



## Message from Rev. Jonathan Humphrey, Minister for Kirkhill and Kiltarlity



In the church “calendar” we are in the season of Pentecost and taking time to look at the impact of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the early believers ( see Acts 2 ). It has always struck me that something new and wonderful was created through the gift of the Holy Spirit – namely a vibrant and ever expanding Christian community. This community “devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” ( Acts 2: 42 ).

For me this passage suggests that in the life of our congregations, devotion to fellowship is as important as listening to teaching ( i.e. a sermon ) or breaking bread and praying together. Jesus spent time with people and with his disciples building fellowship, comforting, challenging and encouraging. A large part of ministry, and the call on all of us as the people of God, is to build relationships and to encourage everyone to find faith and grow in it. Growing in our faith requires that we are deliberate in safeguarding our relationship with Jesus. The more we get to know Him, the more we are transformed into His likeness. This is about raising the “relationship bar” on all fronts, with God and each other. The first Christians were:

*“together and had all things in common. And they were selling possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as they had need. And day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people.”*

( Acts 2: 44-47 )

This is a challenging blueprint for us all. But I am becoming more and more convinced that as we “do what's in the book ( the Bible )” particularly in the area of relationships and giving, we will see the revival that we all seek and pray for.

Pentecost was not a one-off ! We are supposed to be living daily in the continued outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

God’s word to us is quite clear – “awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles” ( Acts 2: 42 ). Of course wonders and signs are the work of God through the Holy Spirit, but there is a call on us as well to partner with what He is doing and be a community that is different – that changes the spiritual atmosphere around us. I long for the day, and I pray that it is coming soon, where people can come amongst us in Kirkhill and Kiltarlity and say like Jacob did at Bethel “surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it” ( Genesis 28: 16 ).

Blessings

*Jonathan*





## Christians decide which Biblical character the party leaders represent.

Author Rachel Rounds

Days after Ed Miliband was likened to Moses with his tablet of stone – a new poll carried out by Christian Research for the Bible Society, has found that Christians think he’s actually more like Jacob – the man who stole his brother’s birthright. The poll of 1,179 Christians across England, Wales and Scotland asked them to compare political party leaders with a choice of over 50 well known characters in the Bible.

Eight % referred to Ed Miliband as Jacob, the Old Testament figure who usurped his brother Esau's birthright. Over a quarter of those polled saw UKIP leader, Nigel Farage, as being like Herod, the ruler who dealt with the Wise Men from the East who were warned, in a dream, to avoid him on their way home. And 17% compared Nick Clegg to Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed Jesus for money. Meanwhile, David Cameron was cast as the troubled King Saul ( by 11% ), who was eventually succeeded by a young and popular activist after a period of infighting and betrayal. But some of the female party leaders were seen in a more positive light.

More than 1 in 5 of those asked ( 22% ) compared SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon with Deborah, an Old Testament prophet who led her people against another nation. Leanne Wood, the Plaid Cymru leader, was portrayed as Queen Esther, a woman who rose to political power in a foreign land, but who used diplomacy to sue for freedom for her people. And Green leader Natalie Bennett was seen as the original earth mother, Eve ( 16% ).

Matthew van Duyvenbode, Director of External Relations, Advocacy and Research at the Bible Society said, “Although this is a light-hearted look at politics through the lens of the Bible, this poll demonstrates the continuing relevance of the characters and plotlines of the Christian Scriptures in contemporary Britain. These are all cracking stories of betrayal, heroism, power, love, honour and justice, and – although ancient – they still connect and inform these very same issues today.”

### **June 21<sup>st</sup> Summer Solstice – longest day of the year**

June, of course is the month of the summer solstice, the month of the Sun. *Sol + stice* come from two Latin words meaning ‘sun’ and ‘to stand still.’ As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates this in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December.

## Church votes in favour of allowing ministers in same sex civil partnerships

On Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015 the Church of Scotland voted in favour of allowing people in same sex civil partnerships to be called as Ministers and Deacons. The historic decision was made by the General Assembly on the Mound in Edinburgh, where the motion was passed by 309 votes in favour and 182 against. The outcome is the culmination of years of deliberation within the Church. The motion has faced a series of debates and votes before the final decision was reached. This included 31 of the Church's presbyteries endorsing the move, to 14 who opposed it. This means the Church has adopted a position which maintains a traditional view of marriage between a man and woman, but allows individual congregations to 'opt out' if they wish to appoint a Minister or a Deacon in a same sex civil partnership.

Later in a speech, the outgoing Moderator Very Rev John Chalmers said : "There's something else that we have to learn as a Church and that is the power of harmony. Of course we need the freedom across the Church to shape the life and worship of the Church according to local needs and local gifts ( and we have seen wonderful examples of this – from Soul Space at Johnstone High Parish to the Shed in Stornoway ) but we cannot go on suffering the pain of internal attacks which are designed to undermine the work or the place of others. It's time to play for the team. And let me be very clear here – I am not speaking to one side or another of the theological spectrum. I am speaking to both ends and middle. It is time to stop calling each other names, time to shun the idea that we should define ourselves by our differences and instead define ourselves by what we hold in common - our baptism into Christ, our dependence on God's grace, our will to serve the poor and so on."

Co-ordinator of the Principal Clerk's office, Very Rev David Arnott, said: "The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decided today to allow individual Kirk Sessions the possibility of allowing a Nominating Committee to consider an application from a Minister living in a civil partnership. During a vacancy a Kirk Session may, but only if it so wishes, and after due deliberation, agree to a Nominating Committee accepting an application from such a Minister. No Kirk Session may be coerced into doing so against its own wishes. This decision was in line with a majority of presbyteries who voted in favour of such a move."

Because the debate predates the legalisation of gay marriage the proposed change mentions only civil partnerships, not same-sex marriages. The Assembly will be asked on Thursday ( 21<sup>st</sup> May ) to consider amending today's new Church law to include Ministers in same-sex marriages – see page 9.

Nicola Sturgeon MSP attended the opening of the General Assembly for the first time as First Minister. She witnessed the installation of Rev Dr Angus Morrison as Moderator of the General Assembly, who had to withdraw from the role last year to undergo treatment for cancer. Later she tweeted: "A pleasure to attend the opening ceremony of the General Assembly and see Rt Rev Angus Morrison installed as Moderator."

This year's Lord High Commissioner – the Queen's representative at the Assembly – is Lord Hope of Craighead KT PC, a distinguished retired Scottish judge. He read out a letter from Her Majesty to the Assembly which praised Scotland's national church for the role it played during last year's independence referendum for the formation of the new Churches' Mutual Credit Union and for the new 'decade for ministry' strategy to recruit new Ministers.

During the annual gathering of the Church of Scotland, this has met almost every year since its inception in 1560, 730 Commissioners drawn from congregations across Scotland and beyond make historic decisions that will affect the direction of the national church. This year it ran from Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Other topics were tax reform, food banks, mental health, fracking, mediation teams in South Sudan and nuclear weapons. On Sunday around 5,000 people attended the Heart and Soul Festival, a celebration in Princes Street Gardens of the work being done by the Church.

*This June brings many prestigious anniversaries, but one, perhaps lesser one, which caught my eye was the fact that on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1967, 48 years ago no less, the world's first cash machine was installed in Enfield !  
That has led to joy and sorrow in nearly equal measure.*

## The power of prayer and faith

This is an article, which appeared in the April 2015 edition of West Word, written by Robert Cholawo, who along with his wife Anne, live permanently on the Isle of Soay. They live on this small remote island approximately four miles by two. It is just less than four miles by sea to Elgol, Isle of Skye. There is no infrastructure and no mains services, which means no mains electricity, gas or water, no roads, no motorised vehicles, no tractors or heavy lifting gear, no street lighting, no shops, or church, no jetty and no regular ferry services. Mail is normally delivered once a week, weather permitting, via Arisaig some 20 miles away. Anne rows out to the mail boat in a small rubber dinghy and the post bag is passed down to Anne. In winter it can sometimes be over a month with no mail. Robert and Anne have one full time neighbour who lives about a mile away along the island's only track. This neighbour happened to be away last winter for 5 to 6 months, which meant that Robert and Anne were on the island alone with their livestock.



A few weeks ago they had a hurricane force storm sweep across the island. This happens occasionally. The storm damage this time was a huge 58 feet high fir tree (one of the biggest on the island) blown down onto a holiday cottage. Oddly enough about 8 feet up the tree trunk, it forked out into two trees, both of formidable size and weight. So it was in a way two trees that fell onto the house demolishing the whole chimney and part of the roof and gable end. They were, as explained, the only two people on the island and it's not practical to phone up a tree surgeon or expect the attendance of a work force. They could leave the tree

where it was, but it would probably demolish the roof and walls of the building in the next run of storms and be a constant danger to them or anyone else that might be on the island later in the year.

At one point they thought it was just too big and dangerous a problem to deal with, but as the days passed and that storm subsided, they finally decided to attempt to remove a few branches to gain more access and make the remaining rubble safe. Robert had a vague idea that he might be able to climb along to the top of the tree and cut small amounts off, lowering them to the ground bit by bit. However, at that time, Robert had been reading from his Bible, Mark 11 : v23-24 which relates a story of 'Faith' - faith only the size of a mustard seed. We could write out the whole passage, but why not look it up yourself ? If you don't have a Bible, buy one, or look it up on the internet, or go into a church and find one there.

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Robert and Anne are Christians, and it is not unusual for them to pray at any time, so while Robert was working on the tree, cutting a few lower branches, he was speaking to God in prayer. Indeed before Robert started the job, he asked for God's guiding hand and that he may do the job safely. The island is a remote place and it would need a coastguard rescue helicopter or the RNLI to assist in a medical emergency. Robert recalls suggesting to God that it would have been a lot easier if the tree could have fallen on the opposite side of the track, onto open ground and not on top of the building. Robert knew that God has a sense of humour, it can be found in so many stories through the whole Bible.

Robert's own faith was smaller than a mustard seed, yet, now is growing daily. But he did ask God for help in faith. Robert remembered Jesus spoke to the fig tree - Mark 11 : v11-14 - and we should speak to our mountain, we should make our request known to God, and we should believe we have already received. Robert's mountain on this day was a big heavy tree. So as the short winter daylight hours faded, Robert did speak to his mountain in faith. He did ask God to move the tree. That was on the Saturday evening, a whole two weeks since the tree had come down.



Overnight, God performed His miracle. On Sunday morning that 58 foot tree was standing upright as if it had never fallen. It was no longer on the roof of the property, but upright. Robert and Anne were somewhat shocked in disbelief, and at the same time amazed in God's perfect timing and that this miracle that had actually taken place. Robert knows we should not have been either shocked or amazed because with God, everything is possible. Robert and Anne were then able to see the tree down safely on the Monday morning.

But there was yet a little more. As Robert neared the final cutting of the trunk, he prayed it would not twist and fall back onto the property. When the tree did start to fall, there would be no second chance. Another miracle ! As it slowly fell, it split in two at the fork, the main bulk of the tree falling exactly where they wanted it to fall on open croft land and the second part of the tree came to rest neatly on a stone wall by the track. It could not have been a more suitable resting place.

Many of you will say, or think, it was the wind that blew the tree back up, or gravity, or a change in the pivotal point or some other natural cause. Robert is not arguing how it happened. God created gravity, the elements, and the laws of the universe, He can open and close the Red Sea at His will, by His awesome power, even if it can be explained away by natural forces. Don't you see, can't you understand ? It was God's timing. The Red Sea parted at the precise moment which over two million of God's chosen people needed to escape and cross over it. It did not however, stay open for the pursuing army of Egyptian soldiers. Robert did exercise faith, even though he admits he was not really expecting an answer. On the Monday, he would have started to cut his way up the tree trunk, with many weeks of hard effort and as you will probably comprehend, a very hazardous job for any individual. God's timing is and was perfect. Robert and Anne were safely out of the way, asleep in bed. However or whatever actually righted the tree is not an issue. God answered prayer, demonstrated to us His mighty power and an island home was saved from yet more serious damage. If you will only believe and invite Him in, He will come into your life.

*'West Word' is the community paper for Mallaig, Morar, Arisaig, Lochailort, Glenfinnan, Glenuig, Knoydart and the Small Isles, and this article is published with the kind permission of Robert Cholawo.*

*'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' John 20 :29*

*'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see' Hebrews 11 :1*

*'Fear not; I will help you ....' Isaiah 41: 13*



## 'UK's last mail coach' to be recreated

The 100th anniversary of what is believed to be the last horse-drawn mail coach journey in the UK is to be recreated in June 2015. The service ran between Kingussie and Tulloch Station near Roy Bridge until May 1915 when it was replaced by motorised transport.

Mail Coach 100, a fundraising event, will follow the same route. It will involve four teams of horses and be completed in four stages over 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June.

The event involving Cairngorm Riding for the Disabled Association will feature the last coachman's pistol, which is kept in Newtonmore. The organisers of Mail Coach 100 said they believed the original service was possibly the last in UK.

Day 1 - Wednesday 3rd June				
Stage	Arrive	Location	Depart	Distance (miles)
1		Kingussie	9.00	
	9.30	Newtonmore	9.35	3.1
	9.50	Biallidbeg	9.55	1.6
	10.15	Creagdhubb Lodge	10.20	1.8
	10.40	Cluny Castle Farm		1.9
2		Cluny Castle Farm	11.10	
	11.30	Laggan Stores	11.40	2.1
	12.00	Wolftrax	12.05	2.2
	12.30	Pattick Falls	12.35	2.3
	13.00	Loch Laggan Inn		2.5
3		Loch Laggan Inn	13.30	
	13.50	Ardverikie Castle View	13.55	2.0
	14.10	Creag Mheagaidh	14.15	1.5
	14.35	Moy Lodge	14.40	2.1
	15.15	Moy Farm		3.4
4		Moy Farm	15.45	
	16.15	Laggan Dam	16.30	3.0
	16.40	Tulloch Station	16.55	1.0
	17.25	Achluachrach	17.30	3.0
	18.00	Roy Bridge		3.0
		Total		36.5

Day 2 - Thursday 4th June				
Stage	Arrive	Location	Depart	Distance (miles)
1		Roy Bridge	9.00	
	9.30	Achluachrach	9.30	3.0
	10.00	Tulloch Station	10.15	3.0
	10.25	Laggan Dam	10.25	1.0
	10.50	County Boundary		2.5
2		County Boundary	11.20	
	12.00	Moy Lodge	12.05	3.9
	12.25	Creag Mheagaidh	12.30	2.1
	12.45	Ardverikie Castle View	12.50	1.5
	13.10	Loch Laggan Inn		2.0
3		Loch Laggan Inn	13.40	
	14.05	Pattick Falls	14.10	2.5
	14.35	Wolftrax	14.40	2.3
	15.00	Laggan Stores	15.10	2.2
	15.30	Cluny Castle Farm		2.1
4		Cluny Castle Farm	16.00	
	16.20	Creagdhubb Lodge	16.25	1.9
	16.45	Bailidbeg	16.50	1.8
	17.05	Newtonmore	17.10	1.6
	17.40	Kingussie		3.1
		Total		36.5

**Advice to young Minister on preaching - 'Consider the postage stamp. Its usefulness consists in its ability to stick to one thing until it gets there.'**

*Members of our Church family and others to be remembered in your prayers*

Please continue to remember the following people in your daily prayers over the next month. The **Guthrie family, Alison and Allan MacKenzie, George Dunbar, Wilma Williamson, Katherine MacKenzie, Margaret West, Anne Lyle, Mary Urquhart, Bill and Betty Freel, Madda Georgeson and Duncan Gray.**

**Wilma Williamson** fell whilst boarding a bus to Beauly in Kirkhill recently. A faulty grab rail was the cause of the accident. Wilma has taken to the Aird Medical practice in Beauly by some good Samaritans, before attending Raigmore Hospital for an X-Ray. She has broken a bone at the top part of her left arm and it is now in a sling. True to form, Wilma shrugged off the incident and was back to 'normal duties' within 24 hours of the fall.

## Beauly Care Project - Senior Citizen's Afternoon Teas in 2015

Kilmorack dates are Tuesdays and Kirkhill dates are Thursdays

2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – cost £1.50

Month	Kilmorack Hall Frances Grant 782 496	Kirkhill Community Centre Eileen Morrison 831 185
June	16 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
July	21 <sup>st</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
August	18 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>
September	15 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
October	20 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>
November	17 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Christmas Special Afternoon Tea</b> with entertainment Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 at Kirkhill Community Centre – 2:30 p.m.		



Please continue to come and put the world to rights at our coffee mornings, held each Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at Wardlaw Church. The home baking is truly excellent, and you will receive a warm welcome every time.

Tuesday mornings at the Church have become a very popular event and attract folks from Inverness to Beauly. **This is not just for "Church" people, but for everyone who wants to come and meet friends in a cosy environment.** You are more than welcome to come along and bring your neighbours and friends. There is no fixed charge for the refreshments, but a donation towards the cost will be most welcome.

# Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste,  
and remember what peace there may be in silence.  
As far as possible, without surrender,  
be on good terms with all persons.  
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;  
and listen to others,  
even to the dull and the ignorant;  
they too have their story.  
Avoid loud and aggressive persons;  
they are vexatious to the spirit.  
If you compare yourself with others,  
you may become vain or bitter,  
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.  
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.  
Keep interested in your own career, however humble;  
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.  
Exercise caution in your business affairs,  
for the world is full of trickery.  
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;  
many persons strive for high ideals,  
and everywhere life is full of heroism.  
Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection.  
Neither be cynical about love,  
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment,  
it is as perennial as the grass.  
Take kindly the counsel of the years,  
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.  
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.  
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.  
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.  
Beyond a wholesome discipline,  
be gentle with yourself.  
You are a child of the universe  
no less than the trees and the stars;  
you have a right to be here.  
And whether or not it is clear to you,  
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.  
Therefore be at peace with God,  
whatever you conceive Him to be.  
And whatever your labours and aspirations,  
in the noisy confusion of life,  
keep peace in your soul.  
With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,  
it is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

*The common myth is that the "Desiderata" poem was found in a church in 1692 and is centuries old, of unknown origin. "Desiderata" was in fact written around 1920 by lawyer Max Ehrmann ( 1872-1945 ) based in Terre Haute, Indiana. The "Desiderata" myth began after Reverend Frederick Kates reproduced the "Desiderata" poem in a collection of inspirational works for his congregation in 1959 on church notepaper, headed: 'The Old St Paul's Church, Baltimore, AD 1692' ( the year the church was founded ). Copies of the "Desiderata" page were circulated among friends, and the myth grew. Whatever the history of "Desiderata", the Ehrmann's prose is inspirational, and offers a simple positive credo for life.*

## Church sends decision on same sex marriage to presbyteries

The General Assembly has taken the first step to extend the provision covering Ministers in same sex civil partnerships to those in same sex marriages. The final decision has been deferred until its presbyteries have been consulted under the process known as the Barrier Act. Presbyteries will now debate the matter and return their votes by the end of this year.

Following the historic vote on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015 ( see page 3 ), it means congregations may now opt out of traditional church teaching on marriage to call a Minister or Deacon in a same sex civil partnership, but that provision does not extend to any Ministers entering into same sex marriages until the final vote has been taken. Special provisions have been agreed which protect any Minister or Deacon ordained before May 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 who is now in a same sex marriage.

The General Assembly faced two votes during a debate lasting more than 3 hours. Very Rev Prof Iain Torrance, who is convener of the Church's Theological Forum, described the proposal as a legal procedure which extended the provision of same sex civil partnerships to same sex marriages. He said the measure would not change the Church's traditional stance on marriage, nor amount to a recognition of the validity of same sex marriage.

Very Rev Albert Bogle then moved a countermotion which sought to defer any decision until the Theological Forum submitted a report on same sex marriage to the Assembly in 2017. However commissioners voted for the proposal and against his countermotion by a narrow margin of 213 in favour to 205 against. Commissioners then voted in favour of sending the proposal to presbyteries under the Barrier Act, by 215 votes for to 195 against.

Commenting on the Assembly's decision, Very Rev David Arnott, who is Coordinator of the Principal Clerk's Office said: "The General Assembly understood this to be a logical extension of the benefits which accrue to those in civil partnership. Very Rev Prof Iain Torrance assured the Assembly the Theological Forum will bring a report on same sex marriage to a future Assembly, which we will look forward to. Out of a pastoral concern for the whole Church the General Assembly decided to pass this Overture to the presbyteries who will report to the Assembly in May 2016."

If a majority of Presbyteries give their approval, the matter will return to the Assembly in 2016 where the final decision will be taken on this matter. Any wider consideration of the theological understanding of same sex marriage will not take place until the Theological Forum presents its report at a future date.

**The Scottish media coverage** of the start of the General Assembly had been overwhelmingly positive, and had broadly welcomed the decision by Commissioners to permit congregations to call Ministers in same sex civil partnerships. From a media perspective, this favourable reception is unsurprising as the Church's members are moving in the direction of changes which have already happened in Scottish society and Scotland's civil law and enjoy broad popular support in the general Scottish population.

The Church has been debating this change for 6 years, over which time Scots have radically changed the legal definition of marriage, become more politically engaged through the referendum campaign, and within the last 3 weeks delivered an unprecedented General Election result. In this context, this very significant change for the Church has not been regarded as front page news by journalists, whose main question has been to ask why it has taken so long.

The debate on social media has been much more mixed, with members expressing strong differing opinions on the implications of the vote. There have been particularly challenging opinions expressed by members of other denominations and many American Presbyterians who have challenged the direction the Church is taking. If social media tells us anything, it is clear that the Presbyterian community is deeply divided on this issue and comment strings on Facebook are not the place to look for either enlightenment or grace.

## Atheism is not so smart by Roy Lawrence

Many years ago I discovered John Bunyan's famous book *Pilgrim's Progress*. Recently I have read it again and have been surprised to discover in it some characters I have never noticed before. There is 'Atheist' who meets Christian and Hopeful on their way to Celestial City. He asks where they are going and they tell him of their hopes of heaven, '*...then Atheist fell into very great laughter,*' explaining "*I laugh to see what ignorant people you are.*" He insists. '*There is no place as you dream of.*'

There is another similar character called 'Shame,' not because he feels any shame himself, but because of his habit of calling out 'Shame' whenever he meets a Christian. His view, like that of Atheist is that it is 'a pitiful, low sneaking business for a man to mind religion.' These two characters are not uncommon today.

Secularism has become fashionable. Atheism is thought to be quite smart, whereas the media often portray believers as bigots and boobies. The same view can be found in some educational circles. I know of a school where a new head teacher has banned the Christmas crib because she says it is not 'politically correct' for a modern school to have one. I am sure she feels smart and fashionable in having these views, and fashionable she may well be, but smart she is not.

**To believe or not to believe.** When I was training for the ministry, I had the good fortune to spend four years at Oxford, obtaining a degree in classics and theology, and then two years of post-graduate study in Cambridge. The purpose was to teach me to think. If Bunyan's Atheist was right and having a Christian faith is a sign of laughable ignorance, training the clergy in this way would make no sense. It would just expose the folly of belief. However, all I can tell you is that the effect on me was precisely the opposite. The impact of those six years was to convince me that Christian belief is well able to stand up to the most searching of thought processes.

Also I could not help noting that many others had come to the same conclusion. Think, for example, of C S Lewis, author of the famous *Narnia* stories, who taught at both Oxford and Cambridge, and whom I was privileged to meet. He was an atheist in his earlier years but found he could not continue to be so. Or think of Professor C E M Joad, once a frequent broadcaster on the BBC *Brains Trust*, whose atheistic views were well known. I remember reading his book *God and Evil*, which revealed that he was slowly and painfully working his way back to believing in God, a process which was completed when he wrote his final book, *Recovery of Belief*. The writer and broadcaster, Malcolm Muggeridge made a similar journey not long afterwards. It was meeting Mother Teresa which brought him to the point at which he realised he could no longer be an unbeliever. His book *Jesus Rediscovered* told the story of his conversion.

I have a list of some fifty former atheists who became Christians. They include politicians of the left and the right, scientists, journalists, poets and pop singers. Also what has happened to individuals has happened to nations too. Russia has abandoned atheistic communism and returned to the beliefs of the Orthodox Church and at this very moment something extraordinary is happening in Communist China, where every day sees perhaps 15,000 new Christians.

**The logic of faith.** None of this is surprising. From the dawn of human thought, men and women have felt that this remarkable universe of ours cannot be a mere accident. If you have enjoyed *The Sound of Music*, you may remember Maria singing : '*nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could,*' but did you know that, when she does so, she is quoting Parmenides, who lived five centuries before Jesus ? It is hard to look at the universe and not wonder where it has come from. And what a universe it is ! Think of the glory of a sunset, the loveliness of a rose, the symmetry of a snowflake.

Even if creation could happen inexplicably by accident, what are we to make of all the evidence of order and design ? Of beauty ? Of moral laws or the visionary experience ? Or of art and literature and great music ? Can we contemplate any or all of these things without a sense of mystery ? A sense of that which is greater than we are - greater than anything which we can conceive or understand ?

*/Contd.*

In Bunyan, Atheist and Shame both try to dispel these questions by mockery. However mockery is a two-edged weapon.

**Laughter in Heaven.** C S Lewis suggested that in heaven atheism would be mentioned only as a sort of joke. Perhaps for a moment we can share the humour.

Imagine you want to buy a car. You go to a local car dealer, point to a model you fancy, and ask about its production. What if the salesman said there was no production line, no design team, and that the car happened by accident ? There was an explosion in the corner of the factory and when the dust settled there it was ! Wouldn't you go to another salesman ? The universe is much more complex than a car. I am not competent to know whether those who speak about a 'big bang' are right or not, but common sense tells us that this cannot be the whole story. And what about those who prefer to talk about creation in terms of a 'steady state ?'

A story was told to me of two university lecturers - one a Christian, the other an atheist. When the atheist visited the Christian he was impressed to see a working model of the solar system in the other one's house. There was a representation of the sun and around it all the planets were rotating. 'My goodness, who made that ?' he asked. The Christian could not resist answering, 'I thought you believed it just happened !'

**Struggle for the soul of the nation.** Perhaps, however, though atheism may cause laughter in heaven, the fact that it is becoming fashionable in Britain is not such a joke.

Most of the best things in our national life come from the Christian faith. Our best laws have a Christian basis. Our education system has a Christian origin. Medical care was pioneered by Christians. That is why a number of our best hospitals and hospices are named after saints. Our traditional standards of decency and honour are based on the Christian ethic.

If we were to remove the Christian influence, the result would be sheer disaster. Yet that is what is happening. The place of Christianity in the nation is being steadily eroded. Christian couples find it difficult to adopt or foster children. Christian teachers and medics can be disciplined and even dismissed if they show their faith. Christian hoteliers are penalised for their principles. By contrast it has become easier, more politically correct, to be an atheist. We ask ourselves what is going wrong, but we do not wait for an answer.

During World War II there was a slogan, 'Don't you know there's a war on ?' You might hear it if you broke the blackout regulations or put more than five inches of water in the bath or tried to obtain more than your ration of food. It is a slogan we could well revive, because there is certainly a war going on now, a war of values and belief. There is a struggle for the soul of our nation and we all have to work out where we stand.

For myself, my conviction, formed over the course of many years, is that I cannot do better than to stand with and for Jesus. The main reason why I believe in God the Father is that I take Him on trust from Jesus. Atheists have to believe they know better than Jesus. I can't do that. Can you ?

*This 'Food for Thought' article appeared in 'The Plain Truth' magazine in their Summer-Autumn 2014 edition.*

Roy Lawrence is a retired canon in the Church of England. Roy is the author of several Christian books and writes regular articles for several Christian magazines.

**Keep it short** The Minister stood up and said: "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. You'll be glad to know that when I asked my secretary to type this sermon out for me I asked her to eliminate any thing that was dull or confusing. So in conclusion...."

**Mother-in-law** Young man asked to describe his mother-in-law: "Generally speaking, she's generally speaking."

**Weight** Signing the register at a wedding, the groom had difficulty in making his ball-point pen work. "Put your weight on it," said the Minister. So the groom complied: 'John Smith ( eleven stone, four pounds )'

# Motorists warned about problems hiring cars abroad

by Brian Milligan, BBC Personal Finance Reporter

Motorists going abroad after 8<sup>th</sup> June are being warned they will need to take a special code with them if they want to hire a car.

From that date the paper counterpart of British driving licences - which records endorsements and fines - is being computerised. Anyone wanting to hire a car abroad will officially need a code to show convictions for offences like speeding.



To obtain it, motorists will have to log on to the DVLA website beforehand. From 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, you may wish to check with the hire company what they need to see when you hire a vehicle. If you're asked for evidence of what vehicles you can drive or confirmation of any penalty points, you can request a unique code from [www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence](http://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence) which allows you to share your driving licence details or you can download a summary of your driving licence record. The code lasts for up to 72 hours and will allow the hire companies to make any necessary checks. You can also request a code by calling 0300 790 6801. This also applies if you have a paper licence that was issued before 1998.

The RAC said many drivers were unaware of the changes. "Our research shows that with just over a month to go before the paper counterpart to the photo-card licence disappears, 55% of drivers are not aware of the planned change," said RAC spokesman Simon Williams.

The DVLA recommends destroying paper counterparts after 8<sup>th</sup> June. However the AA is advising people to hang on to the document, in case some hire companies are unaware of the new arrangements. "Not all car rental companies, or indeed traffic police abroad, will be aware of the changes, so a 'belt and braces' approach of also taking the counterpart might help," said AA president Edmund King. But the AA also said that hiring a car abroad without a paper counterpart is not always a problem. Just as some car hire companies do not currently ask for a counterpart, not all will ask for a code after 8<sup>th</sup> June.

The old-style paper licences, issued before the photo card was introduced in 1998, will remain valid, but holders will still need a code to fully validate them. To view a record of their convictions, motorists can log on to the 'View My Driving licence' page of the government website. They will need their driving licence number, their national insurance number and their postcode. The changes do not apply to driving licences issued by the DVA in Northern Ireland.

**Life abundant.** Two students from a theological training college decided to spend part of their holiday in the countryside doing outreach. They stopped at an old house, and proceeded up the path through a gauntlet of screaming children and a washing line heavy with wet clothes. When they got near the door, the woman of the house stopped scrubbing the steps, brushed her hair and perspiration from her brow, and asked them what they wanted. "We'd like to tell you how you can live forever," they answered.

The exhausted woman hesitated for a moment, and then replied, "Thank you, but I don't think I could stand it !

**Techie trouble.** The Minister at our local church experienced some technical problems with the sound system one Sunday. Instead of starting the service as usual with 'The Lord be with you', he said: "There's something wrong with the microphone."

Not hearing this, the congregation responded: "And also with you."

## Ayrshire elder reminds Assembly to value its Ministers



An elder in Ayr has made a rousing call for the Church to value and nourish its Ministers throughout the country. In what was one of the most heartfelt contributions to Wednesday's ( 20<sup>th</sup> May ) General Assembly proceedings during the Ministries Council report, 70-year-old Isabell A Montgomerie reminded commissioners that hard working Ministers need to operate in an environment where they can flourish.

"We need to see the glass as half full, not half empty," she said. "There has been too much negativity

surrounding the work of Ministers in recent times. I have asked several Ministers if they enjoy their work and they have told me that they are tired and stressed. How can new people come in if Ministers in the pulpits are not full of joy and wellbeing?"

Mrs Montgomerie – an elder at Ochil Tree Parish Church for 32 years and the first female Moderator of Ayr Presbytery – believes Ministers need the support of their Kirk Sessions and congregations to be able to operate at full capacity. "I've been a farmer all my life and what I've learned is that people need to feel appreciated," she added. "Kirk Sessions need to do this. Ministers need to inspire people. They can only do that if they are feeling valued. If elders out there are not doing this, they need to have a good think about how they can support their Minister better. I'm not saying all of this as someone who has had a perfect life. I know that you must see the glass as half full to have a good life."

Mrs Montgomerie's words in the Assembly Hall made such an impact that some Ministers came up to her at the break to thank her. The Church of Scotland is on the lookout for new Ministers. Learn how the role of a Minister can be one of the most rewarding jobs around on the Church of Scotland web-site.

### A Prayer for Wisdom and Perspective

The moon has no atmosphere. It is empty. It is dry. Its day side is hundreds of degrees hot, and its night side is deep-freezingly cold. Its rocks are exposed to the full strength of the sun's radiation. When asteroids cross its path they smash into it, leaving gaping craters that last forever.

The Earth has an atmosphere so thick it will burn almost all incoming objects before they have a chance to touch it. Its temperature is stable enough to harbour liquid water and support an abundance of life. Its ozone layer deflects most of the sun's radiation, and its magnetic field sends rainbow swathes rippling across polar skies.

From the moon's surface one sees stars that are brighter and more numerous than any seen from Earth. The imprints of our feet will echo in its dust for billions of years. Physical laws can be demonstrated on its surface, the clarity of which costs millions to approximate on Earth.

Lord, help me to be as clear and open as the moon, and as filled with life as the Earth. Help me not to get blinded by my own light, for it is given to me by you, and will quickly burn out. Rather, let me be lit up by you, as the moon is lit by the sun. Help me to be a backdrop against which your firmament is illuminated. Help me to spread your love as the Earth's atmosphere spreads the sun's rays, yet not burn those who come close to me.

And Lord, protect me. Help me not to stray into the paths of comets and asteroids. We need not hurt each other out of bad judgement or skewed trajectories. Please guide our orbits to your plan, so that we may all make your sky glorious together.

*Laura Guthrie wrote this prayer for herself and Nicky wished to share the prayer with us all.*

## Guild chooses its sponsored projects for next 3 years



A charity helping new parents through the tough times after having a baby is one of six organisations which will benefit from hundreds of thousands of pounds raised by the Church of Scotland's Guild. Care for the Family Scotland has been announced as one of the Guild's chosen charities for the next three years. Others who will benefit in Scotland include Street Pastors, and a project to make churches welcoming for people with learning disabilities. Abroad, there's support for tackling Female Genital Mutilation in Kenya, an environmental project in Bolivia and a missionary project in Haiti.

Each of the six projects adopted by the Guild can expect to raise around £100,000 during the 2015 - 2018 fundraising cycle. As the Church's voluntary organisation, the Guild has more than 22,600 members in 890 groups across Scotland, and enjoys a track record of success, raising more than £670,000 for the projects it adopted during 2012 - 2015.

The Guild's National Convener, Kay Keith, says Care for the Family, Scotland - like the other five projects - is meeting a very real need. More than half of all new parents who divorce or separate do so within three years of having a child. "It's a very exhilarating time when you have a new baby, but it's



*Kay Keith with Fiona Marks*

also a time of great change for the family and the beginning of a new life," she said. "Some couples don't make it and it seems a bit easier today for couples not to stick together. We recognise that a huge part of that is about communication and understanding what is going on. Care for the Family Scotland helps new parents build strong family relationships and stick together through tough times. As an organisation that is very much concerned with children and with encouraging and helping and the family unit, we wanted to support this work. This is an opportunity, not to just give funding, but also to be part of it," she said. "We will raise funds for all the projects, but we are a service organisation so our members will get very involved as volunteers with the three Scottish projects."

Fiona Marks, Care for the Family's Scottish representative, said The Guild's support for "Let's Stick Together" will help the charity work with thousands of new parents across Scotland. "Together we literally have an opportunity to change the future for children and families. I'm very excited about the next three years. There are 56,000 new babies born in Scotland each year, and if each Guild in Scotland was to tell half a dozen new parents about "Let's Stick Together" that would potentially mean 10,000 families that are stronger across Scotland."

At the heart of the "Let's Stick Together" project are volunteer-led sessions that reach out to couples where they are, including at childbirth classes and church play groups. The sessions teach communication and parenting skills with a focus on helping new mums and dads avoid bad habits and develop the good habits that strengthen love and commitment. Fiona Marks said sleeplessness, isolation and lack of community support prevent parents from making time for one another. For many the consequence is separation or divorce. "The cost to the taxpayer of family breakdown is currently estimated at £46 billion a year, and 50% of parents who separate will do so within three years of having a baby," she said. "These are the statistics and every time I look at them I'm shocked. This is where "Let's Stick Together's" preventative approach can make a huge difference."

Find out more about Care for the Family Scotland: <http://bit.ly/1uGgXep>

## **The other five projects chosen for support from The Guild are:**

### **Ascension Trust – Street Pastors**

Street Pastors are trained volunteers who go out into our streets in all weathers to listen, care and help people. Ascension Trust does not choose where street pastors go; they respond to communities who identify a need. Street pastors are usually on the street from 10 p.m. – 3 a.m. on one or more weekend nights. Just eight years ago, Scotland had no street pastors. Now more than 500 street pastors' work across 20 communities from Edinburgh to Tain. Support from The Guild will help train more street pastors to support more communities.

Find out more about Street Pastors: <http://bit.ly/1DLKz4i>

### **Prospects– All Friends Together**

Prospects in Scotland's "All Friends Together" project aims to help churches welcome people with learning disabilities and include them in all aspects of church life. People with learning disabilities have many gifts and talents to contribute to church life. As we offer friendship, people will have the confidence to use their gifts. Some churches have started groups that build friendship among people of different abilities. Support from The Guild will give leadership and help more congregations start groups that build communities where people with disabilities feel at home.

Find out more about Prospects: <http://www.prospects.org.uk/>

### **Feed the Minds – Breaking the Cycle of FGM**

More than 125 million girls in 29 countries including Scotland have been subjected to female genital mutilation. This cruel and dangerous practice can cause severe physical and psychological problems. Some girls die after being cut. Typically girls who are cut drop out of school and become mothers, often before they reach age 16. Ending FGM is complicated because it is seen as a rite of passage in some cultures. Feed the Minds, a charity that works to combat poverty and injustice across the Global South is partnering with communities in the Kuria district of Kenya to raise awareness, share knowledge and promote a culture of change. Support from The Guild will help girls to choose their own future and stop the innocent becoming victims.

Find out more about Feed the Minds: <http://bit.ly/1HwKEsT>

### **Christian Aid– Caring for Mother Earth in Bolivia**

Millions of Bolivians are struggling to survive in what is one of the poorest countries in the world. They live in one of the world's most biodiverse regions, the Amazon rainforest. But as women spend hours every day gathering firewood, just so families can eat, the forest — the lungs of our world — is under threat from deforestation. Christian Aid's "Caring for Mother Project" will help the charity's Bolivian partners to work with more than 700 families, educating them about climate change and supporting them to build and use solar powered ovens. Support from The Guild will help these families eat year round and help protect the rainforest.

Find out more about Christian Aid Scotland: <http://bit.ly/1DEHkGh>

### **Mission International– Haiti Project**

Mission International is a Christian missionary charity based in Dundee, which aims to improve the material and spiritual lives of some of the world's poorest people. The Haiti Project is working with a church in the north eastern town of Ouanaminthe. The project will construct a building that will include a school, a community centre and a new church centre. One of the poorest countries in the world Haiti also has one of the lowest literacy rates. The primary school, the community centre and the church will help Haitians reach their full potential and build a better future for themselves.

Find out more about Mission International in Haiti: <http://bit.ly/1byDRml>

The projects were chosen to reflect the Guild's theme for 2015-2018: Be Bold Be Strong.  
Projects are chosen by members and get the final seal of approval from the national committee.



▪ The Kirk Session on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015 gave their blessing for John Hamilton and Mervyn Bowden to be admitted to church membership by profession of faith and for Marjorie Hamilton to be admitted by resolution of the Kirk Session. Rev. Peter Donald welcomed them into membership following his sermon and the Elders, along with the entire congregation, offered the right hand of friendship to John and Mervyn as they were affirmed as followers of Christ and to Marjory who reaffirmed her commitment to Christ.

- The Kirk Session at their meeting on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 agreed the transfer of Lillian King's lines from the East Kilbride South Church to Wardlaw Church. Lillian lives in Braeview Drive but due to arthritis and failing mobility she is no longer able to leave the house although she remains very mentally active and takes a great interest in the community and the wider world. Lillian moved some 3 ½ years ago from East Kilbride to be nearer her daughter, Aileen Armstrong and her family, here in Kirkhill. We extend a very warm welcome to Lillian in joining our Church family.
- Following a recent meeting for those interested in working with children and young people at the Manse, the Kirkhill Sunday School is now to be known as the Kirkhill Sunday Club. There will be three separate age groups – crèche, primary and secondary. Every Sunday there will be different activities planned for each age group.
- The Kirkhill Kirk Session meets on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the Guild Room at Wardlaw Church. This Session meeting will mainly focus on the discussions from the joint Kirkhill and Kiltarlity Kirk Session meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015 regarding the Sunday service times. All Kirk Session meetings are open, so, unless for special business reasons, any member of the congregation can attend, although only as observers and cannot speak, unless invited to by Rev. Jonathan Humphrey, the Moderator of the Session meeting, or vote.
- On Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015 between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., Jonathan and Kate will be in Wardlaw Church praying. You are invited to join them at this time of prayer. Come along when you can, leave when you must. Drop into the church and say a prayer, reflect, rest and remember.
- Jonathan and Kate Humphrey will be on holiday from Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June to Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015 inclusive. Jonathan will lead the service on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June and will return to lead the service on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> July.
- Our service on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July will be an Elder and members led event with the theme of "*Proclaim release to the captives*" Luke 4: 18. This service will be followed by a time of friendship with sandwiches and home baking. If the weather is kind to us, we will have a picnic in the Church grounds. The service is our annual event on behalf of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme and donations can be made at the friendship event for this Programme. We are seeking four members to take part in this service and if you are interested, please speak to Iain J. Mortimer without delay after the 4<sup>th</sup> June.
- Our service on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> July will be led by Alasdair and Eileen Morrison. Alasdair and Eileen will also go on to Kiltarlity Church to lead their 11:15 a.m. worship service.
- Jonathan and Kate are contactable at the Manse – 831 247 - if you wish to visit them, or ask them to visit you at any time. They will make you most welcome, so do not be shy, give them a ring.
- Thanks to Margaret Birkbeck and Mary McClelland for proof reading this edition.

Father's Day is observed on the third Sunday of June - 21st June this year. It honours all fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and father figures for their contribution to family life. Father's Day is a time to recognise fathers and father figures who have influenced a person's life. It is celebrated through cards, gifts, dining out, gifts such as electronic gadgets, sports attire, household tools or time spent together.

**History** - Father's Day started in the early 20th century in the United States to celebrate fatherhood and to complement Mother's Day. It was first celebrated on June 19, 1910 in Spokane, Washington at the YMCA by Sonora Smart Dodd. She heard about Mother's Day in 1909 and told her pastor she thought fathers should have a similar holiday. Her father raised six children as a single parent. The local clergymen agreed to the idea and the first Father's Day sermon was given on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1910.

## Outgoing Moderator calls for unity



Outgoing Moderator Very Rev John Chalmers, pictured holding a string of doves the symbol of peace, has used his final address to urge Church members to unite and work together in harmony to fulfil the mission of the Church. Congregations need the freedom to shape their worship according to their local needs, he said in his speech to the General Assembly on Saturday evening ( 16<sup>th</sup> May ). Theological differences should not be viewed as defining characteristics. Instead Ministers and church members should define themselves by shared understanding of baptism into Christ and the Grace of God.

"It was the gift of Jesus to get people to look past religious structures, it was the gift of Jesus to drill deeper than moral assertions and it was the gift of Jesus to give people an inner life that transformed their engagement with the outer world."

Mr Chalmers characterised his year as an extraordinary and unforgettable spiritual journey, which centred on the theme of reconciliation after loss and conflict. Looking back, he recalled the beginning of his year was marked by a visit to Hexham and Hawick, for a service commemorating Border hostilities dating back 500 years. He then visited the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary, where the church is still dealing with the guilt, distrust and fear from the 1990s. Later in the year he took part in services commemorating the end of World War One and the Liberation of Jersey from Nazi occupation.

"These experiences in themselves may seem quite random but taken together there is the emergence of a common theme which is about the healing of memory and the long slow haul which leads people from hostility to peace and from peace to reconciliation." Mr Chalmers said that promising developments this year included the start of the Tomorrow's Calling campaign and the launch of the Churches Mutual Credit Union. On a personal note, he said, the year had both sad and happy moments. His wife Liz lost her parents and his son was married. Yet throughout the year, support from his team helped him navigate every challenge.

"The Referendum, visits to Nigeria and South Sudan and a meeting with Pope Francis all brought new insights," he said. Describing the current violence in South Sudan, he said: "South Sudan is a tragedy on a scale that I cannot begin to report. There is work to be done that will take generations. I don't know when South Sudan will get to emerge onto the world stage as a peaceful and productive nation. But I do know this, when it does emerge, women will be the key. They can and will be the peacemakers of the future, but only when gender justice is taken seriously and I will be supporting Christian Aid's Gender Justice Campaign; not least because it will force us to face up to some theological home truths of our own."

## Prayer of hope

Father, thank you that nothing is impossible with you. When circumstances seem to conspire, when situations are entrenched, when relationships feel fragile, help us to remember that you are the God who breaks through barriers, who opens eyes and transforms lives of even the most unlikely people. Help us to remember Paul - who he was and what he became - to be encouraged and full of hope and thanks, In Jesus name, Amen.

'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you' 1 Peter 5: 7

## ***I Am Thankful For...***

The taxes I pay because it means that I'm employed.

The clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.

My shadow who watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

A lawn that has to be mowed, windows that have to be washed and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

The space I find at the end of the car park because it means I am capable of walking.

All the complaining I hear about our government because it means we have freedom of speech.

That lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means that I can hear.

The piles of washing and ironing because it means my loved ones are nearby.

The alarm that goes off in the morning because it means that I am alive.

## ***When you don't know when to stop !***

The Minister was known for the clarity and brevity of his sermons. His talks were well organised and always ended promptly in about 10 minutes. Then one Sunday, after his usual brisk start, he seemed to wander and drift around a bit. He just kept on preaching with a puzzled look on his face, until 35 minutes later he caught his wife's furtive but frantic signals, and brought the sermon to a close.

Back home, his wife asked him why he had got so muddled. He answered, "Well, I've got into the habit of tucking a lozenge in my mouth before I stand to speak. When the lozenge has dissolved, I know it is time to stop. This morning unfortunately I picked up a collar button instead of a lozenge."

## **The Train of Life**

At birth we boarded the train and met our parents, and we believe they will always travel on our side. However, at some station our parents will step down from the train, leaving us on this journey alone.

As time goes by, other people will board the train; and they will be significant, i.e. our siblings, friends, children, and even the love of our life. Many will step down and leave a permanent vacuum. Others will go so unnoticed that we don't realise they vacated their seats. This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hellos, goodbyes and farewells. Success consists of having a good relationship with all passengers requiring that we give the best of ourselves.

### **The mystery to everyone is:**

We do not know at which station we ourselves will step down. So, we must live in the best way, love, forgive, and offer the best of who we are. It is important to do this because when the time comes for us to step down and leave our seat empty we should leave behind beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

I wish you a joyful journey on the train of life. Reap success and give lots of love. More importantly, thank God for the journey. Lastly, I thank you for being one of the passengers on my train.

## Recent Fund Raising Events

Thank you to all the folks from the Church and community who gave to our April 2015 Highland Foodbank appeal. We had a remarkable collection of both food and financial donations – 104 kgs of food and £110 in cash and cheques. Lorna Dempster and her team very much appreciate your continued support.

You can donate to the Highland Foodbank at any time by leaving collections in the basket in the Church entrance.



The generosity of our congregation and parish has once again been revealed with a remarkable figure of £285 being donated during Christian Aid week. A further £28.75 can be added to this figure due to Gift Aid declarations – making a total of £313.75.

Your actions demonstrate love in action. And there are a **million ways to show your love for God's precious planet.** Every action – large and small – makes a difference. With your help we can get back on a path towards a better future for many people around our world. *'...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'* Micah 6: 8



On 26<sup>th</sup> May the Tuesday Coffee Morning was in aid of the Nepali Earthquake Disaster Appeal. Pauline Gault had approached Kate and Jonathan Humphrey to ask if the Church would be willing to hold an event for this appeal. Mary Bell and Maris Elkin readily agreed to allow the well-established Tuesday Coffee Morning to be 'taken over.' There was a turnout of over 60 people, plus many children, who came to sample the home baking, tea and coffee and enjoy the fellowship. Pauline spoke about her time living in Nepal and showed pictures, on the screens, in Nepal with her family.

The two earthquakes ( 25<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> May ) killed nearly 9,000 people and injured over 23,500. Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless with entire villages flattened, across many districts of the country. The total population of Nepal is just under 29 million.

Credit to Pauline, Mary, Maris, Winnie, Margaret, Kate, Robbie, Arthur, Henry and David, for all the hard work they contributed in running and setting up this event. Thanks also to all those who donated home baking. Gratitude and thanks to all those who came along and supported the event and made donations totalling £434 towards this appeal.

# What Australian slang has given the world

by Mark Gwynn a researcher and editor at the Australian National Dictionary Centre based at the Australian National University.

The Lucky Country is well-known for its unique turns of phrase. But few realise how many terms in use around the world originated down under. In 2013, ‘selfie’ became the Oxford Dictionary’s word of the year. It’s become such a ubiquitous word, but few stop to think about where it came from. It may come as a surprise to learn that it has its origins in Australia: the first evidence of the word comes from an online forum entry by the Australian Nathan Hope, who posted a photo of his lip, which he says he cut while drinking at a mate’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party. It’s not the first time an Aussie slang word has made its way into the wider English lexicon. Far from it – Australian slang has influenced the English language around the world, just as Australian culture has been transported to the world by comedians such as Barry Humphries, TV shows such as *Neighbours*, and actors such as Cate Blanchett and Hugh Jackman. Oxford Dictionary has been steadily updating the Australian English entries to its online dictionary. By the end of this year some 2,000 words, definitions and phrases derived from or chiefly used in Australian English will have made their way into the venerable online dictionary. Only some of these will have made their way around the world, but just as Australians have historically borrowed many words and incorporated them into their own variety of English, other English-speakers are now borrowing from the Australian vocabulary.

Take ‘selfie.’ For most Australian English speakers, the ‘-ie’ suffix is a natural part of the language. Unlike similar diminutives in international English, for example ‘birdie’ or ‘doggie’, the ‘-ie’ suffix in Australian English serves as a marker of informality – providing speakers with a shared code of familiarity and solidarity. Australian English is replete with such words: ‘barbie’ ( a barbecue ), ‘mushie’ ( a mushroom ), ‘prezzie’ ( a present ), and ‘sunnies’ (sunglasses) to name just a few. There are a number of these types of abbreviations that have started their life in Australian English and are now to be found in global English: ‘budgie’ ( a budgerigar ), ‘greenie’ ( a conservationist or environmentalist ), ‘mozzie’ ( a mosquito ), ‘pollie’ ( a politician ), and ‘surfie’ ( a surfer ).

The Australian penchant for abbreviating words is also demonstrated by the use of the ‘-o’ suffix. In Australian English an ‘ambo’ is an ambulance officer, a ‘reffo’ is a refugee, and a ‘rello’ is a relative. A number of these types of abbreviations have made their way into global English including ‘demo’ ( a demonstration ), ‘muso’ ( a musician ), and ‘preggo’ ( pregnant ). Other abbreviations, including ‘perv’ ( a sexual pervert ) and ‘uni’ ( university ), have also migrated to global English. Perhaps the most well-known abbreviation in Australian English is ‘g’day’. While this abbreviated form of ‘good day’ is recorded from the 1880s, it came to international prominence in the 1980s through a series of tourism advertisements where Australian actor and comedian Paul Hogan invited people from around the world to visit Australia and say “g’day”.

Many English speakers would also know about the common use in Australia of ‘mate’ ( a friend, a colleague ) and the great Australian adjective ‘bloody’ ( used as an intensifier – ‘that’s a bloody good book’ ). These two words are used elsewhere but are often stereotypically associated with Australian English. But a number of widely-used words that have either originated in Australian English, or where the first evidence and primary usage is Australian, these include ‘petrolhead’ ( a car enthusiast ), ‘ratbag’ ( a troublemaker ), ‘rustbucket’ ( a dilapidated car ) and ‘wheelie bin’ ( a large two-wheeled bin for household rubbish ). Plenty of verbs, too, have Australian origins. Examples include: ‘to crash’ ( to go to sleep ), ‘to hurl’ ( to vomit ), ‘to rubbish’ ( to denigrate a person ), and ‘to stonewall’ ( to obstruct a piece of parliamentary business ).

As with other varieties of English around the world, Australian English has its fair share of idioms and phrases that are often unfathomable to the non-native speaker. This is certainly true of idioms including ‘to carry on like a pork chop’ ( to behave foolishly; to make a fuss ), ‘to chuck a sickie’ ( to take a day’s sick leave from work – with the implication that the person is not really ill ), and ‘to spit the dummy’ ( to lose one’s temper ). But some Australian idioms and phrases have been taken up widely in global English. For example, ‘like a rat up a drainpipe’ ( very quickly ), ‘no worries’ ( an assurance that all is fine ) and ‘to put the boot in’ ( to attack savagely, especially when the opponent is disadvantaged, or in a manner which is conventionally unacceptable), ‘uie’ ( a U turn, e.g. “just do a uie.” ).

# Third Sunday Praise

Wardlaw Church, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June starting at 6:00 p.m.

Third Sunday praise is an informal gathering for all who want to:

Go deeper with God in worship  
Hear Him speak to us through His Word  
Experience His love and presence through the power of the Holy Spirit  
Receive healing and encouragement  
Enjoy fellowship over tea, coffee, and home baking.

Our aim is for everyone to feel welcomed,  
regardless of church background,  
whether you have faith, a little faith or none.

Why not give it a try ?

**Communion will be celebrated as part of this service.**

This girl said she recognised me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

They told me I had type A blood, but it was a Type-O.

PMS jokes aren't funny, period.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary ? A thesaurus.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool .

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

Velcro - what a rip off !

Cartoonist found dead in home. Details are sketchy.

Venison for dinner ? Oh, deer !

I used to think I was indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

*Thanks to Keith McClelland for these one-liners.*

# Urquhart Castle - Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015

7:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Gates open for picnickers at 6:00 p.m.



The three Glenurquhart Churches invite you to an evening with the Alex Macdonald Band, supported by a local choir and musicians.

Bring a picnic and your folding chairs and relax in the unique Loch Ness-side setting of Urquhart Castle, where you can enjoy the band, sing along with our choir, or simply listen.

The event is **FREE** - gates open at 6:00 p.m.

*Free car parking at the castle - pre-booking of a space is advised*

*Outdoor event, come prepared for the weather and possibly midges.*

*Assistance dogs only are welcome*

## Why not come by boat ?

Jacobite Cruises have kindly offered to provide the Jacobite Warrior cruiser to bring up to 250 people from the Clansman Hotel to the Castle. There will be no charge for this. Depart from the Clansman Hotel at 5.00 p.m. promptly. There is no return boat ! To reserve places, contact Ruth Macleod on 01456 450 112. We are reserving 100 places for youth groups.

To pre-book car parking space ( advised ) and for further information contact:

**Ruth Macleod on 01456 450 112**

## **Newspaper headlines where you know what they meant, *but....!***

Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide

Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges

Man Struck By Lightning: Faces Battery Charge

New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group

Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft

Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

Hospitals are Sued by Seven Foot Doctors

**Happy Meals !** During a children's talk, a Minister was explaining about the significance of Communion. "The Bible talks of Holy Communion being a 'joyful feast.' What does that mean ? Well, 'joyful' means happy and a feast is a meal. So a joyful feast is a happy meal."

He paused then asked what three things were needed for a happy meal. One of the children replied "Hamburger, fries and a regular soft drink !"

## Meet Scott the signing dog the ears of the Kirk's first deaf Minister



Rev Mary Whittaker and Scott the dog amazed delegates at the General Assembly with their silent but eloquent communication. When members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland turned to their neighbours to shake hands in the small ceremony known as the Sign of Peace, Scott the dog gave his own sign of "paws" for peace.

A hearing dog for deaf people, Scott loves to shake hands with his human friends. He even knows when to do it. "He comes to church with me all the time, says Rev Mary Whittaker, who became a Minister four

years ago and is the Church of Scotland's first ever born-deaf Minister. "So he sees us giving the sign of peace and he says, 'What about me ?' God created him as well and he likes giving the sign of peace to people." Scott wags his tail with happiness when Mary signs that he's a clever boy. Delegates to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh have been amazed at his ability to understand sign language.

A cross between a golden retriever and a labrador, Scott is Mary's second hearing dog and has been with her for three years. He wakes her up gently when her alarm goes off. When the doorbell rings, he lets her know by touching her leg. "When he gives me the sign, I follow him and he will take me to the door," she says. "It's most important when I'm travelling because if a fire alarm rings he can let me know with a special sign." Mary, 55, who was born with no hearing at all, says, "I can't hear if someone's shouting my name, but they can shout Scott's name and when he turns to look so do I."

Rev Whittaker wants more deaf people to consider becoming Ministers and called for a review of the Church's guidelines on ministering to the deaf community. She said deaf people need to feel welcomed into the ministry so they can speak for themselves and worship in their own language sign language. "It's about empowerment - empowering deaf people to become leaders," she says. "I feel that's important because for so long other people spoke for us. Deaf people want to study, pray and preach, and I want to welcome people to use those gifts. "They are only deaf. There is no reason they shouldn't be able to use their gifts."

Rev Whittaker ministers to two deaf congregations in the presbytery of Moray: St Johns in Aberdeen and Moray Deaf Church. She has also visited Shetland, which has no specific worship for deaf people.

People who have been deaf since birth have a culture based around sign language and only learn English as a second language. "Sign language has a different structure, different grammar," she says. "I'll never be as good in English as I am in my natural language. When I'm signing I'm like a fish in water." The Church's existing rules were written in 1969 and have been completely out of date for decades, she says. They assume Ministers will work with deaf people, but not be deaf themselves.

### Descriptions

Dust : mud with the juice squeezed out.

Inflation : cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

Raisin : grape with sunburn.

Mosquito : an insect that makes you like flies better.

Beauty salon : where women curl up and dye.

Cannibal : one who is fed up with people

Committee : a body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.



Minister – Rev. Jonathan Humphrey

**831 247 / 07587 186 424**

jandkhumphrey@btinternet.com

Session Clerk – Eileen Morrison

**831 185 / eileenmorrison@btinternet.com**

Safeguarding Coordinator – Mary Bell

**831 717 / mgb41@btinternet.com**

Kirkhill Sunday Club – Margaret Birkbeck

**831 518 / birkbeck2000@yahoo.com**

KirkLink editor – Iain J. Mortimer **782 648 / 07833 188 939**

ian.mortimer1@btinternet.com

Birchwood, 7 Priory Place, Beauly, IV4 7GB

Church web-site – [www.kiltarlityandkirkhill.org.uk](http://www.kiltarlityandkirkhill.org.uk)

## WARDLAW CHURCH'S JUNE 2015 EVENTS DIARY

TUESDAY	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Coffee / tea / home baking between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.
WEDNESDAY	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
<b>SUNDAY</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday morning worship at 10:00 a.m.</b>
SUNDAY	7 <sup>th</sup>	First Sunday Praise at Kiltarlity Free Church starting at 6:00 p.m.
TUESDAY	9 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee / tea / home baking between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.
WEDNESDAY	10 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
<b>SUNDAY</b>	14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday morning worship at 10:00 a.m.</b>
TUESDAY	16 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee / tea / home baking between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.
TUESDAY	16 <sup>th</sup>	Kirkhill Kirk Session meeting at 7:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY	17 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
FRIDAY	19 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer time between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.
<b>SUNDAY</b>	21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Sunday morning worship at 10:00 a.m.</b>
SUNDAY	21 <sup>st</sup>	Third Sunday Praise, including Communion, at 6:00 p.m.
TUESDAY	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Coffee / tea / home baking between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.
WEDNESDAY	24 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
<b>SUNDAY</b>	28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday morning worship at 10:00 a.m.</b>
TUESDAY	30 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee / tea / home baking between 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon.

Directly after God in heaven comes Papa. – *Mozart as a boy*

A father is a banker provided by nature. – *French proverb*

The child had every toy his father wanted. – *Robert C. Whitten*

*The July 2015 edition will be available on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015*