

The Link

The magazine of Auldearn & St. Ninian's
Church of Scotland, Nairn
SC015361



Easter 2015

From our Interim Moderator...

Dear Friends,

Do we believe the words of the hymns we sing Sunday by Sunday? I ask this because Easter is approaching and the narrative of many Easter hymns is the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, here is an Easter hymn that states what we celebrate, namely, Christ's victory over the grave.

*1. Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus my Saviour!
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus my Lord!*

Chorus

*Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

*2. Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus my Saviour!
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus my Lord!*

Up from the grave He arose...

*3. Death cannot keep his prey,
Jesus my Saviour!
He tore the bars away,
Jesus my Lord!*

Up from the grave He arose...

Robert Lowry, 1826-1899.

The central theme of the Easter hymns is the triumphant resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and what it means to us, who are His disciples. The message shouts loud and clear. Jesus is not dead! He is alive! This is a fact. Jesus lives today, and because He lives, we too live. Without Easter, there is no victory in the Christian life. According to one of the newer Easter hymns, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow" (Gloria & William J Gaither).

How true that is when we know Jesus.

Our reason for living—as Christians—is anchored on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the reason why we wake up each morning and set out to do the things we do each day. Every breath we take, every deed we do, every word we say, is for our risen Saviour.

Paul's argument in I Cor 15:12-33 about the resurrection of the dead gives us a glimpse of his thought and teaching on the resurrection of Christ. Paul argued from the irrefutable fact that the resurrection of Jesus is true, which

(Continued on page 2)

was believed and preached by the apostles. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how then can some say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen, and if Christ is not risen then all preaching is useless, and so too is our faith. This would make us all out to be nothing other than false witnesses to God. But did we not testify that God raised Christ from the dead in our vows of membership? Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.

Another Easter hymn is, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" (Samuel Medley, 1738-1799), and because Jesus lives, every positive thing follows. There is forgiveness of sin. There is freedom from the power of sin. There is victory in the Christian life. There is eternal life. Therefore, we are not lost, because there is life after death, which is the central message contained in the Easter hymns. We have a reason for living because Christ has risen. Indeed, life is worth living even in the midst of difficulties. In time of tribulation, we can give thanks to God and stand firm, for He has given us the victory through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of Christ's resurrection, Christians have the assurance of resurrection, too. The apostle writes: *"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; [43] it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power... [54] When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' [55] 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' [56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (I Cor 15:42-43, 54-57, NIV).

The lyrics and music of the Easter hymn, "Low in the Grave He Lay," were written by the Baptist minister, composer, and hymn writer Robert Lowry in 1874. Lowry wrote about 500 hymns, "Low in the Grave He Lay" (aka, "Up From the Grave He Arose"), along with, "Nothing But the Blood," and, "Shall We Gather At The River?" are among his best known.

"Low in the Grave He Lay," reproduces what the angel said to the women who visited Jesus' tomb on the third day: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. [6] He is not here; he has risen, just as he said"* (Matt 28:6, NIV).

Jesus lives. The tomb is empty. Death is defeated. The grave is opened. God is in control. His Word is true. Satan is defeated. Death, Hell, and the grave are rendered powerless by Jesus Christ's resurrection. That's the good news of Easter. Consequently, if we believe the message of Easter then why not share this good news with others?

With every good wish for a blessed Easter, Yours in the Lord's service, Fraser.

Vacancy Update

The Joint Kirk Sessions met on Thursday 26th March to be informed that the Nomination Committee was putting forward one candidate as Sole Nominee as minister for both congregations. The first of two weekly edicts was read by the Interim Moderator on Sunday 29th March in preparation for the candidate's preaching in both churches on Sunday 12th April. Voting will take place immediately after each service with the count being made that evening.

If you'd like to read more about the rules and conditions under which any Nomination Committee works, have a look at the Church of Scotland guidance at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/2417/ADVICE_FOR_NOMINATING_COMMITTEES.pdf

Flower Rota April 15 — August 15

April

5th Mrs. M. MacDonald
12th Mrs K. Dunlop
19th Mrs. P. Gordon &
Mrs Macrae
26th Mrs. D. Cooke

May

3rd Mrs. I. Sharpe
10th Mrs. M. Asher
17th Mrs. S. Forbes
24th Mrs. S. Barron
31st Mrs. I. Bryce

June

7th Mrs. K. Dunlop
14th Mrs. M. Bunker
21st
28th Mrs. B. Borthwick

July

5th Mrs M Scott
12th Mrs D Cooke
19th Mrs P Gordon
26th Mrs G Grant

August

2nd Mrs S Forbes
9th Mrs's D & M MacDonald
16th Mrs K Dunlop
23rd
30th

Please contact Betty if you can take one of the 'vacant' weeks.



"God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do."

Biblical Chronology of Passion Week.

Palm Sunday.

Jesus enters Jerusalem.

This event is recorded by all four evangelists: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.

Monday.

Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time—Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18 (and see Lk 19:45-48).

Jesus curses the unfruitful fig tree—Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-25.

Tuesday.

Priests, scribes and elders question Christ's authority—Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8

The Lord talks in parables of Israel's unfaithfulness: -

(1) Of two sons—Matthew 21:28-32.

(2) Of wicked tenants—Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19.

(3) Of marriage feast—Matthew 22:1-14.

Pharisees question Him concerning tribute to Caesar—Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26.

Questions concerning Resurrection—Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40.

A scribe and the greatest commandment—Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34.

Christ is asked about the Messiah—Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44.

Jesus pronounces woes on the scribes and Pharisees—Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47.

A widow's mite—Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.

Some Greeks seek Him—John 12:20-36.

The unbelief and rejection of the Jews—John 12:37-50.

The Saviour talks about what shall be—Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38.

Parable of ten maidens—Matthew 25:1-13.

Parable of talents—Matthew 25:14-30.

Jesus describes the judgment to come—Matthew 25:31-46.

Wednesday.

Judas conspires against Jesus—Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 10-11; Luke 22:1-6.

He is anointed at Bethany—Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9.

Thursday.

Preparation for the Passover—Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13.

(A squabble—Luke 22:34-30.)

Jesus washes the disciples' feet—John 13:1-20.

The Passover and the betrayer—Matthew 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21; John 13:21-35.

The Lord's Supper inaugurated—Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20.

Betrayal foretold—Luke 22:21-23.

Peter's denial foretold—Luke 22:31-34.

Peter and the disciples forewarned—Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:36-38.

His farewell talk to the disciples (The Upper Room Discourse) —John 14-16.

Christ's intercessory prayer for His disciples—John 17.

Jesus prays in Gethsemane—Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46; John 18:1.

Friday.

The Lord is arrested—Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12.

Jesus' first trial (ecclesiastical law): -

(1) Before Annas—John 18:13-27.

(2) Before Caiaphas—Matthew 26:57-67; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54 (John 18:24).

(3) Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin—Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71.

He is denied three times by Peter—Matthew 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:54, 66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27.

Judas commits suicide—Matthew 27:3-10.

Jesus' second trial (civil law): -

(1) Before Pilate—Matthew 27:2, 11-14; Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38.

(2) Before Herod—Luke 23:6-12.

(Continued on page 4)

Guild News

Our Christmas Lunch was held on 10th December at the Nairn Golf Club. The meal was delicious but the day was one of the wildest in 2014. This did not spoil the event and all present had fun.

At the only meeting in January we welcomed our Guild friends from Nairn Old to listen to Mrs Margaret Turner. While I missed the meeting I know those present found Mrs Turner's talk on coping with personal bereavement both touching and helpful.

February was a busy month. Service being our theme this year, we had Mr Bill Logan from Guide Dogs for the Blind tell us of his lifelong service for the charity, we visited Whinnieknowe and with help from Mr 'Peem' Stevenson passed a pleasant afternoon with residents. Thursday 19th February was our annual coffee morning. It was well attended and an amazing £422 was realised.

Stuart McAra from Leprosy Mission came to speak to us (*see separate article on this*) and on 18th March we were invited to Asher's Bakery to hold our meeting, have a talk and enjoy tea. Our AGM will be on 1st April and that will be the final meeting of our Guild year.

While the AGM is our final meeting we do have some extra meetings. A Highland Rally is being held in Crown Church, Inverness on 18th April and the Annual Summer Rally is at Daviot on 26th May. It is also hoped that a meeting with our Guild Link from Buckie South & West Church can be arranged in May, possibly at Baxters of Fochabers.

Now a date for everyone's diary – our annual afternoon tea will be held on Wednesday 15th April at 2.00 p.m. As ever you are all invited. See you there.

Sheena Proctor.

The Guild chooses six projects to support over a three year period. In St Ninian's we decided to support three projects. During the first year we all had fun filling back packs with clothes and items necessary to send a child to school. So far this project has received £108,228, to feed these children.

The following year we supported Heart for Art with Crossreach, looking at the use of art therapy in the care of those with dementia. This is the best supported project and £132,252 has been given to it.

Comfort Rwanda's work is to build new homes for some of the survivors of the genocide in Rwanda. This is our current project and the total for this project is £87,836. so far.

The total so far for the six Guild projects £613,385. We send £200 each year to our chosen project and we thank all in the church who support our effort in any way.

Isabel Bryce

(Continued from page 3)

(3) Jesus is brought before Pilate again and sentenced to death—Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16.

He is mocked by the soldiers—Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:2.

He is sentenced to be crucified—John 19:16.

The road to Golgotha—Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26-32; John 19:17.

He is crucified—Matthew 27:33-44; Mark 15:22-32; Luke 23:33; John 19:18-24.

His seven last words:

(1) "Father, forgive them..."—Luke 23:34.

(2) "Today you will be with Me in paradise"—Luke 23:39-43.

(3) "Woman... here is your son..."—John 19:25-27.

(4) "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"—Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

(5) "I thirst"—John 19:28-29.

(6) "It is finished"—John 19:30.

(7) "Father, into your hands..."—Luke 23:44-49.

His burial—Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42.

The Saviour's tomb sealed is guarded—Matthew 27:62-66.



(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Saturday evening.

The women buy spices—Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56.

Sunday—The Day of Christ's Resurrection.

The resurrection—Matthew 28:2-4.

Mary Magdalene visits the tomb—John 20:1-2.

Other women visit the tomb—Mark 16:2-4; Luke 24:1-3.

The angel in the tomb—Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8.

Peter and John go to the tomb—Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10.

The Risen Lord's first appearance is to Mary Magdalene—Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18.

Second appearance—Matt 28:8-10; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:9-12.

The Roman report—Matthew 28:11-15.

Third appearance—Luke 24:34.

Fourth appearance on the Emmaus Rd—Luke 24:13-35.

Fifth appearance, Thomas absent—Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25.

Second Lord's Day.

Sixth appearance to the disciples, Thomas being present —John 26-31.

Final appearances.

Jesus appears for the seventh time on the shore of the Sea of Galilee—John 21:1-25.

Eighth appearance—Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18.

Christ' last appearances—Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53 & I Corinthians 15:6 (to five hundred).

Fraser Turner

Hands

Yesterday afternoon I visited an elderly lady who is about to be admitted to a Care Home as she is no longer able to look after herself. As I sat there, I looked at her wrinkled, frail-looking hands resting in her lap I thought of the many years over which they had been active. In bringing up her family, those hands had cooked, washed, scrubbed, carried, (maybe even smacked!) and certainly would have comforted. They had fed chickens, dug vegetables, baked for family, church lunches and Sunday School picnics.

This made me think too of all that hands do in a day's work. If we ever damage our hands and have to do without them, that's when we discover, don't we, just how much we depend on their usefulness.

While on this earth, Jesus used his hands a lot too. He touched the sick to heal them, he broke bread and fish into pieces for hungry people, he placed hands on children to bless them, he passed around bread and wine in that special meal of remembrance and blessing the night before he died. And, he let his hands be nailed to a cross.

Did anybody's hands ever do more good for people than Jesus' hands? Whose hands do all the good now that he is no longer with us here on earth? After all his body isn't with us anymore. Well, no, that's not quite true. We - you and I who belong to God's family - are now the body of Jesus. We are his hands. We have been given the great responsibility of carrying on where Jesus left off, using OUR hands now as instruments of HIS blessing to others.

The thought of such a great responsibility can be a scary one - until we remember that God equips us to be a channel for his goodness to people around us.

Maybe a lot of what we do with our hands doesn't seem very important. Are they really instruments of blessing? After all, it's usually the same old routine things day by day, whether in our homes, jobs, church or community. We hand cups of tea to visitors in our homes, arrange flowers in church, hang up the washing, etc.

None of that may seem to be very special. BUT - because our hands are now Jesus's hands, his blessing does flow through them, in whatever we do as part of his body. And that makes the ordinary, mundane tasks ordinary no longer, doesn't it?

It also places us, in our menial, everyday jobs, right alongside Jesus Himself. After all, He washed dirty feet!

Read : John 13 vv 4, 5 and 12-17.

Mary Heggie

Stated Annual General Meeting 2015

The Stated Annual General Meeting for Nairn St Ninian's was held on Wednesday 11th March in the church hall.

The Revd. Fraser Turner opened the meeting by reading Hebrews 5:11—6:12, and with prayer. Those present were noted and apologies taken.

The minute of the previous SAGM was read and accepted as a true record, with no matters arising.

The following notes are extracts of the main reports received on the evening.

Financial Report

Mrs S Paton gave this report. Balances at the end of the year stood at:

Unrestricted Funds	£121,648
Restricted Funds:	£112,082
Total	£233,730

It was noted that many of the savings held on deposit had now been invested in the Church of Scotland Growth Fund, and presently was producing a healthy return.

Significant points included:

FWO down by £601,

Open plate up by c. £1,018,

Income from Funerals/weddings down by £1033

Hall income down by £1,033, and

The Coffee Break income was up £504.

The accounts included 50% of the Heritage Lottery Funding Award for the organ restoration.

There had been some changes in regular hall users over the year, with matters settling once more. A Tuesday night from 19:30 is now available for let.

A legacy of £1,500 from the estate of Miss E Main has been invested with Church of Scotland Investors' Trust. The Guild was thanked for their donation to the Church. This year we had no Manse Council Tax as the property is vacant, but we have had standing charges for utilities to maintain provision.

Church utility costs have increased £1,275 but we are currently £2419 in credit. This will be claimed back later in the spring.

Two new columns have been added to this year's accounts – Stewardship and Vacancy Costs. It was noted that the Bond and legacies have been invested in growth funds rather than put on deposit. Members were referred to p14 of the accounts to demonstrate the returns to date on these investments. A new current account was opened for the organ restoration works, as required by our lottery award. Works start in April.

The Treasurer thanked Mrs S. Proctor, Mr C Cooke and those who faithfully counted the collection each Sunday.

Mr A Barron and Mr A Macleod were thanked for auditing and preparing OSCR figures respectively.

The Meeting agreed unanimously that Mr A. Barron be

appointed as Independent Examiner for the 2015 Accounts.

Full copies of the Financial Accounts are available for collection by anyone who was unable to attend this meeting.

Guild Report

This was given by Mrs N McIntyre.

The Guild continues to be well supported with 29 members, including 3 men and a Guide dog, with average attendance of 22. Nine members form the committee who lead the meetings. The theme this year was "A world to serve" with the topic, "Let's talk about how to share" with a wide range of speakers who spoke on this topic.

Links with Link Partners and Nairn Old were maintained and representatives attended Presbyterian meetings and representatives planning to attend spring rallies. Donations were made to the project "Comfort Rwanda" and the church.

Members of the congregation were thanked for their continuing support.

Sunday School Report

Mrs Cooke advised that she had been running Sunday School since August as Mrs Scott had moved to Calder.

The children had a trip to Christie's in Fochabers and then they took part in the Book Service performing three sketches depicting stories about Jesus, ably assisted by Judy McIntosh.

At the start of the new Session there were 8 children on the roll. Due to a change in her work schedule, Mrs Reid has been unable to help with the Sunday School. Fortunately Natalie Robertson, mother of four of the children, has been able to assist most weeks.

The children's harvest appeal this year was for Cash For Kids. The children had a baking stall at the Thursday Coffee break before Harvest Sunday and raised £107 for the charity. The children helped out at the Harvest Service which had a theme of sharing and using your talents. For the Christmas family service, the children told the Christmas Story using shadow puppets.

Mrs Cooke gave thanks to Mrs Robertson for her help, and to June Ranscombe, who has taken three sessions whilst she was on holiday.

As Mrs Cooke would be away several weekends during the summer term she asked members to look more permanent solution for recruiting more staff for the Sunday school.

Session Report

This report, delivered by Mrs G McCloy, Session Clerk, detailed the activities and lets within the church. As well

Stated Annual General Meeting 2015

as our joint monthly services, evening services had been instigated by the Interim Moderator. A new Bible Study & Prayer group was now held every second Wednesday of the month. The "Food for Thought" monthly lunch was also new, with 10 members undertaking Food Hygiene training to support this venture. Communion Preparatory Services were held with additional services held during Passion week. The House Group continues to meet each Monday. The Pastoral Care Group is now well-established and Mrs Heggie was thanked for leading this.

Eleven members had died in the past year, two members had left the area and two moved to worship elsewhere.

Elections to the Congregational Board

There was no election required as no members were due to step down this year.

Stewardship Report

This was given by Mrs S Paton who advised that the Committee had met with the National Adviser to support the final phase of this 3 year project. T.R.I.O. presentations and a booklet supported this phase where all members were asked to review their giving. Invitations and booklets were produced and all members and adherents were visited by the committee team. From a roll of 220, 30 responses were returned. Donations of £770 were received, 3 standing orders were set up, four requests for FWO envelopes were met and 5 Gift Aid requests were dealt with.

Mrs Paton thanked everyone on the committee; especially Mrs J Ranscombe for her technological skills. The Interim Moderator was warmly thanked for his encouragement and support and for the Stewardship sermons. It is intended to recruit more people to continue this work and hold some Stewardship events.

Fabric Report

This was given by Mr A. Paton.

In the Manse, the new bathroom with wet wall is complete. Additional central heating radiators have been connected and the front aspect of the house has new windows. New patio doors have also been fitted to the rear of the house. The driveway was scraped back and new chips laid. The roof has been cleared and treated to prevent further algae and vegetation growth, with minor slate and chimney replacement works undertaken. External paintworks will be overtaken once the weather improves. Garden maintenance has been carried out over the year and those involved were thanked.

In the church, exterior metal works around the steeple clock were restored, as were all gutters and downpipes.

Slates have also been treated with an anti-fungal spray. A new anti-slip flooring has been fitted to the front entrance and window blinds are due to be fitted this month. A new heater was fitted to the Vestry fireplace. In the church hall, the kitchen water heater has been condemned and a replacement is being sourced. The strip lights are now obsolete and a quote is awaited for their replacement.

A new church noticeboard is required as the original was damaged during works, and came down in recent storms.

He closed his report by thanking his colleagues on the Fabric Committee for their help during the year. Mr Interim Moderator added his thanks and highly commended the late Mr R Borthwick who was instrumental in implementing and overtaking much of the 5 year planned programme.

Safeguarding Report

This was given by Mrs J Ranscombe.

It was noted that no investigations had been required during the year. The training session for the Kirk Session which had been arranged for December 2013 had been held in 2014, and it was noted that PVG checks were now required for key members involved with working with children and vulnerable adults. This was being progressed by Mrs Ranscombe.

Minister's Report

Revd. Fraser Turner thanked all office bearers, including the organist and Mrs M Heggie (Pastoral Care), for their conscientious works.

He gave a personal thanks for the congregation's support for his ministry here, and felt that great strides had been made – we just needed to get more "Sunday-only" people involved in the daily life of the church. He reviewed the sermon themes covered in the last year and again emphasised the great opportunity and potential of this congregation. He concluded by commenting how he had enjoyed working with the congregation over the last year, and emphasised the need for continued prayer.

A vote of thanks for all those attending and presenting was given by Mr C Cooke. All were thanked, not just for their works in preparation for the meeting, but for their time and talents given unstintingly over the year.

In addition, he gave thanks to Revd. Fraser Turner for his unstinting efforts and practical and spiritual support to the congregation, and especially office bearers.

Revd. Fraser Turner closed the Meeting at 20:42 hours with the benediction.

Lenten Hunger or Lenten Feast?

*As a deer longs for a cool stream of water,
So I long for you, O God.
I thirst for you, the Living God;
When can I go and worship in your presence?
(Psalm 42 v1-2: Good News Bible)*

Lent used to be a time when I gave something up. Like many people, I thought that denying myself chocolate or a glass of wine was a good thing, reminding me of Jesus' time in the wilderness when he went without. However, I once read a very inspiring piece of writing which asked me to try doing something *extra* during Lent instead of giving something up. This intrigued me and so I decided to try it. I decided that instead of giving something up, I would make an extra prayer and reflection time each day.

I thought about how to do this and chose to use a Lenten guide called "A Feast for Lent" by Delia Smith. You may know this lady as the famous television chef and a writer of many cookbooks but did you know she is also a committed Christian?

I decided to follow her "recipe" for Lent and spend an extra time with God each day in prayer. I can honestly say that it has made a huge difference to my life and the way I now think about Lent. It has helped me to look more closely at aspects of my life that I need to change. Even though I have used the same book for a few years now, each time I follow it, the Lord brings out something new and it teaches me afresh. I think this is one of the most wonderful things about God's Word. No matter how many times you read the same passage in the Bible it can say something new to you every time, teaching you in a different way because it is a *living* word.

Read Ephesians 3 v14-21. Paul's prayer for the church at Ephesus, is a prayer for all those who are searching for God. It describes what happens to people when they begin to have a prayer life, a time to be with and learn from God: to build a relationship with Him that grows and blesses.

Here is a quote from the book that explains it much better than I can: "*Prayer is a school for loving: it is in this prayer-relationship that we learn to love God, how to love ourselves, and how to love others, which Jesus said sums up the whole of God's law. Prayer time, then is a time for learning about love and, as we grow stronger, so our vision of love will open out, enabling us in the end to 'know what is beyond all knowledge.... And be filled with the utter fullness of God'. God's power will give us the capacity to do more than we ever imagined, and the fruits of prayer will flow out to bless others.*" (Pages 84/85).

St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) said "*Keep the word of God for blessed are they that keep it. Let it pierce deep into your inmost soul and penetrate your feelings and actions. Eat well and your soul will delight and grow. Do not forget to eat your bread or your heart will wither, but let your soul feast richly. If you keep the word of God in this way without a doubt you will be kept by it.*"

I am pleased to say that Lent is now "a feast" for my soul.

For Advent and again at the New Year, you will have received a free gift of Bible study notes published by the Bible Reading Fellowship. I hope that these will have helped and inspired you to spend time with God and learn more about His love for us.

(*A Feast for Lent* is published by the Bible Reading Fellowship and the royalties go to the Sick Children's Trust at Great Ormand Street Hospital, as do those of its sister book, *A Feast for Advent*)

June Ranscombe.

**"Everything can
change in the blink of
an eye.
But don't worry;
God never blinks"**

WHAT'S ON?

SUNDAYS

Service 10.15 a.m.
Crèche and Sunday School
Evening Services at 6.30 p.m.
1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays

MONDAYS

Evening House groups
(Tel 452998 for details)

TUESDAYS

Food For Thought 12 noon
1st Tuesday of every month

WEDNESDAYS

Guild 1st and 3rd Wednesdays
Bible Study and Prayer 2 p.m.
2nd and 4th Wednesdays

THURSDAYS

Coffee Break in Church Hall
10 a.m.—11.30 a.m.

Life Isn't All It's Cracked up to Be... It's More

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

(Continued on page 10)

Trust in God

Two travelling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead the angels were given a small space in the cold basement.

As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, "Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how he could have let this happen. "The first man had everything, yet you helped him," she accused. "The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die."

"Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied. "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it. Then last night, as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead. Things aren't always what they seem."

Sometimes that is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way they should. If you have faith, you just need to trust that every outcome is always to your advantage. You just might not know it until some time later...

Tom Heggie

Joint Easter Services for Auldearn & St Ninian's

Once again we will be holding these in St Ninian's Hall at 7.30pm. Do come along and support these services.

Thursday 2nd April 2015, Maundy Thursday

Welcome, Intimations & Call to Worship

Hymn: MP 55 Beneath the cross of Jesus *Tune: St Christopher*
Prayers of Approach and Confession and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn: MP 26 All you that pass by *Tune: Wareham*

Gospel Reading: John 19 vv 28 - 37

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Hymn: MP 520 O sacred head, once wounded :*Passion Chorale*

Sermon: Seven Words (vi) It is finished

Hymn: MP 473 My hope is built on nothing less :*St Catherine*
Benediction & Amen (3-fold)

Friday 3rd April 2015, 7 Good Friday

Welcome, Intimations & Call to Worship

Hymn: MP 618 Sun of my soul *Tune: Abends*

Prayers of Approach and Confession and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn: MP 499 O happy day

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 31 vv 1 - 5

Gospel Reading: Luke 23 vv 44 - 49

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

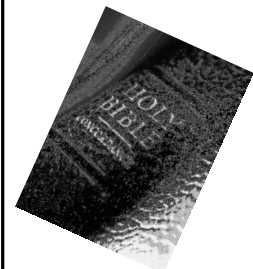
Hymn: MP 515 O love that wilt not let me go *Tune: St Margaret*

Sermon: Seven Words (vii) I commit my Spirit

Hymn: MP 757 When peace like a river
Benediction & Amen (3-fold)

Frame every so-called disaster with these words: 'In five years, will this matter?'

If you can serve in this way, please contact Betty Borthwick.



"The woodpecker might have to go!"

Bible Readers Apr 15—August 2015

April 2015

5th John Waugh
12th Judy McIntosh
19th Rose McKendrick
26th Dorothea Cooke

May 2015

3rd Patsy Forbes
10th June Ranscombe
17th Andy Paton
24th Clifford Cooke
31st Betty Borthwick

June 2015

7th Norma McIntyre
14th John Waugh
21st Judy McIntosh
28th Rose McKendrick

July 2015

5th Dorothea Cooke
12th Patsy Forbes
19th June Ranscombe
26th Andy Paton

August 2015

2nd Clifford Cooke
9th Betty Borthwick
16th Norma McIntyre
23rd John Waugh
30th Judy McIntosh

Musical Mutterings 14

Well! Here we are at last!

After several years of preparation, and assuming nothing unexpected happens meantime, work will start on Monday 13th April to dismantle the St Ninian's organ so that it can have a well earned clean and overhaul. Apart from an odd, very rare breakdown this will be the first "rest" the organ has had since it was last overhauled in 1986, and only the fourth overhaul the instrument has had in its 91 year lifetime.

Interestingly, although I cannot find any record of the cost of the 1986 overhaul, I do know that the 1934 overhaul cost £58 and in 1956 the overhaul cost £319, although an extra £150 was spent then replacing the original water powered blower with a "new-fangled" electric Discus blower. (An equivalent blower today would cost at least £3,000, so it is happy that the 1956 blower is still in good shape and doing its job without hitch.)

Today's refurbishment is much more extensive than previous overhauls and the total cost is planned at £48,250. Granted, this is a lot of money, but this expenditure will ensure that the organ remains in first class condition and, in modern phraseology, "fit for purpose" for many decades to come. I am delighted to publicly acknowledge my sincere thanks to the Kirk Session and the Congregational Board, and in particular Clifford Cooke and Grigor McKay, as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund for their 68% grant, for the monumental amount of work they have put into making this project happen.

The work contract has been awarded to Paul Miller of PM Pipe Organ Maintenance Ltd, Bonnybridge, Stirling. Again barring accidents (!) the organ will be re-dedicated with a re-opening recital on Saturday 1st August when the recitalist will be my son Graham Maclagan, Associate Director of Music at the Parish Church of Saint Cuthbert, Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh and Teacher of Music at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh. This will be followed by further concerts and recitals at roughly two to three month intervals involving pupils from Millbank and Nairn Academy. (*See separate article about their engagement in the project!*)

No Musical Muttering would be complete without a touch of humour! BUT, like all the best humour the following has a grounding in reality and I have to say that I am agreement with the sentiments expressed! The following was passed on to me by another organist who in turn was sent it on a social media website. We are not aware of any copyright restrictions but if we have infringed your copyright please accept our apologies and let us know so that we can acknowledge you in the next issue of The Link. These words indicate what church musicians think of some of the rubbish promulgated as worship nowadays! Sing this to yourself to the tune Repton.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways,
for most of us, when asked our mind,
admit we still more pleasure find
in hymns of ancient days,
in hymns of ancient days.

The simple lyrics, for a start,
of many a modern song
are far too trite to touch the heart,
enshrine no poetry, no art,
and go on much too long,
and go on much too long.

O for a rest from jollity
and syncopated praise!
What happened to tranquillity?
The silence of eternity
is hard to hear these days,
is hard to hear these days.

Send Thy deep hush, subduing all
those happy claps that drown
the tender whisper of Thy call.
Triumphalism is not all,
for sometimes we feel down,
for sometimes we feel down.

Donald Maclagan

(Continued from page 8)

So it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. 'I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.'

The old woman smiled, 'Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks we each have that make our lives together so interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them. SO, to all of my cracked pot friends, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path! **Tom Heggie**

Church Organ Restoration

As you will read in Donald's "Mutterings", the work is soon to start thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding and our commitment to this project. However, this project is only funded on the basis of the action plan which we submitted being successfully completed.

There are 5 broad criteria which must be met to receive this funding.

- The church organ will be fully restored bringing it back to its original operational condition by specialists who will be procured through a tendering process.
- School sessions will be delivered to 40 pupils on the restoration and science behind the church organ.
- 16 volunteers will be given training on tour guiding and 100 visitors will attend monthly open days on the restoration of the organ.
- A digital record will be kept on the restoration of the organ which will be available online and an exhibition will be produced on the history of the organ.
- Organ lessons will be provided for those who wish to try the instrument and recitals will be delivered regularly once the organ has been restored.

To date, the Millbank P4/5 class has been to have a tour of the church and a talk about the times when it was built. They then visited Nairn Museum to find out about Victorian Nairn. The church has provided them with a camera and a voice recorder to allow them record all their project works and learning. In class, they are also learning to play a wind instrument—the penny whistle, to help them understand how the organ pipes work!

In addition, the children have been joined by two year groups from Nairn Academy's music department where they have all had a shot at seeing inside the organ space, playing the organ and listening to pieces which show the instrument's capabilities—before restoration. These activities are being recorded on our church Facebook page *so if you're on Facebook, just search for Nairn St Ninian's and PLEASE "like" the page to follow events.*

(Continued on page 12)

The Leprosy Mission Scotland

On Wednesday 4th March 2015, our speaker at the Guild was Stuart McAra of the Leprosy Mission Scotland. He told us that the Leprosy Mission had been ongoing for 140 years, and yet 4 million people still suffer from leprosy today, the forgotten disease.

It is curable if caught early, but once disabilities occur, the process cannot be reversed. Consequently, they now run vocational training centres giving practical help leading to survivors obtaining jobs.

Leprosy Mission Scotland concentrates its work in seven of the countries in Africa and Asia. However, we have a direct connection with the Leprosy Mission through the Rev Donald Mitchell, born in Ardclach on 6th January 1792, and who died in India on 20th November 1823.

He was the oldest surviving son of Rev Donald Mitchell Snr., Parish Minister of Ardclach.

After a spell in the British army as a cadet he set sail for Bombay, India, where he married a widow, Elizabeth Donaldson, whose husband had been a missionary. He was so impressed by the preaching of two Scottish Missionaries, that he resigned from the army and trained as a Minister of the Church of Scotland, being ordained and licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Nairn in 1822.

Donald offered his services to the Scottish Missionary Society in Edinburgh and sailed back to Bombay in 1823, with his growing family. He set up 10 schools for the local children based on Christian principals.

Unfortunately, he worked himself into the ground and caught a fever following a torrential rainstorm. The family went up river for convalescence, but Rev Mitchell died at Poladpur on 20th November 1823. The family returned to England.

In 1892, near the site of his grave, a local Christian teacher set up a few bamboo huts to care for beggars suffering from leprosy. By 1912, the Church of Scotland had built permanent buildings, together with a church and was financing the work.

In 1943, a new couple had taken charge and a new church and hospital block were constructed in memory of Rev Mitchell. A monument to him had been erected at Poladpur, but the new couple, on paying a visit to Ardclach, were dismayed to discover no memorial to him in Scotland. The Rev a Gordon McGillivray suggested that a replica of the Poladpur monument be erected at Ardclach and this was unveiled by Dr T B M Sloane of the Leprosy Mission on 20th October 1961.

In 2014, the monument was fully restored and a service to mark the renovation of the Mitchell Memorial will be held in the former North Church at Ardclach at 11am on Saturday 25th April to which all are welcome.

For many years, the late Miss Elizabeth Main was the representative of the Leprosy Mission Scotland in St Ninian's church and in her time the sum of £4,500 was collected from both the members and Guild. It is hoped to re-instate this support for the work of the Leprosy Mission by distributing collecting boxes and holding an annual gift day.

The new representative is Mrs Norma McIntyre, Guild secretary.

(Continued from page 11)

The children very much enjoyed listening to:

“Te Deum Prelude” by Charpentier (1634-1704) (better known as the theme of the Eurovision Song Contest.)

“Panis Angelicus” by César Franck (1822-1890) (Various tenors in programmes such as Britain's Got Talent have sung this.)

“Gymnopédie I” by Erik Satie (1866-1925) (Over the last 50 years this has been used in films and in pop music arrangements on at least 16 different occasions!)

“March from Scipio” by Handel (1685-1759) (A loud triumphant end to the mini-recital!)

The Phantom of the Opera and a piece by Andrew and Julian Lloyd Webber's father William, *“Noël Nouvelet”*.

We now need help, input and support from congregational members and others to make this the success it should be—as it is much more than simply getting the organ restored.

We now need people to sign up to:

- ✓ come and have a look at the works—both when being dismantled and re-installed,
- ✓ help clean the church during and after the restoration works, and
- ✓ undertake a (fun) half-day training session where we talk through the organ works so you can be on the rota for church openings afterwards.

Please let Clifford, Grigor or Grace know if you can help /be involved with these activities!

By the completion of the project, we will:

- have a permanent display and booklets for visitors on the church and the organ. Local school children and our Sunday School will be involved in drafting and producing these materials,
- Have an updated and revised website about this musical attraction,
- we will have set up and trained a rota of helpers (aiming for 16 over time!) who will support the opening of the sanctuary at agreed times so that the organ can be seen (and played where visitors have the skill),
- provide opportunities for (budding) musicians to play the organ and use it for learning the instrument under appropriate tutor supervision, and
- hold regular recitals and concerts with the organ forming a central part of these events.

Prayer Thought

“We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. [4] Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. [5] But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: [6] Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did” (1 John 2:3-6, NIV).

It would be helpful to begin by understanding what is not being said in this passage. John is not saying that we are saved by our good works, or that our deeds somehow put us in a position of winning God's favour. What he is saying is that if we are truly believers in Jesus Christ, that belief will be evidenced by a life that reflects Jesus' life. Another way of putting it would be to say that the Christian life is one of continuous development, which leads us to reflect Christ more and more every day.

The issue here is obedience. Do we simply believe the right things, or do we live the right things? Are we believers only intellectually, or are we also believers in the way we live our lives when we go to work, are at home, or out and about with our friends and family? Jesus calls us to not only think righteously, but to live righteously. We prove our dedication to God by obeying His directives. And by obeying His directives, we become more and more Christ like.

Prayer Thought: Father, I want to live in obedience to You. Give me the power, the desire, and the willpower to become like Your Son, for I ask it in His Name. Amen.

Fraser <><

Deadlines for The Link Magazine

Articles and items are welcomed from both congregations, so please do think about how you can contribute. Articles can be e-mailed at any time of the year. Please have them to Clifford (clifford.cooke@talktalk.net) by **Sunday 14th June and Sunday 22nd November 2015.**