

HOLYTOWN PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

MARCH 2016



Dear Friends,

I was looking out of my study window the other day and there in the centre of the front garden little patches of white, under the trees, amid growing green shoots caught my eye and the seeing of those little white patches immediately raised ,my spirits.

As the days have passed those white patches have turned into wonderful clumps of snowdrops - clumps I believe to be even more beautiful than they were last year.

The wonderful thing about their appearance is, of course, that they herald the season of spring.

Some people would say that spring doesn't begin until the 20th March this year but in fact meteorological Spring begins on the 1st March - so I am going with the meteorologists!

So as I write we are on the threshold of spring!

Interestingly, and quite coincidentally, as part of my own Lenten Reflections last week I found myself reading this poem by Pete Anderson entitled 'Resurrecting!:

The sun
warms my back
while the black
earth in my hand
carries in memory
of winter's
icy
iron grip

Frost
fingers
spring's
first bold beginnings
threateningly,
but
the budding of trees
betrays
nature's
secret
understanding
of death and resurrection.

This is a good time for me
between snowdrop and daffodil;
I would wish
perhaps
to spend
eternity
here
on the threshold of things -
expectant

Nevertheless,
even here,
I grope for meaning
(instead of simply being);
resurrection,
salvation,
redemption,
each
suggest to me

a process
rather than
a condition,
an ebb
and flow,
a signpost
rather than
a destination.

For now
it is sufficient
to have caught
a glimpse
of that possibility.

This time
between snowdrop
and daffodil,
encourages me
to wait.

In this period of Lent when we reflect on ourselves, on Jesus and on what lies ahead for him, and what that means for us, it seems to me like we are all in that time between the snowdrops and the daffodils - for do not we ourselves transform the cross of crucifixion to a cross of resurrection with daffodils on Easter Day.

We are all on the threshold of resurrection - we have caught a glimpse of what will be, come Easter Day, but for now we are in that in-between - we are not there yet - so we wait expectantly.

Being a reflective sort of person - I have to say I do like this time between snowdrop and daffodil spent in self-reflection and it certainly does encourage me to wait for the joy of Easter Day!

We are half way through our Lenten Journey - we have caught a glimpse of the resurrection to come symbolized in the sight of those snowdrops - be encouraged it is not long to wait now for the Risen Christ!

Lenten Blessings
Caryl

FUNERALS

Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

January

Charles Kirk
Janet Robertson
John McClymont
Robert Baillie
William Jeffrey
Irene O'Hare
Janet Allan
Robert McLarty

THANK YOU

Miss Betty Reid was delighted with the flower arrangement from the Church and wishes to say "thank you" for this most acceptable gift.

Mrs Joan Gilmour would like to say thank-you for the lovely flowers she received from the church and indeed they were very special as I received them on the day of my 89th birthday, Love to all.

FLOWER LIST

March 13	N McCartney
20	C Docherty
27	M Frazer
April 3	C Dunns

EASTER SERVICES

Easter Services will be held each evening at 7.00 pm from Monday 21st to Friday 25th March. This year the services will be in Wrangholm Kirk, New Stevenston.

On Sunday 27th March a Dawn Service will be held at the Memorial Garden at the Church Hall. The exact time will be announced later.

SPRING FAYRE - SATURDAY 23rd APRIL

The Committee for the Spring Fayre is: Linda Baillie, Kenneth Bell, Isa Hinshelwood, Ian Houston, Bill Jenkins, May McNeil, Susan Reid and Tom Stewart. The Treasurer is Syd McCartney.

The stallholders are:

Tea Room
Cake & Candy

The Guild
Susan Reid and Paula Spiers

Burgers & Hot Dogs
Unwanted Gifts
Red Stall
Lucky Dips
Fancy Goods & Hand

Knits
Jewellery
Games
Art

Face Painting has still to be arranged.

Kenneth & June Bell
The Girls' Brigade
Senior Girls' Brigade
Netta McCartney & Alice Smith

Betty McKenzie & Betty Reid
Amanda Brown
The Boys' Brigade
Kirsty Shaw

DEDICATION SERVICE OF CALDERBANK WAR MEMORIAL

I was last to leave the hall car park after morning worship only a few weeks ago when a man drove in and stopped to speak to me. He was a really nice man, his name was Vincent and he handed me an invite to the dedication of a new war memorial in Calderbank which was scheduled for 11 am on Saturday, February 27th. I should have had this intimated but due to some other factors including my advancing years, this didn't happen and I apologise for this omission. However, after a timely reminder from my dear wife, I managed to attend this event and I was glad I did. It was one of those occasions you can look back on and think to yourself: 'it was good to have been there.' There were a couple of plaques with verses that you may be familiar with but I thought it would do no harm to publish at this or any other time.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row that mark our place;
And in the sky, the larks still bravely singing,
Fly scarce heard amid the guns below.

The plaque also states that it is 'To the memory of the Boys of Calderbank and Surrounding Area Who lost their lives but won the war. The other plaque has the lines.

Young men of iron, coal and steel left their homes to defend
the country they loved,
Some never to return, their sacrifice never forgotten,
Their valiant deeds still resonate with us today in the freedom
we enjoy.

The weather was kind to this event and although it was a wee bit cool, there wasn't a cloud in the sky and the sun shone on proceedings from beginning to end. There was a great turnout from the local land, air and sea cadets who were all really well turned out and were well-polished in their drill manoeuvres.

The service consisted of an introduction by the Very Reverend Fathèr James Grant, Parish Priest, Holy Family, Mossend. This was followed by prayers for Peace, Unity, Abolition of Poverty and Religious tolerance by the retired Church of Scotland Minister that is covering Calderbank and Flowerhill on a part-time basis. The Reverend Father Joseph McKiganda, Parish Priest, Corpus Christi, Calderbank prayed for Grace.

We stood together and sang 'How Great Thou Art', 'The Lord's My Shepherd' and 'Abide with me'. Addresses were given by Tom Clarke CBE on behalf of the Royal Air Force Association, Joseph Stanfield MBE, Director Royal Air Force Association and Mr A McCallum, Royal Air Force 602 Squadron.

On hindsight, I think there were a number of reasons that contributed to my enjoyment of the occasion.

- My Granny and one of my uncles lived in Calderbank. I attended Primary Sunday School at Calderbank Church and very briefly the Boys' Brigade so I felt some ties with the village.
- Seemingly the plaques with all the names had been stored away in a cupboard somewhere and when Vincent found out, he decided to do something about it. He involved folks within the community, the local authority became involved and on Saturday 27th February they celebrated the achievement of their joint purposes that brought people together in a good cause.
- Good things can be achieved when people work together.
- It's never too late to do something that is good. Most local villages will have had their war memorials for many years. We should never forget why they were commissioned.
- There's something about singing hymns and psalms outside that I find very special.
- My father's middle name was Wilkinson and the last name under the 1914-18 war was Joseph Wilkinson and I wondered if in some way we could be related.
- I learned that there are other times to remember, not just on Armistice Sunday.
- There was a real sense of community and the Lord was at

the very centre.

If you are able, take a trip over to Calderbank and have a look at the memorial which is in a small garden of remembrance just behind the community centre.

VISIT TO ANOTHER CHURCH

During February, my wife had to go to St Andrews in connection with her work. I was allowed to tag along and we ended up staying for a couple of days and we both love the town. On the Sunday morning, we attended morning worship at Trinity Church in the centre of the town. It is an absolutely beautiful building albeit a bit cooler than our own Church on a Sunday morning. A choir opened the service with a psalm of praise that would have sounded wonderful on any stage in the world but within this historic place of worship, I don't have the words to adequately describe the experience of hearing that arrangement with that organ, with those harmonies in that place. It was interesting to hear they are a vacant charge and are about to enter a period of interim ministry and it was their interim moderator that led worship when we attended. It was also interesting to see that despite the grandeur of the surroundings, their attendance was not too dissimilar to our own. There were 7 children in Sunday School. In his sermon, the preacher emphasised that the Church was not about beautiful buildings because many of these buildings although beautiful are also empty. This gave me serious cause for thought and at this time, I am still pondering over this issue ie the sustainability and viability of Church buildings that demand more care and maintenance as they get older from congregations that are decreasing in size. If anyone has any ideas as to how we solve this problem, I for one would be

keen to hear them. We pride ourselves in being a Church that holds to scripture. I am struggling to find a passage that says we should put the maintenance of buildings before the spreading of the gospel by word and example.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

ON THE RESURRECTION GLORY

They asked me how I know it's true
that the Saviour lived and died
And if I believe the story
that the Lord was crucified . . .
And I have so many answers
to prove His holy being -
Answers that are everywhere
within the realm of seeing -
The leaves that fall in autumn
and were buried in the sod
Now budding on the tree boughs
to lift their arms to God.
The flowers that were covered
and entombed beneath the snow
Pushing through the darkness
to bid the spring hello,
On every side, great nature sings
the Easter story,
So who am I to question
the Resurrection glory?

Helen Steiner Rice

A SPECIAL BIG SISTER

We are all familiar with the story of Moses but he was only one of a family of three. His sister, Miriam, played her part in preserving Moses' life. The Egyptian Pharaoh had become very concerned about the strength of the Israelites within his land that he issued orders to destroy all the baby boys who were born.

When Moses, who had been hidden for a while came to the stage where that was impossible it was Miriam who gathered the bulrushes from which the basket was constructed into which Moses was placed.

Miriam kept a watchful eye over the basket - at times pretending to play to save attracting attention. What a surprise she must have had when the Egyptian Princess, daughter of Pharaoh's daughter, appeared on the scene. The Princess would have been very aware of the instructions given by her father. However, she was responsible for saving Moses' life. Miriam has the opportunity to suggest that she will get him a Hebrew nurse - none other than Moses' mother.

Miriam played an important part in ensuring that her brother's welfare was taken care of. What a change in fortune for Moses took place! God was ensuring that the future leader of the Israelites was well prepared for the daunting task he had to undertake.

Do not condemn the judgement of another because it differs from yours. You may both be wrong. Anon

When looking for faults, use a mirror, not a telescope Anon

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

An empty tomb, a stone rolled away
Speak of the Saviour who rose Easter Day,
But that was centuries and centuries ago
And we ask today - Was it really so?
Did He walk on earth and live and die
And return to the Father to dwell on high?
We were not there to hear or see,
But our hopes and dreams of eternity
Are centred around the Easter story
When Christ ascended and rose in glory,
And life on earth has not been the same
Regardless of what the sceptics claim,
For after the Lord was crucified,
Even the ones who had scoffed and denied
Knew that something had taken place
That nothing could ever remove or erase
For hope was born in the soul of man,
And faith to believe in God's master plan
Stirred in the hearts to dispel doubt and fear,
And that faith has grown with each passing year,
For the hope of man is the Easter story,
And life is robbed of all meaning and glory
Unless man knows that he has a goal
And a resting place for his searching soul.

Helen Steiner Rice

Speed-reading may be a good thing, but it was never meant for the Bible. It takes calm, thoughtful, prayerful meditation on the Word to extract its deepest nourishment.

Vance Havner

A PLACE OF WORSHIP

Where God revealed himself, a place of worship was made. At the time of the Exodus from Egypt it could be described as a tent-temple. This was sensible when people were moving from place to place. This tent-temple came to be known as a Tabernacle.

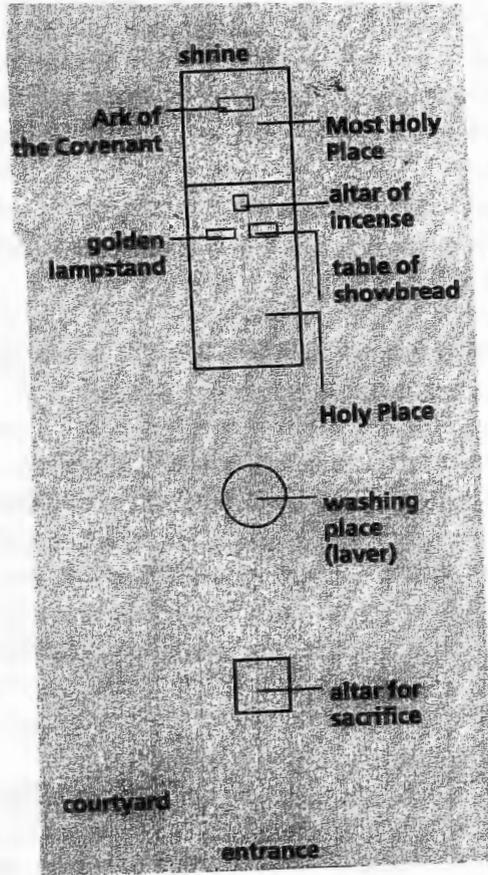
The central shrine was made up of upright wooden planks, gilded and supported by a system of beams, tenons and heavy silver sockets that stood on the ground. This created a three-sided structure. A roof was provided by curtains of white linen, embroidered with figures of cherubim, which were protected by successive layers of sackcloth, red ramskins and goatskins (Exodus 26:1-30).

Inside, the long room was divided in two by a curtain hung on gilded pillars to create a "Most Holy Place". A curtain of similar material was hung over the entrance to prevent the eyes of the curious from seeing inside (Exodus 26:31-36). The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22) was placed in the Most Holy Place, and the table of showbread (Exodus 25:23-30), golden lamp stand (Exodus 25:31-40), and altar of incense (Exodus 25:1-10) in the Holy Place. Outside the curtained entrance was an altar for sacrifice (Exodus 27:1-8), and a large bronze laver or washing place for ceremonial cleansing (Exodus 30:17-21).

It was a characteristic of religion in the area at the time that the space around the central shrine or altar was holy, as well as the shrine itself. Moses was reminded that the ground around the burning bush was holy (Exodus 3:5). The shrine was therefore separated from the outside world by a large

courtyard. Entry into the courtyard was through embroidered hangings set in the narrow, eastern end (Exodus 27:9-19).

Plan of the Tabernacle and the courtyard



STORY OF A WELL-KNOWN HYMN

It is believed that the hymn "O Sacred Head, sore wounded" was written by Bernard of Clairvaux who lived in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. Bernard was from the Burgundy region of France. Bernard chose in his twenties to become a monk and became in time one of the finest and most influential church leaders of that period. Three centuries later Martin Luther wrote that "he was the best monk that ever lived, whom I admire beyond all the rest put together."

The hymn was translated into German in the 17th century by Paul Gerhardt. Paul Gerhardt lived in Saxony and he eventually became a minister in the German Reformed Church. He was involved in the controversy between Lutherans and Calvinists. Gerhardt went on to write more than one hundred hymns.

The translation which we now know was the work of James W Alexander who lived from 1804 to 1859. James W Alexander trained at Princeton Theological Seminary and later taught history there.

The tune for the hymn is "Passion Chorale". This was originally a German love song ("My heart is distracted by a Gentle Maid" in Hans Leo Hassler's collection. Hassler lived from 1564 to 1612. The words of the hymn together with Hassler's tune appeared in the "Praxis Pietatis Melica", a German hymn book published in 1644. Within one hundred years nearly fifty editions of this hymn book were printed.

Harmonisation of this tune was by the German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach who was one of the greatest church

musicians of all time. Bach appeared to be very fond of this melody as he used the chorale five times throughout his well-known St Matthew Passion, composed in 1729. The present version of the tune is a combination of various harmonisations of the melody used by Bach.

The hymn "O Sacred Head, sore wounded" certainly has a very interesting and historical background.