



HOLYTOWN PARISH CHURCH  
OF SCOTLAND

APRIL 2015

Dear Friends,

With all the high winds we have had in recent days the Manse garden is looking a little dishevelled as I am sure you may have noticed as you pass through to church each Sunday morning. Both front and back gardens are littered with bits of broken branches - some large and wieldy, some small and twig-like, and each branch or twig lies where the wind has taken them.

I have indeed cleared both lawns already this year but with each new storm it seems the wind finds yet more old and fragile branches to bend and break and litter the lawn.

Yet is that not part of the work of the wind at this time of year?

When old dead wood is broken from the trees does it not leave behind a stronger tree with the potential for new growth and new life?

Yes, for a while all may seem chaotic as broken branches break and fall but soon we see the fruits of the wind's work as the trees in the garden spring back to life and come into leaf.

There is always one tree in the back garden right opposite my study window which is first to come into leaf and it is always a great joy to me to see its bright foliage appear - for against the stark background of the tree trunks and spindly branches it is like a sign of hope - its wonderfully green leaves appear and the tree is reborn with the promise of blossom and beauty to come for many months.

God's creation is truly awakening once more!

I know we have had in the garden the snowdrops, the daffodils, the narcissus and the crocuses which have been hiding below ground all winter waiting for the warmth to return to the earth that they might reappear.

But somehow for me when the first leaves appear on that little tree it's different - for that little tree has had to withstand all the windy, winter weather rather than hide from it like the bulbs appear to do and then strengthened by losing those broken branches it comes to life once more - and not just back to life but to life with greater beauty.

Sometimes the winter months for us are difficult - days are short and nights can be long and sometimes life just seems harder during the long months of winter.

We sometimes feel we want to hide away from the wild wintry weather too rather than face the storms that life may throw our way.

However, we should be encouraged by that little tree because for all that it has had to withstand over the winter - wind, cold, rain, whatever - it does come through it all, there is new growth for it and for us looking at it always that hope and promise of beauty yet to come.

Easter is always a time when we think of new birth, new hope and promise.

It is good that we think of all that Jesus had to withstand for us - and that he did so - willingly - he did not hide from what he had to do.

He withstood everything they threw at him - for us - that we might have new growth, new hope and a new life eternally with him.

There is the promise for us - a new life - the beauty yet to come!

Easter Blessings  
Caryl

## FLOWER LIST

April 5 Christine Dunns  
12 Meta Frazer  
19 Margaret Lennox  
26 Christine Menzies  
May 3 Wedding

## THANK YOU

**Mrs Winifred Menzies** would like to thank you for the flowers she received from the Church in March. They are much appreciated.

**Mrs Meta Frazer** wishes to say "thank you" for the gifts and cards she received on her 80th birthday. She was most appreciative of your thoughtfulness.

**Mrs Cathy Davidson** wishes to thank: *you* for the flowers she received from the Church. She was delighted with them

*In the tiny petal of a tiny flower that grew from a tiny pod  
Is the miracle and the mystery of all creation and God!*

I recently attended a conference run by the Spiritual Care Team at Wishaw General Hospital. It became clear that not all patients were aware of the fact that a chaplain was available 2417 in addition to their own minister. It was suggested that we might include the information below in our church magazines to raise awareness of the Spiritual Care Team.

Caryl

## **SPIRITUAL CARE WHILST IN HOSPITAL**

All of us can find ourselves challenged by illness - our own illness or that of a friend or relative. Sometimes this can trigger anxieties or distress which may effect our wellbeing. We are all more than simply a collection of organs; we have emotional psychological and spiritual sides to our being as well as physical.

The chaplains employed by NHSL can support you with this - they are available equally to the whole hospital community - patients, staff, relatives and carers. The NHSL chaplain will always put you at the centre, listening to your story and supporting you in whatever way you feel is most beneficial for you. Just ask a member of staff to get in touch with the chaplain on your behalf or contact them via the hospital switchboard. There is a chaplain on call 2417 for urgent situations.

You might want to see your own faith leader or representative. They are always welcome in the hospital and access can normally be arranged at any reasonable time - they simply need to check with the nursing staff when they arrive. There are some times when visits are not ok such as over mealtimes

or if the doctor or other healthcare staff are working with the patient. Equally visits that are very early or late can cause a problem too especially in shared rooms.

If a patient is receiving end of life care then it is usually possible to visit at almost anytime with the agreement of the nursing staff.

Hospital Phone Numbers:

Hairmyres 01335 585000

Monklands 01236 748748

Wishaw 01698 361000

If we but had the eyes to see  
God's face in every cloud,  
If we but had the ears to hear  
His voice above the crowd  
If we could feel His gentle touch  
In every springtime breeze  
And find a haven in His arms  
'Neath sheltering leafy trees . . .  
If we could just lift up our hearts  
Like flowers to the sun  
And trust His loving *promise*  
And pray, "*Thy will be done,*"  
We'd find the peace we're seeking,  
The kind no man can give,  
The peace that comes from knowing,  
*He died so we might live!*

Helen Steiner Rice

## **SIGNS OF SPRING**

Every year at this time, I get a real thrill to see the first buds and blossom appearing on the trees that are all around us. I have a primitive type of fear stored deep within my being that the buds and signs of spring may not appear one year and in the future, winter will be forever. Of course, all this is a load of rubbish. The Lord never fails to provide the seasons.

In the beginning of the winter months,. some of the common shrubs were really heavy with berries which led some of the 'experts' on TV and radio to predict a really severe winter. It never happened. Heavy snow was predicted on several occasions through the winter months. That never happened either.

When will people realise that there is only one God and it is only he who knows what will be. It is only he that knows the times and seasons. It is only he that knows all there is to know.

## **ATIESTATION OF CHURCH RECORDS**

A big thank you to all who maintain the records in this Church that the Church of Scotland/Presbytery requires us to maintain. It is heartening each year when they are all brought together to be made available for inspection by members of the congregation (should they so desire) and in the days following, being taken for inspection by Presbytery. This is not achieved by one person. It is achieved by various individual efforts and various group efforts and the importance of all this effort on behalf of our Church should not go unnoticed.

## WEEKLY OFFERINGS

I received a letter this week from the Church of Scotland's head office which is in George Street, Edinburgh and thought it would be worth passing on for your information. The letter explains what happens to each £10 that finds its way into the offertory bags each Sunday morning. I found it quite interesting and I hope you do too.

About £4.20 is kept by the local Church for all sorts of costs including maintaining the building, mission, worship and supporting Church groups.

About £5.00 goes to the parish ministries fund. This ensures we have ministries in every part of the country.

About £0.80 supports congregations with services such as Safeguarding, Law Department, General Trustees and Stewardship and Finance. Some of this money also ensures the mission of the Church is strengthened through the work of Councils. This is roughly split as follows:

- ?Op Mission Discipleship
- 4p Church and Society
- 6p Social Care
- 11p World Mission
- 40p Support and Services to your Church (legal advice, Accounting, safeguarding)
- Sp General Assembly and Moderator
- 7p Special Contributions

We should also remember that each Presbytery can use 4% of its total Ministries and Mission contributions at its own



discretion to assist congregations.

Finally, each £10 donation provides a powerful ministry, locally, nationally and globally.

## **A WORD OF THANKS**

We would like to record our thanks for a very generous donation of £300 from an anonymous donor which will assist in the maintenance of the new landscaped area of the garden.

## **FULFILMENT**

*Apple blossoms* bursting wide  
now beautify the tree.  
And make a Springtime picture  
that is beautiful to see . . .  
Oh, fragrant lovely blossoms,  
you'll make a bright bouquet  
If I but break your branches  
from the apple tree today . . .  
But if I break your branches  
and make your beauty mine,  
You'll bear no fruit in season  
when severed from the vine . . .  
And when we cut ourselves away  
from guidance that's divine,  
Our lives will be as fruitless  
as the branch without the vine . . .  
For as the flowering branches  
depend upon the tree  
To nourish and fulfil them  
till they reach futurity,

We too must be dependent  
on our Father up above,  
For we are but the *branches*  
and He's *the Tree of Love*.

Helen Steiner Rice

## **LIGHT**

Have you ever thought about how important light is in our lives? It is clear that God realised the importance of light because we read in Genesis 1:3, "Let there be light," and there was light.' Light was the first to be created.

Light is a guide. God brought His people out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. Throughout their long journey we learn from Exodus 13 that "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud" and by night He was "a pillar of fire to give them light."

Light also comes in the form of hope - a hope that something special will take place, a belief that it will happen and faith to trust in the eventual outcome. Isaiah lived between 700 and 800 years before the birth of Christ and yet he tells us in his prophecy, first of all about the virgin birth, later about the wonder of this child, for example, wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the Prince of Peace. He is also able to tell us of the cruel death he was destined to suffer.

Two hundred years later the promises given to Isaiah had still not come to pass but Zechariah makes a prophecy. While in Israel with a group a verse from Zechariah was read to us.

We were all standing at Bepthage, on our way to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus sent his disciples to fetch the colt. The verse reads, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

When Jesus was born a star guided the Wise Men to where the baby Jesus was lying. An old Polish carol which the children have sung says:

"Once a golden star was shining, clear and bright,  
Guiding kings of old across the eastern night.  
Only the star was guiding,  
Kings in the desert riding,  
Long ago, long ago."

This carol captures something of the enormous wonder of what God did for us. These kings brought him gold, which indicates that he is a king, but, in addition, they also brought frankincense and myrrh which foretold his death on the cross.

Within the pages of the New Testament many references are made to light. John the Baptist's task was to prepare the way and he is described as "a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." Jesus describes himself as the "Light of the world".

One of the most wonderful and at the same time most terrifying experiences of the three disciples - Peter, James and John - took place on a mountain believed to be Mount Tabor. There the disciples saw Jesus transfigured before their very eyes. Luke 9:29 describes the scene, "As he was

praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning."

What to me is the most dramatic conversion is the blinding light from heaven which Saul, soon to be Paul, saw on his way to Damascus. That was a very significant event. Without the writings of Paul the New Testament would not have contained such a valuable insight into the teachings of Jesus. The initial problem was that the people had viewed Saul as a persecutor and then they were presented with Paul who sought to spread the Gospel.

Paul and Silas' imprisonment in Philippi, near modern-day Thessalonica ended with an earthquake. The subsequent conversion of the jailer who initially asked for a light is quite wonderful. The jailer had seen the light.

I believe that our church building standing up on a rock is a light for all around the village.

## **FAITH AND HOPE**

The future is yours, it belongs to you,  
And with faith in God  
and in yourself, too,  
No hill's too high,  
no mountain too tall,  
For with faith in the Lord  
you can conquer them all -  
And all that you wish for  
that is honest and true  
The Lord will certainly give to you,  
Not always the way you most desire

But always he gives  
what you most require -  
So accept what He sends,  
be it bitter or sweet,  
For God knows best  
what makes life complete,  
And great is your gladness  
and rich your reward  
When you learn to accept  
the will of the Lord.

Helen Steiner Rice

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## **EGP (Edinburgh Global Partnerships)**

This summer I will be travelling to Kerala in the south of India alongside seven other volunteers with the charity, Edinburgh Global Partnerships. EGP is a student-run, registered charity at the University of Edinburgh that works local communities on community-led projects that cover a wide variety of development issues. The projects are centred on what the community really needs and works to improve the living conditions of all.

We will be helping a community group called Mitraniketan who have been helping people to alleviate poverty in Kerala for over 50 years. They aim at providing equal opportunities for all through providing education and getting involved in small, entrepreneurial start-up businesses. They run a number of educational institutions, from a nursery to a high school, as well as several profit generating businesses - the proceeds of which all go back into the community.

This year, Mitraniketan are - focused on empowering disadvantaged families and women from poor income backgrounds through a backyard poultry project that will not only allow them to start generating revenue for their families, but will also highlight significant nutrition benefits.

We will be travelling to the Mitraniketan community to help with the construction of the chicken coops, in addition to getting involved with the nutritional training that goes with the project. We also plan to get stuck in with all elements of Mitraniketan life.

In order to make this project a success we are aiming to raise

£11,000. This money will go entirely towards the project and the resources needed. All personal expenses such as flights, living costs, insurance and vaccinations will be covered by the team and no donation received will be used to this end.

To help meet this target we have been organising a number of events whilst at university ranging from sponsored fire walks to five-a-side football tournaments (with one volunteer even running a half marathon dressed as a chicken!).

My family are helping me by hosting a Fashion Show - 'Taylor Fashions' on the 16 April within the Church Hall. Admission is £5. It would be great to see many of you there to help support this cause and I will be giving a wee speech about the project on the night.

Richard Lovell

**SOCIAL EVENT** - Taylor Fashion Show - Thursday 16 April 2015 at 7.00 pm Admission £5.00.

## **FRUIT**

Various types of fruit are mentioned frequently in Scripture. Among the most common are grapes, figs, olives, pomegranates, and apples (perhaps to be identified with apricots or quince). Israel, in contrast to her neighbours, recognised the process by which trees reproduce by means of seeds carried in fruit to be a part of God's good plan at creation (Genesis 1:12,29). The continuing fruitfulness of Israel's trees was dependent on faithfulness to the covenant. (Deuteronomy.28:4,11,18). The first fruit to ripen was offered to God (Exodus 23:16, Nehemiah 10:35).

The word was also used figuratively. Fruit often indicates a thought close to our word results. The fruit of the spirit is the result of the spirit's workings in the lives of believers (Galatians 5:22-23). Similar is the use of fruit where we would speak of manifestations or expressions. The fruits of righteousness (Philippians 1:11; James 3:18), of repentance (Matthew 3:8), of light (Ephesians 5:9) are expressions of righteousness, repentance, and moral purity. Jesus cautioned that false prophets could be identified by the fruit they produced (Matthew 7:15-20), that is, by the qualities manifested in their lives. Jesus similarly warned of the necessity of bearing fruit that was compatible with citizenship in the kingdom of God (Matthew 21:43). Fruit sometimes has the sense of reward (Isaiah 3:10); John 4:36; Philippians 4:17). Fruit is also used as a picture for Christian converts (Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 16:15).

### **"LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVE EXCELLING"**

In a myriad of miraculous ways  
God shapes our lives and changes our days,  
Beyond our will or even knowing  
God keeps our spirit ever growing  
For lights and shadows, sun and rain,  
Sadness and gladness, joy and pain  
Combine to make our lives complete  
And give us victory through defeat . . .  
"Oh, Love Divine, All Love Excelling,"  
In troubled hearts you just keep dwelling,  
Patiently waiting for a "Prodigal Son"  
To say at last, "Thy will be done."

Helen Steiner Rice



## **AN EASTER MEDITATION**

In the glorious Easter Story  
A troubled world can find  
Blessed reassurance  
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.

## **OUR VISION**

**Our vision is to be a living, caring church  
at the heart of our communities -  
Celebrating worship, offering support.**