

Christ  
is  
Risen!



Dear Friends,

I was very tempted this month to just leave a blank space here on the page as my letter to you.

Why you might ask?

Well because it seems to me that so often we just don't give ourselves any space in our lives to think and reflect, sometimes not even a short space in our days to just be still for a few moments.

This was brought home to me once more this week having just spent three days with my ministry colleagues - most of whom I trained with and most of whom have now been in ministry for at least five years.

In those three days together away from the world we were encouraged to take time and space to reflect on our ministries since last we met.

Our days were long but did not seem so - for a quiet and confidential space for reflection amid the busy life of Parish Ministers was created for us and so for example it was wonderful to have space morning and evening to just sit with God and worship him together - without any of us having had to prepare that worship.

Our small group facilitators too created a quiet and confidential space for us in which we could each share aspects of our Parish life - both positive and negative if we wished - and in the voicing of these aspects and reflecting upon them - both within ourselves and with others in the small

group - we were offered no advice or solutions but just a listening ear and the encouragement to reflect deeply on our words and look for God at work within all of the situations voiced.

I have to say my particular group met in the Oratory and it was indeed wonderful to be bathed in the light of the stained glass window as we each reflected with each other.

Yet, also within our days there was space and time built in for self-reflection where we took time to think on all we had heard from our colleagues and assimilate what that meant for us and for them - be that by a solitary walk or time spent alone.

Time and space was also given for fellowship - both 'table fellowship' as we ate together - and also times of sharing informally together after evening worship - when acquaintances were renewed or new friendships forged.

The whole three days were so beneficial for my spiritual well-being and they reminded me once more of how important it is to make and take time for reflection in our lives and to create such reflective spaces in order that we can be with God and spend time with him.

Jesus himself took such times to reflect on what he was doing in his life. He always created space to be with God - for he often went off alone to pray and think.

We have such a good example in him - so please in this Lenten time of reflection be encouraged to take time each day to think on things, to look for God at work within your life, to make a space for him and for reflection and please don't



succumb to the temptation to fill up every waking moment of your day!

Space and silence encourage reflection - and reflection is good for the soul. So why not try having some space and silence each day and enhance your spiritual well-being!

Lenten Blessings  
Caryl

## FLOWER LIST

April 13	F Hunter
20	M Lennox
27	C Menzies
May 4	D Paterson

## EASTER 2014

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April** - Palm Sunday Service at 10.00 am

### **Holy Week Services**

**Holy Week Services** from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00 pm each evening will be held in Wrangholm Church, New Stevenston.

Communion will be celebrated at the service on Maundy Thursday, ie the 17<sup>th</sup> April. On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April we remember the events of Good Friday.

## **Easter Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> April**

The Easter Sunrise Service at **5.45 am** will be held beneath the cross in the **Holytown** Church Hall Garden. This will be followed by breakfast in the Hall.

The Easter Sunday Service will, as normal, be at 10.00 am in the Church.

## **JOHN FRAZER**

In his youth John was involved in many of the activities of the church including the Bible Class and Youth Fellowship. He also served on the Congregational Board prior to being ordained as an elder in 1999. John and his wife, Meta, were regularly in church Sunday by Sunday until John's health prevented him from coming. Our thoughts and prayers are with Meta as she mourns John's passing.

## **THANKSGIVING SERVICE**

The Thanksgiving Service for the Boys' and Girls' Brigades will be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00 am.

## **A WORD OF THANKS**

Mrs Betty Murray wishes to express her thanks for the cards and flowers received while she was unwell. She would like also to thank the minister for her comforting visits.

*Think a little,  
Try a little,  
Achieve more than a little.*

## THE GUILD

The Guild Session is now over. At the Annual General Meeting Mrs Una Smith was re-elected as Vice-President, Mrs Norma Gemmell as Secretary and Mrs Betty Jenkins as Treasurer. Mrs Isa Hinshelwood has resigned as President.

Isa has been President for twelve years and throughout these years has done a splendid job of keeping the ladies together. Isa is a very friendly person and has always had the knack of making the many speakers she has met over the years feel at home in the company of the Guild. She has shown great dedication not only at the Guild but also at home as she prepared week by week for the meeting in the quietness of her own home. It is also fitting that we should remember that prior to being President, Isa was treasurer for a number of years. We appreciate all that Isa has done over these many years and wish to say a big "thank you" to her.

### In His Footsteps by Helen Steiner Rice

When someone does a kindness  
it always seems to me  
That's the way God up in Heaven  
would like us all to be. . . .  
For when we bring some pleasure  
to another human heart,  
We have followed in His footsteps  
and we've had a little part  
In serving Him who loves us -  
for I am very sure it's true  
That in serving those around us  
We serve and please Him, too.



## FOOD HYGIENE COURSE

Between ourselves and Wrangholm, 19 of us attended an Elementary Food Hygiene Training Course on 22<sup>nd</sup> March which was held in the sanctuary of Wrangholm Kirk. The course was provided (at a cost of £500 + £10 for each participant) by Motherwell College and, on the day was presented by Mr George Lippiatt who is the catering manager at Shotts Prison.

George has received awards for his promotion and training of culinary excellence in his students and has transformed catering at Shotts from a functional unit to a widely respected centre of catering excellence. His team delivers a balanced, nutritional menu to 550 long-term prisoners and also provides work for 30 prisoners. He has produced a Perfect Pantry folder of simple instructions for all food handlers in the establishment.

George along with his colleagues, understand the importance of maintaining family visits and trying to lessen the feeling of being penalized that children may feel following the imprisonment of a member of the family. Prisoners under the tutoring and supervision of the catering staff will provide a celebration cake for a special occasion such as birthdays or anniversaries. The cakes are designed and can be personalised with a person's name, cartoon character or pop idol. Producing these cakes also provides the prisoners involved with valuable skills, which could be used to gain employment upon release. Special initiatives include World Cup football themed menus, highly sought after celebration cakes and happy meal breakfasts for visiting children.

During our training day, George exuded enthusiasm and I'm sure he brings his infectious personality and very high standards to everything he does. All in attendance found him to be a first class instructor with excellent presentation skills. George made the event truly memorable, fun and most definitely worthwhile.

Incidentally, all 19 of us passed the examination which was held at the end of the day.

It's been a wee while since we've had a joint event with our sister Church in our linkage and this was ideal for reminding us of the fun and fellowship to be had when we do.

A big thank you must go to May for organising this important event and also arranging the sausage rolls, sandwiches, biscuits, crisps and (of course) fruit that kept us all going throughout the day. Another big thank you should also go to the folks at Wrangholm for providing a nice warm venue and the tea and coffee which was also available throughout the day.

## **LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED**

Whenever I am troubled  
And lost in deep despair  
I bundle all my troubles up  
And go to God in prayer . . .

I tell Him I am heartsick  
And lost and lonely, too,  
That my mind is deeply burdened  
And I don't know what to do . . .



But I know He stilled the tempest  
And calmed the angry sea  
And I humbly ask if in His love  
He'll do the same for me . . .

And then I just keep *Quiet*  
And think only thoughts of *Peace*  
And if I abide in *Stillness*  
My 'restless murmurings' cease.

## A MIRACLE INDEED

I came upon an extremely moving true story on the internet this week.

Joanne Milne, 40, from Gateshead, was born deaf, and during her 20s also began to lose her vision due to the rare medical condition called Usher Syndrome.

Last month she was fitted with cochlear implants and after 40 years of silence the life-changing procedure has meant she is now able to hear. Not only this but the moment this woman, who had been deaf since birth and never heard a sound, hears for the first time and has her life transformed was captured on film by her mother.

The short film captures the incredible moment when Joanne hears a nurse going through the days of the week followed by the months of the year and shows her bursting into tears in shock.

"The switch-on was the most emotional and overwhelming experience of my life and I'm still in shock now. The first day

everybody sounded robotic and I have to learn to recognise what these sounds are as I build a sound library in my brain," she said. "Hearing things for the first time is so, so emotional, from the ping of a light switch to music to running water, I can't stop crying." "I can already foresee how it's going to be life changing and the implants will get better and better over time, I'm so happy."

Ms Milne, who works for charity Sense, said she was now a lot more aware of things around her, which was a huge help given that she is also blind. "I'm also attempting to use the telephone at one point but it's one step at a time as it's all so daunting. It's the small things that are huge life changing experiences to me right now and this will probably last a few months," she said. "Over the last 48 hours hearing someone laughing behind me, the birds twittering and just being with friends - they didn't have to tap my arm or leg to get my attention, which is a massive leap for a deaf person."

She thanked the team at the Midlands Implant Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, for the procedure and said their support had been fantastic.

Is this not just the most wonderful story? If you get a chance to see the short film on the internet, watch it. It really is most touching.

After experiencing this touching moment, I scrolled down the page on the computer and there was an opportunity for the public to post comments on the story. In amongst all the comments of congratulation and encouragement were the following:

- If she "never heard a sound", how could she recognize words spoken to her? And how on earth could she learn to speak herself, and so well and fluently. too, if she did NOT hear any speech until now?
- While I think this story is awesome and heartwarming, I had similar questions. How does she know what "robotic" sounds like? She is maintaining eye contact (it appears), so is she fully blind or just "legally blind"? This story is awesome, I'm just curious.
- How does she already have a British accent?

Now this is a story that is reported in a number of daily newspapers including the telegraph. A nurse is filmed reciting the days of the week and the months of the year. This miracle has been achieved due to the scientific development of a device by men. By virtue of the internet, it will have been seen by millions.

Despite all the above, there are always going to be the disbelievers and the sceptics.

Do any elements of this story ring a bell with you?

Mark 7:35-36

And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.



## LENT

Fast from judging others;  
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from emphasis on differences;  
Feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness;  
Feast on the reality of all light.

Fast from thoughts of illness;  
Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute;  
Feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent;  
Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;  
Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;  
Feast on optimism.

Fast from worry;  
Feast on God's providence.

Fast from complaining;  
Feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives;

Feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures;

Feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility;

Feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness;

Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;

Feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety;

Feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement;

Feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress;

Feast on verities that uplift.

Fast from lethargy;

Feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion;

Feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken;

Feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow;

Feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip'  
Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm:  
Feast on prayer that sustains.

Anon

## RESURRECTION

A vicar once went on his own for a walking holiday in the Lakes. He befriended a young shepherd lad who asked him to explain the Christian faith to him. The vicar pointed to the fingers of his right hand and said, pointing to each finger, "The Lord is my shepherd," As he said this, he emphasised the word *my* and held onto the fourth finger of his right hand. "The important thing," he said, is to be able to say that. "the Lord is *my* shepherd."

The following summer the vicar went back to the same place. He couldn't find the boy anywhere and was sad. One day he came across a farmhouse and decided to knock on the door for a drink. The owner let him into the kitchen for a cup of tea. As he looked around his eyes alighted on a photograph on the mantle piece above the kitchen fire. There was the boy! So the vicar asked the woman of the house about him. "oh, that was my son," she replied, "He died last winter during a very sever blizzard. In fact they brought his body here into the kitchen and laid it on this very table. It was a horrible moment. One thing was a bit strange though. My son was holding onto the fourth finger of his right hand . . ."

(A Box of Delights, compiled by J John & Mark Sibbee)



## AN EASTER MEDITATION

In the glorious Easter Story  
A troubled world can find  
Blessed assurance  
And enduring peace of mind -  
For though we grow discouraged  
In this world we're living in,  
There is comfort just in knowing  
That God triumphed over sin,  
For our Saviour's Resurrection  
Was God's way of telling men  
That in Christ we are eternal  
And in Him we live again-  
And to know life is unending  
And God's love is endless, too,  
Makes our daily tasks and burdens  
So much easier to do,  
And our earthly trials and problems  
Are but guideposts on the way  
To the love and life eternal  
That God promised Easter Day.

Helen Steiner Rice

*There is no situation so chaotic that God cannot from that situation, create something that is surpassingly good. He did it at Creation, He did it at the Cross, He is doing it today.*

*(Handley C G Moule)*

*"God created the world out of nothing, and as long as we are nothing, he can make something out of us."*

*(Martin Luther)*

## **Financial Statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
FWO	5,305.05	5,882.90
Plate	2,022.82	1,575.03
Standing Orders	<u>1,599.00</u>	<u>1,599.00</u>
	<u>£8,926.87</u>	<u>£9,056.93</u>
Decrease £130.06		
Average per Sunday	£686.60	£696.69
No of Sundays	13	13

### **Fabric Fund**

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
January - February	115.50	108.05
March	23.50	92.67
Total to date	139.00	200.72

## **"THE HOUSE OF PRAYER"**

"The House of Prayer" is no farther away  
 Than the quiet spot where you kneel and pray,  
 For the heart is a temple when God is there  
 As you place yourself in His loving care.

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**Church Services are at 10.00 am and on last Sunday of the month  
and Communion Sundays at 6.30 pm.**

**Our Website is: [www.holytownparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.holytownparishchurch.org.uk)**