the King of glory enter may*. Therefore, each Lord's Day let us 'Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!' (Psalm 100:4) *Soli Deo gloria!* ◘





LANDSCAPES OF GRACE

Written by David Clark and Katy Emslie-Smith
Published by: SilverWood Books
Price: £10 (order by email at landscapesofgracesales@gmail.com)

For anyone who has marvelled at the beauty of Highland Scotland, this book captures the spiritual essence of the land, grounded firmly in the ancient book of Psalms.

Former geography teacher and Church of Scotland minister – in Airdrie and Dundee – (and Scripture Union Scotland General Director) Clark draws on his particular experience in some of the most beautiful places in the Highlands, drawing on the resonance of the Psalms in these places of beauty and wonder. According to Clark the work has been 'enriched' by the contribution of Emslie-Smith.

Beautiful photographs bring each location to life, with the authors showing how the words and imagery of the Psalms can be found in the beauty and rugged landscapes of some of the most remote parts of Scotland. The purpose of the book is very clearly to link the spiritual with the beauty at the essence of the world gifted by God.

The 99 page volume is divided into 14 chapters, with each focussing on a landscape drawn from Clark's life and experience and each has a prayer or reflection rooted in some of the words of the Psalms, drawing to mind God in the presence of the gift of beautiful imagery.

The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair – who is a keen outdoors enthusiast – best summarises the premise of the book in a foreword: 'This book is grounded in the Scottish landscapes that I treasure so dearly. Every reflection takes me to places that I've been or that are high on my list to visit. That which is described – mountain tops, steep cliffs, lonely glens, breaking Atlantic waves – stirs my soul.'

Warm endorsement for the work also comes from Elaine Duncan, chief executive of the Scottish Bible Society who describes the book as 'food for the soul – even if you have never visited the landscapes described.'

FROM THE HEART

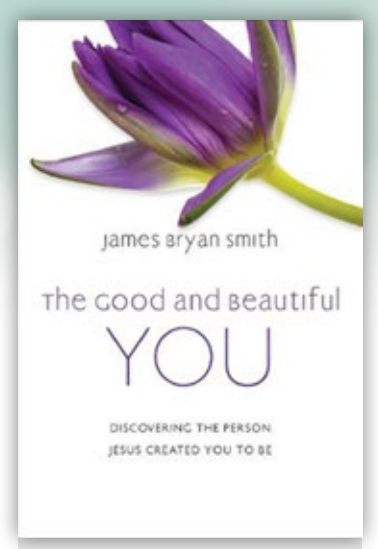
An honest look at life and faith

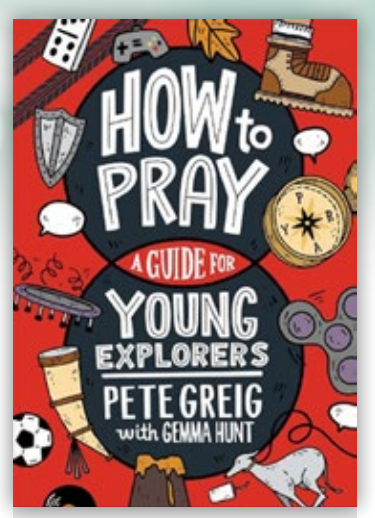
Written by: Rob Parsons with foreword by Sam Hailes
Published by: Hodder Faith
Price: £14.99

Drawn from his 30 years as a columnist with Premier Christianity, this book offers a collection of the author's thoughts on everything from parenting to pride, from the wisdom of a teenage mother to disappointment with God.

The collection is easy to delve in and out and has been written for a popular audience with wide appeal.

Each column has a thought-provoking message and the short snappy nature of each chapter makes it easy to consume in short bursts or in a single longer reading.





THE GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL YOU

DIscovering the Person Jesus Created You To Be

Written by: James Bryan Smith

Published by: Hodder and Stoughton

Price: £16.99

The author is an ordained United Methodist Church minister in the USA and is a professor of theology at Friends University in Wichita Kansas and also the executive director of the Apprentice Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation.

He is also also a founding member of Renovare, a Christian spiritual renewal ministry which seeks to help people become more like Jesus.

This hardback is the final title in a series centred on key truths about ourselves. The premise of the work is about the person we become and shows how some of the biggest barriers lie in poisonous personal thoughts which shape the way we view ourselves.

In an introduction the author explains that whilst spiritual disciplines are important in formation but equally important is a solid understanding of self which is key in forming 'who you are in Christ'.

Smith explains: 'Christian spiritual formation is nor primarily about helping you feel more spiritual , but it is about forming you in Christ.'

The book has a helpful appendix allowing each chapter to be used for group discussion, although it is equally suitable for individual use.

FOR CHILDREN

HOW TO PRAY

A Guide for Youth Explorers

Written by: Pete Greig with Gemma Hunt

Published by: Hodder Faith

Price: £10.99

The author of the best-selling book 'How to Pray', has taken this as a basis for a new work encouraging children to engage and teamed up with CBBC presenter and author Gemma Hunt.

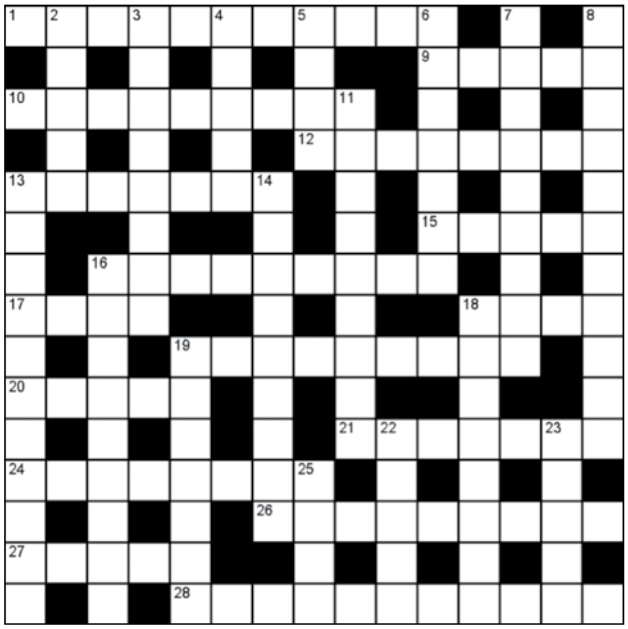
The format – which includes lots of activities – can be used by older children individually seeking to learn more about prayer and engagement. It would also be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of those involved in nurturing the faith of young people and offers a treasure trove of insights and ideas to encourage and foster prayer.

The book offers illustration on every page in a format that is not too heavy and appealing for younger readers and aims to answer their questions in straightforward , everyday language and draws on references found in the culture of today.

There is no stipulated age range for the book, but it would be more suitable for aged eight and above to teenagers.

Lynne McNeil

July 2022 Crossword – Compiled by Jeannie Hollands



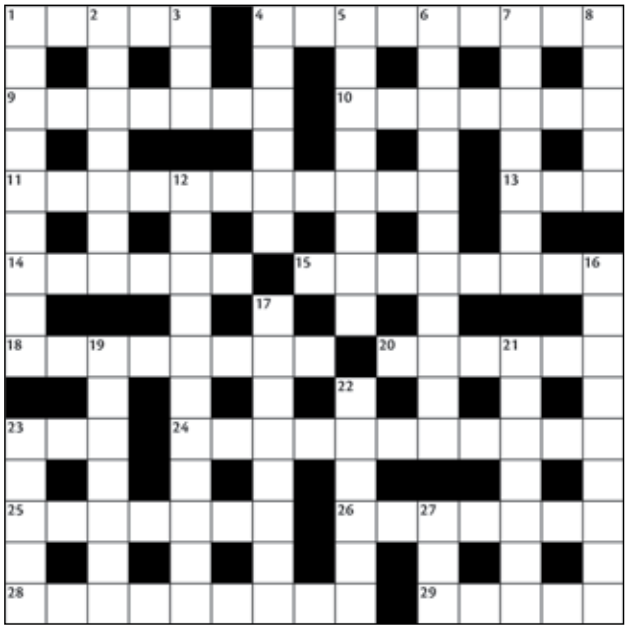
Across

1 '-- -- -- and with the sun', (hymn) (5,2,4)
9 Arm joint (5)
10 Prince of the fallen angels (9)
12 Pouring forth of wine (8)
13 Pager (7)
15 Abstract style (2,3)
16 Sandwiched (2-7)
17 Simple (4)
18 Flat-bottomed boat (4)
19 Small orange (9)
20 Internal (5)
21 Bible (3,4)
24 Of Jewish law (8)
26 Denatures (anag) (9)
27 Blackbird (5)
28 Making fine dispersion of minute droplets (11)

Down

2 Round frame (5)
3 Town in southeast Ireland (8)
4 What rubbish (2,3)
5 Spirit in 1 across (4)
6 Cedars of -- (7)
7 Compliance (9)
8 '-- -- -- -- with Jesus Christ', (hymn) (1,4,2,4)
11 US states where Protestant fundamentalism is dominant (5,4)
13 A blessing (11)
14 Inflammation of part of eye (9)
16 Gelatine (9)
18 Snootiness (8)
19 Difficulty (7)
22 Indian language (5)
23 Large sea (5)
25 Short visit (4)

July 2022 Cryptic Crossword – Compiled by Peter Chamberlain



Across

1 Untidy study covered in powder (5)
4 Remarkable pictures right to be included in holy writ (9)
9 Sung eastern hymn (7)
10 Short introduction, it follows anthem (7)
11 Might it be said before start of proceedings in Upper House? (5,6)
13 Where there was no room in Nazareth initially! (3)
14 Said fat came from somewhere in southern Europe (6)
15 Dan Moore unfortunately left in a lonely place (8)
18 Encourages inclusion of leading boffins (8)
20 Way one trapped deserter in the clouds (6)
23 Place accommodating American chum (3)
24 Good lively harmony going round character from 14 across reported in study of songs of praise (11)
25 Seaman included in different silly programmes (7)
26 Lamb to hit ball up, a bloomer (7)
28 Rough-sounding spire eg, it is over crossing of a church (4-5)
29 Old Bob has hand out in song (5)

Down

1 Set of rules about eau de Cologne, one surprisingly has been removed (9)
2 Second commander to drive using whip (7)
3 Nine months in the affirmative (3)
4 Shy about to make a mistake with wine (6)
5 24 hours of wet weather at time of financial need (5,3)
6 Father had right notes rewritten included for 11 across (11)
7 More perfect (7)
8 Taken in at school, we hear (5)
12 Holy centre that's a symbol of Jesus' love and sacrifice (6,5)
16 Grange where milk is produced? (5,4)
17 Regard unfavourably this when taken (1,3,4)
19 US lass took sign I included for famous Italian (7)
21 A scholar about to yank flask (7)
22 Seize some clothing (6)
23 Sitter that's also a baffling problem (5)
27 Bishop with Penny accepted a roll (3)

There is no prize draw this month and the Crosswords are just for fun.

Solution to June 2022 Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Amazing grace; 8 Lover; 9 Testament; 11 Dandier; 12 Skidder; 13 Olive; 14 Emergency; 17 Enteritis; 19 Bantu; 20 Ice over; 23 Extreme; 24 Dragooned; 25 Rhode; 26 Almighty word
DOWN: 1 Adventist; 2 Airline; 3 Interment; 4 Gusts; 5 Reading; 6 Creed; 7 Gladsome mind; 10 Turn your eyes; 15 Easter Day; 16 Nonce word; 18 Ravioli; 19 Botargo; 21 Email; 22 Ranch

Solution to June 2022 Cryptic Crossword

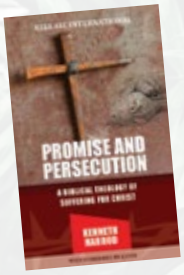
ACROSS: 1 Surplice; 5 Primus; 9 Recovery; 10 Unison; 11 Prostate; 14 Lowest; 15 Eternal; 16 Spirit; 19 Messiah; 20 Haggai; 21 Issuing; 26 Anoint; 27 Sneaking; 28 In-tray; 29 Compline; 30 Nicene; 31 Heirloom
DOWN: 1 Seraph; 2 Rector; 3 Levite; 4 Curate; 6 Randolph; 7 Misheard; 8 Sanctity; 12 Atheist; 13 Erastus; 14 Lasagne; 17 Thracian; 18 Agnostic; 19 Maintain; 22 Intone; 23 Gaspar; 24 Libido; 25 Agleam

Daniel's family were killed because they were Christians



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MINISTRIES

Compiled by Faith Nurture

DEATHS

Rev Dr Thomas G Macfarlane, formerly of Glasgow: South Shawlands, on March 11

Rev Duncan J Mcgregor, formerly of Channelkirk linked with Lauder Old, on April 17

RETIRED

Rev Robert Cleland, from Ardersier linked with Petty, on May 1

DEMISSIONS

Rev Julie M Rennick, from Larbert: West, on May 8

Rev Rae A Clark, from Clackmannan, on May 19

Rev Stuart Farmes, from Kirkmabreck linked with Monigaff, on May 25

Rev David B Prentice-Hyers, from Troon: Old, on May 29

Rev Christopher G Galbraith, from Bathgate: Boghall, on May 31

TRANSLATIONS

Rev Scott M Rennie, from Aberdeen: Queen's Cross to London: Crown Court, on May 5

Rev Dr D Stewart Gillan, from Glasgow: St John's Renfield to Israel, on May 31

INDUCTIONS

Rev Brian Macleod, to Invergordon, on April 29

MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT STAFF – NEW APPOINTMENTS

Lamont Howie, to Glasgow: Drumchapel St Mark's as Community Outreach Worker, on May 2

Shirley Billes, to Lothian: Tranent as Youth and Families Worker, on May 9

CHAPLAINCY

Rev David T Young, to Armed Forces Chaplaincy: RAF, on February 14

DEACONS – DEATHS

Mrs Agnes Tait DCS, formerly of East Kilbride: Greenhills & East Kilbride: Moncrieff, on April 20

ELDERSHIP

Carsphairn: Ordained: Hugh Clark Kennedy

LONG SERVICE

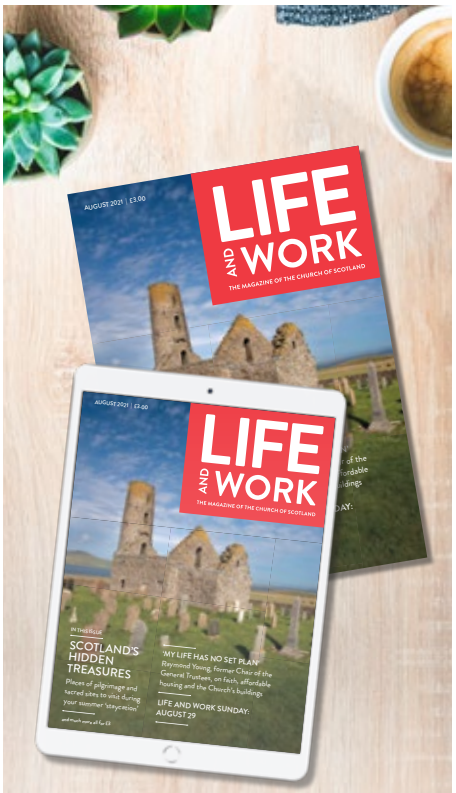
Dunkeld Parish Church: Pat Buxton (30), Forrest Moffat (30) and Ann Young (30)

Inverness Trinity Church: David MacKay (50) and David Taylor (42)

Spott Parish Church: David Porter (49) and Victor Wood (38)

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Love and grace

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers reflects on the presence of God.

'THE SPACE' is a drop-in centre in Govanhill run by the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul.

One day a mother of nine children, in desperation, found her way to 'The Space'. She had been left to care for her children alone, but her biggest challenge was her young son who had severe learning difficulties and was also incontinent.

The boy could hardly walk; his shoes were two sizes too small and they hadn't been off his feet in months. A worker at 'The Space' described how socks and a new pair of shoes were bought for that young boy and she told me how she had peeled off the old shoes, taken the boy's feet on her lap and washed them clean. While she did that the boy's mother wept. She wept because no one had ever done that kind of thing for her or for her boy.

She was experiencing love and grace being poured out. There were no words, but two things were true of that scene: real practical help was being given to someone on the margins of society and God was present – present in a pair of shoes and socks from Asda.

God should not be understood as some kind of puppet master presiding over good and evil in the universe – God is the presence that walks with the poor and when we reach out to lift up the marginalised and the excluded we are making God present, known and real.

That is why I am overcome by shame at the presentation of plans to set up a processing facility in the southern hemisphere for refugees and asylum seekers arriving on our shores. The Archbishop of Canterbury was right to say that the plan was ungodly. It is, and it denies us the opportunity to make the presence of God known and real in the hospitality and welcome that we provide for traumatised people who are running for their lives.

It is deeply disturbing to reflect on the thought that this policy is considered by some to be a 'vote winner'. That is not because it puts pressure on people smugglers, but because it has the potential to keep people who are regarded by some as job thieves and spongers out of the country. This is not Britain at its best – this is populism at its worst.

There is a global refugee crisis, but the truth is that it hardly touches the United Kingdom. 85% of the world's refugees live in the poorest countries in the world. It is simply wrong to suggest that there is a refugee crisis in the UK. Refugees made up just 0.2% of our population in 2019. According to UNHCR, the United Nations' refugee agency, the UK received 31,752 asylum applications in the year ending September 2020 – while Germany received 155,295, France 129,480 and Spain 128,520. Turkey now hosts the highest number of refugees in the world with 3.7 million, followed by Colombia with 1.7 million.

> "...when we reach out to lift up the marginalised and the excluded we are making God present, known and real.

More people are on the run from war, oppression and hunger than at any time in history. But instead of dealing directly to break-up the people smuggling cartels and dealing compassionately with people so desperate that they would risk their lives and the lives of their families to a rubber dinghy in the busiest shipping lane in the world, we propose sending them more than 4000 miles to be processed as if they were a product on an assembly line.

I have never been so conscious of the connection that there is between right decisions in our political life and the right outcomes for the most desperate and vulnerable people in the world. I have never been so conscious of the link between how we treat the outsider and the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' ◘

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It's thanks to people like you that we are able to reach individuals and families in their time of crisis and support their long term needs. We are looking for volunteers to serve in a variety of different roles, current opportunities include:

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- **Passing the Baton – Can you help transform lives through friendship?**
- **Anne Hope House & Bethany Christian Centre in Edinburgh – Do you have one night a week to offer as a Sleepover Volunteer?**

Find out more on our website: www.bethanychristiantrust.com

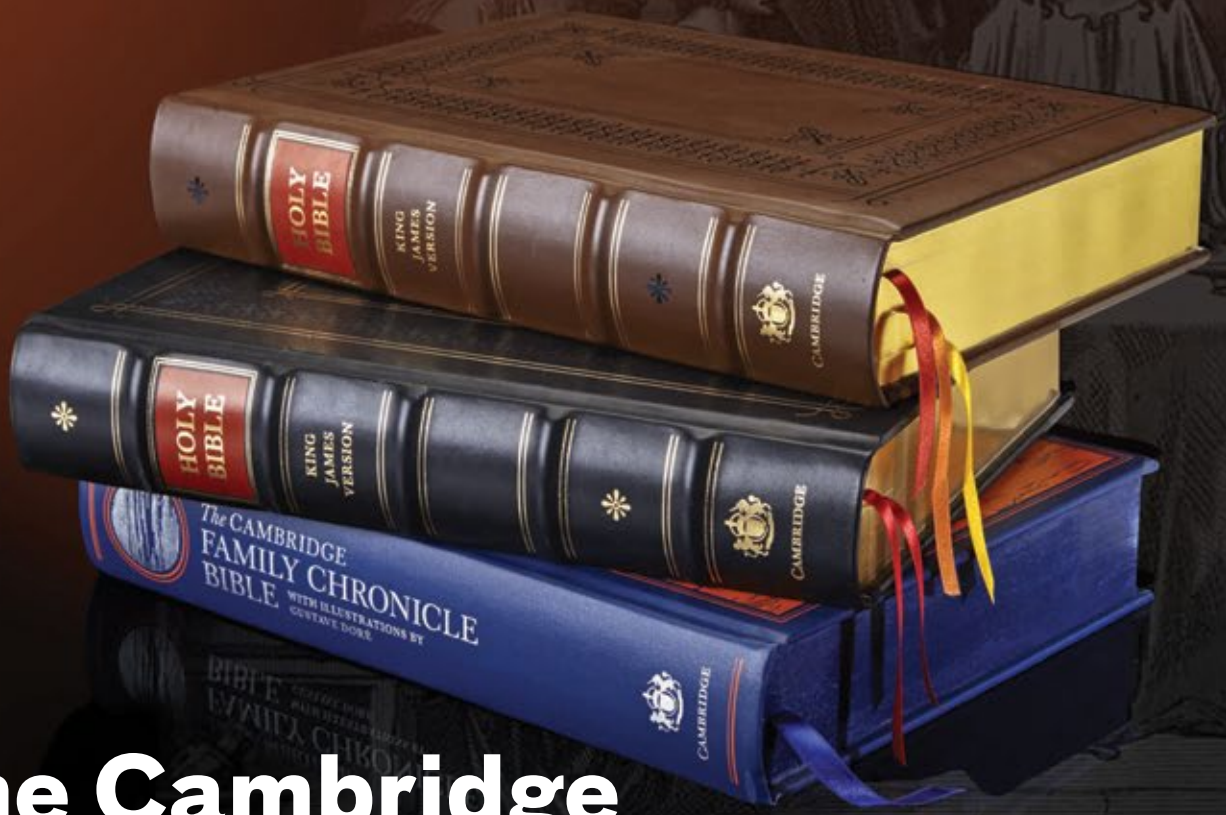
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