

OUR VISION

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



**HOLYTOWN PARISH CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND**

MARCH 2014

Dear Friends,

While sitting on a petrol station forecourt recently my eye was drawn to a sign which emblazoned the wall inside the shop attached to the petrol station - that sign said 'RUNNING ON EMPTY?' and then I noticed the one next to it which said, 'THIRSTY?'

Now obviously these signs were designed to encourage people paying for their petrol to buy a sandwich or a chocolate bar or indeed to buy a bottle of Irn Bru or water to take away their physical hunger or thirst.

However, I have to say, they spoke to me in a much more profound way for barely the day before I had been chatting to someone who I felt was running on empty, someone who was finding it all too hard to fill himself up in a meaningful way!

Also throughout the previous week I myself had been so extremely busy with a whole variety of activities that seemed to be sapping my time and energies - and at times it seemed like there was no space in my days at all for God and I was certainly beginning to feel the need of a 'top up' to my spiritual being!

Now, I am sure, spiritually, we all have moments such as that - there are times when we all 'run on empty' and can find no way to fill ourselves back up.

Equally I am sure that there are times when we will have an unquenchable 'thirst' - sometimes not knowing what we are thirsting for - other times knowing we thirst for God or

knowledge of God again to fill us up once more.

Remember Jesus too had times of 'running on empty' - times of unquenchable 'thirst' - and spiritual hunger and thirst need to be addressed just as physical hunger and thirst do and what better time to try and do that than during the season of Lent!

So my Lenten Challenge to you this year is to fill yourself up to the brim - try and satisfy your hunger, try and quench your thirst - and what better way to do that than to look once more at the teachings of Jesus in the gospels!

Why not take time in the first four weeks of Lent to read through a gospel each week, read it from start to finish in a week and familiarize yourself once more with the teachings you find there?

Be refreshed by what you read and let Jesus' teachings 'top up' your spiritual being.

Then in the last two weeks of Lent why not be practical - why not try and work through some of Jesus' teaching in your own life - and put it into practice in the lives of others.

A simple act of kindness each day for two weeks, a word of encouragement to someone each day for two weeks, time spent with someone each day for two weeks.

What can you put into practice from Jesus' teaching during Lent which might just help to fill others up?

But remember you will have to be filled up first by reading his

words!

Lenten Blessings
Caryl

FLOWER LIST

March	9	C Bell
	16	C Docherty
	23	S Connell
	30	-
April	6	U Smith

There are still a number of blank spaces on the Flower Calendar. If you are willing to add your name, the list will be found in the Vestibule of the Church.

THE GUILD

The Guild Session is almost over. The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March at 7.15 pm.

SPRING FAYRE -

Saturday 5th April - 11.00 am - 2.00 pm

The Committee: Linda Baillie, Kenneth Bell, Isa Hinshelwood, Ian Houston, Bill Jenkins, May Lovell, Susan Reid, Tom Stewart; treasurer: Syd McCartney

Stalls

Tea Room

The Guild

Cake & Candy	Susan Reid and Christine Duns
Burger & Hot Dogs	Kenneth and June Bell
Unwanted Gifts	The Girls' Brigade
Blue Stall	GB Officers
Lucky Dips	Netta and Rachel McCartney
Hand Knits	Betty McKenzie and Betty Reid
Jewellery	Margaret Anderson
Silent Auction	Graham Kyle and Tom Stewart
Games	The Boys' Brigade
Bouncy Castle	John Murray and David Shaw

Tea tickets, price £2 and Quiz Sheets, price £1 are on sale now and are available from any Committee member.

The Hall will be open in the evening on Friday 4th April and in the morning of Saturday 5th April to receive your gifts for the stalls. We will be most grateful if you can contribute something you have baked for the Baking Stall and the Tea Room. If you need help to get your gifts to the hall, get in touch with any Committee member and you will get the help you need.

BB REUNION

I realise there will be other reports on this event in this issue of the magazine but I felt I had to comment on the success of the dinner on the Saturday, the attendance at the parade to morning worship on the Sunday and the lunch we had afterwards. Compliments to all the officers and helpers for the organisation that went into this unique and special occasion for our BB company and our Church.

Annual Report

Once again it has been necessary to report on the activities and achievements within our Church over the past year. I lean heavily on the contributions that are made to the magazine to provide content for this report so once again, I would appeal to you all to provide content for the magazine. It is now more available than ever before. As well as the usual home deliveries, it can be picked up at the front door each month by everyone who attends morning worship. A sincere thanks to all contributors for 2013. It gives me the thankful problem of cutting down the large amount of content rather than struggling to do what I can with little content. We have a vibrant living Church here in Holytown. We hear the Good News preached each Sunday but let us also actively share the good news of Church activity and the Christian fellowship that goes along with it.

Appeal

Some of you will have noticed that the Church web site has not been updated for some time. I would appeal to anyone who has the skills and can put aside a little bit of time each month for ten months out of the year to put the content of the magazine on to the web site and maybe come up with some ideas for updating the functionality and overall content of the site from its current form.

Ravenscraig

I was dropping someone off about a week ago at the new Motherwell College which was built on the old Ravenscraig site. I let her off by the side of the road that goes down the

side of the college and had to wait for her calling me to let me know when I had to go back and collect her. During this time, I was having a look around and vaguely remembering the former landscape that was once a hive of heavy industry activity with smoking chimneys, trains going in and out, lots of noise and lots of men moving around with purpose. I vaguely remembered the bitterness when work at Ravenscraig came to an end and the brief press interest when the cooling towers bearing the name of the plant were demolished. On a more personal note, I remember playing rugby for Bellshill in our claret and amber strips against Dalziel High with their blue and white strips up at Dalziel's sports pitches at Cleland estate. At the end of the game, we all ended up looking the same because we would all be covered in the red dust that was generated by Ravenscraig and put out into the atmosphere via the massive chimneys on the site. As I looked across the flattened area, a movement caught my eye. At the edge of some new tree growth, a roe deer was grazing. I sat and watched it for about ten minutes then it gradually faded further into the young trees until it disappeared. This raised a few questions in my mind, namely,

- Where were the other deer because they are not solitary creatures.
- Where did this deer family come from?
- Will folks leave them alone?

It's interesting that this large piece of land was taken over by man for a while but only for a finite amount of time. The time of use came to a conclusion and initially, the site was an eyesore as large pieces of machinery and earth moving equipment cleared the former steel producing and processing buildings and their contents. And now, it is heartening to see

that God has taken another mess made by man and is making it right without any help from those who created the mess in the first place. If you just think for a moment about the amount of times this process has repeated itself not just in history but in our own lifetimes. I was thinking of Bellshill maternity and the time standing at Bellshill Cross with my mother (next to the Cross barbers for those who remember) to see the Queen driving past after she had performed the opening ceremony. I know flats and houses have been built on the site but they will also have a finite life cycle and God will again eventually take back what is his own.

BB CENTENARY

When our BB Company celebrated its centenary it was wonderful to see so many former members in the church for the Sunday Morning Service on 23rd February. Many memories of days past attending parades and sitting in the church at Dedication, Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day services would have been recalled.

For us in the congregation it was lovely to welcome so many weel-kent faces back to the church. The influence of the BB was always strong - just how strong is illustrated by the ex-members who came from places such as London, Newcastle and Leicester to take part in the Reunion events. It was delightful to see Charles Allen thoroughly enjoying chatting to so many of his friends in the village. Charles, now Lord Charles Allen, was very much at home.

We all enjoyed hearing the boys and the "old boys" singing "Will your anchor hold?", "Who is on the Lord's side?" and the other hymns. It was most uplifting.

We should like to thank the BB for inviting all of the congregation to have a light lunch in the hall at the close of the morning service. This gave all of us a great opportunity to renew friendships from years back even if at times it took a little time to jog our memories.

Sunday 23rd February will live on in our memories as a very special day.

Finally we should like to the BB Captain, Glen Baillie and the officers for including the congregation in the refreshments in the hall. For the ex-members it added that little bit extra as well as making the congregation feel very much a part of the Centenary Celebration.

THE FRIENDS WE MAKE

As part of a group being taken to the Holy Land by the well-known minister, Rev James Currie, I was in Jerusalem. Staying in the same hotel was a group from Australia. One of our group spotted that two of the Australians shared the same surname as me and told them about me. This led to my meeting Arthur and Lila Milne who hailed from Bordertown, South Australia. We swapped addresses and kept in touch. They visited me and together we went to the one area where the name is very common indeed, Aberdeenshire. Arthur said that his family had originated from Scotland and it was quite likely that we were related. That's quite a possibility when I can say that my great great grandfather had sixteen children!! Who knows?

While in Adelaide in 2001 I visited Lila in hospital before going

with Arthur and his brother and sister-in-law on a trip round the area. We had a most enjoyable time. Curiously, when we had our evening meal, we might well have been in Germany or Austria as we had Wiener Schnitzel for our main course. Perhaps this is because at least one village not far from Adelaide was settled by a group of Lutherans who had fled from Prussia due to being persecuted by the Calvinists. The village is called Hahndorf. Hahn was the name of the captain of the ship which took them to Australia and Dorf is a village in German. The captain stayed for a time in the area to help them to settle.

Recently a letter arrived in which Arthur told me of Lila's death - at the ripe age of 96. He enclosed a copy of the prayer which Lila said every morning. Let me share it with you.

Good Morning God!

You are ushering in another day
Untouched and freshly new
So here I come to ask you, God
If you'll renew me too
Forgive the many errors
That I made yesterday
And let me try again, dear God,
To walk closer in thy way -
But, Father, I am well aware
I can't make it on my own
So TAKE MY HAND and
HOLD IT TIGHT
For I can't WALK ALONE!

This prayer was read at the thanksgiving service.

DREAM DESTINATIONS!

For many of us a visit to the Maldives would be something quite exotic. For those who do visit the island what do they know of life for the people living there?

In a recent issue of "Praying for the Persecuted Church 2014" issued by the Barnabas Fund we learn that life for Christians could not be farther from idyllic. Anyone on the island who is not a Muslim cannot become a citizen or hold any public position, including politics or the judiciary. Civil law is based on Islamic sharia, and any public statement contrary to Islam is forbidden. Christians, who make up less than 0.2% of the population and any others who are non-Muslim can worship only in private. No non-Muslim places of worship exist. No Christian should encourage anyone to become a Christian. The punishment is either house arrest or imprisonment for five years. Any converts to Christianity are likely to lose their citizenship. Maldivian Christians suffer surveillance, ostracism and discrimination and they must also educate their children as Muslims. Foreign Christians can be deported for carrying Christian literature or having Christian symbols.

How fortunate we are compared with those who are Christians in what is seen as a wonderful holiday destination, the Maldives.

THE UNEXPECTED MIRACLES

The unexpected kindness
From an unexpected place,
A hand outstretched in friendship,
A smile on someone's face,

A word of understanding
 Spoken in an hour of trial
 Are unexpected miracles
 That make life more worthwhile -
 We know not how it happened
 That in an hour of need
 Somebody out of nowhere
 Proved to be a friend indeed -
 For God has many messengers
 We fail to recognize
 But He sends them when we need them
 For His ways are wondrous wise!
 So keep looking for an "angel"
 And keep listening to hear -
 For on life's busy crowded streets
 You will find God's presence there.

Helen Steiner Rice

Financial Statement as at 28th February 2014

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
FWO	3,220.80	3,597.90
Plate	1,347.94	883.60
Standing Orders	<u>1,066.00</u>	<u>1,006.00</u>
	<u>£5,634.74</u>	<u>£5,547.50</u>
	Increase £87.24	
Average per Sunday	£704.34	£693.44
No of Sundays	8	8

Fabric Fund

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
January	£24.60	£52.20
February	115.50	55.85
Total to date	£140.10	£108.05

STATED ANNUAL MEETING

The Stated Annual Meeting was held on Sunday 2nd March at the close of Morning Worship. At the meeting the accounts were approved. Our treasurer, Mrs Susan Reid, drew attention to the drop in our finances but assured us that she was looking forward to the continued loyal support of the congregation in 2014.

Two members of the Congregational Board - Mrs Nancy McPherson and Mrs June Bell - resigned. We thank them sincerely for their service. Mr Tom Reid was re-elected to serve for a further three years. No new members were appointed.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year the World Day of Prayer was written by Christian women of Egypt. The notes given in connection with this tell us a little about religion in Egypt which you will find of interest.

"12% of Egyptians are Copts. The largest and most ancient Christian Church is the Coptic Orthodox Church, which regards St Mark as its first Patriarch. The Coptic language is still used in the church liturgy. In addition it is estimated that there are tens of thousands of Greek Orthodox Christians,

around 25,000 Armenian Orthodox Christians and a small community of Syrian Orthodox Christians. It is estimated that there are over 200,000 Egyptian Catholics. The largest of the 17 churches constituting the Protestant denomination is the Coptic Evangelical Church. The Calendar of the Egyptian Church is a continuation of the Ancient Egyptian Calendar. Present day farmers continue to rely on it. It is also known as the Calendar of the Martyrs to commemorate the suffering of the persecuted church during the Roman era. Persecution did not extinguish the church. It strengthened it. Herodotus, the Greek historian wrote that the Egyptians 'are religious to excess, far beyond any other race of men.'

"Christianity arrived early in Egypt and has flourished ever since with millions of adherents both in Egypt and Coptic communities abroad. Since the eleventh century Egyptian Christians have formed a minority. There are over 2,626 churches in Egypt and a recent census estimates the number of Christians in Egypt as 17 million plus 3 million Egyptian Christians living abroad."

Interestingly some of those "living abroad" worship within the bounds of the Presbytery of Hamilton. After the closure of Burnbank Parish Church the Coptic Church took over the building. All of the Burnbank congregation were invited to attend when the Coptic Church first met. There was a service followed by a meal. Those who attended were made most welcome. I believe that this is the second church of this denomination in Scotland.

SO SWIFT THE WAY! SO SHORT THE DAY!

In this fast-moving world of turmoil and tension,

With problems and troubles, too many to mention,
Our days are so crowded and our hours are so few,
There's *so little time* and *so much to do* . . .
We are *pressured* and *pushed* until we are "dizzy",
There's never a minute we're not "crazily busy",
And sometimes we wonder as we rush through the day -
Does God really want us to hurry this way?
Why are we impatient and continually vexed,
And often bewildered, disturbed and perplexed?
Perhaps we're too busy with our own selfish seeking
To hear the dear Lord when He's tenderly speaking . . .
We are working so tensely in our self-centred way,
We've no time for listening to what God has to say,
And hard as we work, at the end of the day
We know in our hearts we did not "pay our way" . . .
But God in His mercy looks down on us all,
And though what we've done is so pitifully small,
He makes us feel welcome to kneel down and pray
For the chance to do better as we start a new day,
And life would be better if we learned to rely
On our Father in heaven without asking "why" . . .
And if we'd remember as we rush through the day,
"The Lord is our Shepherd and He'll lead the way" . . .
So don't rush ahead in reckless endeavour,
Remember "*He leadeth*" and "*Time is forever*"!

Helen Steiner Rice

Notice on a Church Notice Board

When the load feels heavy, it's a sign you're climbing.

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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