

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 2015

Dear Friends,

Well here we are at the beginning of Lent once more, Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday have been and gone and now we settle into the 40-day Lenten period for another year.

Lent is always a period characterized by reflection, 40 days when we are challenged to take time to be with God, to reflect on Him, on our lives and even to question ourselves about our lives and how we are living them. In so doing hopefully we grow closer to God and discover new things about ourselves and our deepening faith journey.

This is the time of year when people often take themselves off on retreat - the very word retreat suggesting a backing off from the busyness of life and a getting away from all the hustle and bustle and distractions of life to a place of quiet contemplation where that focusing on God can be experienced.

Retreat is supposed to recall for us the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, and that's why so many people on retreat go to a specific retreat house or centre where they can indeed find a place to quieten their hearts and minds and so become more aware of God in their lives.

Yet, it always seems to me that the time Jesus spent in the wilderness was not merely a time of quiet contemplation away from the world; it was also a time of great challenge and temptation - as well as Jesus becoming more aware of God's will for him and his life.

I deeply believe we do all need these times of spiritual searching - times of retreat from our busyness to be with God

- and what better time to do so than during Lent.

However, I do not think we should be totally disengaged from the world around us when experiencing such times. For I believe that as we become more aware of God in our lives in our 'retreat times' we actually receive from Him a very special gift and that is the gift of awareness.

Such a wonderful gift to receive!

For it then allows us to view the world around us in a totally different way - we begin to view it as if through the eyes of God - we see the temptations, we see injustice, we see how we could make a difference to God's world by standing up for what is right and just.

I also believe that once we become more aware of God in such times of retreat or quiet we can then actually start to become more aware of him in the busyness of our lives too. So when we are faced with the temptations and challenges of the world in our own lives, with our gifting of awareness, we can listen for God's voice, hear His voice and respond to His guiding much more easily to get us through such times.

When Jesus came out of His wilderness time - or retreat time - he began his ministry.

When we come out of our retreat times we too must go about our ministry of showing God's love to the world and standing up for the voiceless to bring God's justice to His world.

So my Lenten challenge to you personally is to take those times of retreat over the next forty days of Lent - try and find

more time to be close to God - even just a little more time each day - let God heighten your spiritual awareness of Him in all parts of your life and then return from such times ready to share His love and justice in the world.

Lenten Blessings to you all!

Caryl

HOLYTOWN AND WRANGHOLM PARISH REGISTER FOR 2014

Baptisms

Aleena Grace Campbell
Abbie Rae Campbell
Joshua Craig Frew
Zara Mary Frew
Zach Oliver Fannon
Jamie Stewart Hill
Connor Ferguson Bradley

Weddings

Lynne Murray to Scott Haney
Dee Hunter to Allan Stevenson
Margaret Murphy to Ian Watson
Rita Glen to David Devine
Corinne Clements to Ross Kelly
Fiona Newman to Ross Elliot
Evelyn Williamson to Douglas Park
Stephanie Adams to Edward McConnachie

Pamela Wright to Graeme Reid
Dawn Ferguson to Stephen Bradley
Carolyn Grant to Samuel Arthur

Wedding Blessings and Renewal of Vows

Marion and Peter Butler
Elaine and Chris Biggam

Funerals

January

Janet France
Alan Thompson
Alexander Nicol
Robert Thomson

February

Rachel Stevenson
William Hunter
Andrew Mitchell

March

May McGhee
Agnes McLellan

April

John Frazer

May

Charles Eadie

June

Susan McAnulla
John Taylor
Margaret Simpson

July

Catherine Mathewson
Janet Rennie
Sam Blythe

August

Elizabeth Murray
Alexander Milton
Elizabeth Hughes
Annie Erwin

September

Janet Cathcart

October

Jeannie Johnstone
Margaret McLaughlin
Pauline Skelton

November

Jim McPherson
Alan McClymont

December

James Hillock
John Bond

FLOWER LIST

Mar 8	C Bell
15	C Docherty
22	I Hinshelwood
29	S Connell
April 5	C Dunns

THANK YOU

Mrs Sarah Swann recently celebrated her 95th birthday. Many good wishes to her from all of the congregation. Mrs Swann would like to thank everyone for the flowers, cards and good wishes received.

Mrs Sheila Mitchell would like to say "thank you" for the flowers she received from the church. She really appreciated them.

Most of us would get along well if we used the advice we give to thers. *Anon*

HOLY WEEK - Monday 30 March to Friday 3 April

This year the Holy Week Services will be held in Holytown. From Monday to Wednesday and on Friday the Service will be in the Church. On Thursday evening please note the Service will be in the Hall. All services will be at 7 pm.

On Sunday 5th April the Sunrise Service will be held in the Church Hall grounds as usual. The exact time, which depends on the time of sunrise, will be announced later. As usual breakfast will be available in the Hall afterwards.

SCOTTISH NIGHT

I have heard no negatives about our Scottish night which we had in the church hall on 20th February. It seemed to go really well from start to finish and everyone enjoyed the content and format. Although it's been said before, it's great to have the opportunity for us to enjoy each other's company under the banner of a church event.

Thanks are due to a few folks who helped make this night a success.

Peter and Davy for providing the music

Isa and May for doing all the organising and also helping decorate the hall

Cynthia and Norman for the table decorations and the song sheets

Jim for having the hall sparkling

John for setting out the tables and chairs

Amy and Sophie for their wee recitals

Tom and all from Buffet Delight for the catering

Freda and Linda for helping serve the tea and coffee
Caryl for her opening remarks and the encouragement and support she has given to the social committee
Most especially to all who attended without whom all the above efforts would have been pointless

HUMOUR IN THE KIRK

The Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning, 'Jesus walks on the Water.'
The sermon tonight, 'Searching for Jesus'.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school

days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hospitality.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5.00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm.

Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

And this one just about sums them all up:

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

While looking for the Scots Dictionary I spotted a book from the 1920s which an old friend had given me. The title is "The Nor' East" by W S Bruce. When I looked at it one section brought back memories of Holytown Church from the mid 1800s. Many meetings of the male members were held in order to appoint a precentor. (The women had no say in the matter!) It seemed as if the precentor never was too long in his post.

What is a precentor? A precentor was entrusted with leading congregational worship. His only tool was a tuning fork. He sat directly under the minister at what was known as the precentor's desk. Our precentor's desk disappeared around 1910 when the chancel was added to the church.

The book I found tells the story of a visiting minister thanking the precentor for leading the praise in the old Highland way.

The precentor replied, "I lost the tune a' thegither" He continued "I'm ashamed o' masel'. I gaed aff the tune the nicht. I began wi' 'Irish' but lost it in the second line. But I caught the 'French' i' the third line, and keepit him firm." The minister remarked "Well done, you ought to have been at Waterloo!"

Another story tells of a young precentor who did receive a bit of encouragement. "One Sunday it happened to be a portion of Psalm 119, beginning with the words: 'Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of Thy precepts divine.' An old elder, observing his timorousness and the several attempts he made to begin, said to him at the close of the service, 'Yon verse, laddie, wis awful' appropriate. But haud ye on, and He'll teach ye the perfec' wye yet."

This description given of a beadle gives us a glimpse into days long past. The beadle in question, now retired due to ill health, was reminiscing to the minister and said these words.

"I aye felt I was unworthy o' the place, sir. Ye ken, the man that cairries up the buiks to the poopit wad need to be a model man. He shud be nae far ahint ony o' the elders. It's a sair responsibeelity that he has upon his shooders; and I aye felt it a wecht upo' me. Mony a time I prayed aboot it; an' Mr --- aften spoke aboot it tae me. He liket me, ye ken, to magniffee ma office."

How times have changed - almost beyond recognition!!

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

None of us have any idea what is round the next corner in our

lives. I had used my Concessionary Fare Card just before 5 pm on one day and slightly before 10 am the next day was told that it was invalid. At first I could not believe it. The driver suggested that I had at some point lost the card but soon realised that was not the case. There was nothing else which would give a satisfactory answer than to go to Buchanan Bus Station to investigate.

There I laid the card down and asked why it no longer functioned. After a moment or so the man there looked at me and said "you are dead". For a long time I had been aware of another person with the same name and date of birth but she didn't live in Hamilton and I had never encountered her anywhere. Whoever cancelled the card had paid no heed to the address. Had I not encountered a mix-up in Hairmyres Hospital I would have had no idea that another person existed.

Once more all is once again - the card has been replaced and I am back in business. Surely this event should convince us that even the smallest detail could be important and make the difference between causing distress and allowing life to proceed with the minimum of fuss.

AN ANCIENT PRAYER

Give me a good digestion, Lord, and also something to digest.
Give me a healthy body, Lord, and sense to keep it at its best.
Give me a healthy mind, good Lord, to keep the good and pure in sight,
Which, . . . Seeing sin, is not appalled, but finds a way to set it right.
Give me a mind that is not bound, that does not whimper,

whine or sigh;
Don't let me worry overmuch about the fussy thing called "I".
Give me a sense of humour, Lord;
Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some happiness from life and pass it on to other folk.

CHRIST ALONE

The world, I thought, belonged to me -
Goods, gold and people, land and sea -
Where'er I walked beneath God's sky
In those old days my word was 'I'.

Years passed, there flashed my pathway near
The fragment of a vision dear;
My former word no more sufficed
And what I said was - 'I and Christ'.

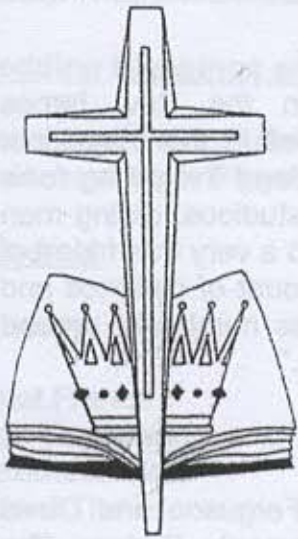
But, O, the more I looked on Him,
His glory grew, while mine grew dim,
I shrank so small, He towered so high,
All I dared say was - 'Christ and I'.

Years more the vision held its place
And looked me steadily in the face;
I speak now in a humbler tone,
And what I say is - 'Christ alone'.

Anon

*Next time you ask, "How are you?" Then do make sure you
stay and listen to the answer you might make someone's day.*

DO YOU REMEMBER?



This design was used regularly when we produced monthly Bible Reading Notes. It was designed by a colleague of mine when I worked in Coatbridge Technical College. One day while chatting I mentioned that I had done my business training in the office of Creamola Food Products. His eyes lit up. Then he told me he was the "Creamola Boy". Do you remember the packets with the globe of the world and a little lad with his legs dangling over it. This little lad went on to become an Art teacher and taught in the

Dundyvan annexe one day a week. Quite a coincidence!!

Building the Manse



1951 - Fete in Holytown School in aid of the Manse Building Fund. Left to right: Mrs Law, Mrs McMinn, Miss Russell, Mrs Wilson, Mrs McLeman, Miss M. Milne, Mrs Milne, Mr D. I. Paterson, Mrs Pattison, Mrs Brackenridge, Rev. J. McLeman.

Back in 1951 a fete opened by Mr William Whitelaw raised the amazing sum of £1,000. This is a remarkable amount when you consider that it would have taken a Police Constable two years to earn that.

Patience and perseverance - When the Rev James McLeman died in 1982 this was included in the magazine. "The young folks were not forgotten - indeed the young folks of that day learned a lot from the quiet, studious, caring man who was not merely their minister but also a very true friend of all. Mr McLeman had a tremendous amount of patience and trust and although latterly his Bible Class numbered around forty it had begun with only four members."

Special Memories

The Boys' Brigade - In 1973 Robert Ferguson and David McDonald were the first to receive Queen's Badges (the highest award which can be attained) in our company. They were followed in 1977 by Tom Ferguson. In a bygone era two had received King's Badges.

The Girls' Brigade - In 1971 Margaret Anderson was the first in our company to be presented with the Queen's Award (the highest award which can be attained). She was followed in 1975 by Elizabeth Hunter receiving the same award.

These four young people were the trail blazers for others to follow in their footsteps.

A very direct Command - An article concerning the preaching of a Sole Nominee ends with a very direct command. **BE THERE**. Orders don't come much clearer than

that.

(My thanks to Isa for giving me the magazines in which these facts are contained.)

THE EASTER MESSAGE - WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Last Easter, when my voice was lifted up
To sing the praises of my risen Lord,
I had not tasted sorrow's bitter cup;
The music held for me no minor chord.

This Eastertide my stricken heart sends up
The strains I lift in accents clear and strong;
For I have drained the dregs of sorrow's cup,
And learned the meaning of the Easter song.

I know the sweetness of the minor chord
The glory of the major full and clear,
I know the Power of my risen Lord -
Praise God He lives, and they shall live whom I held dear.

And though I cannot help the tears that flow,
And though my heart is as sad as sad can be,
I sing the Easter Song because I know
The Blessed Easter message is for me!

(The Easter Message was written by John Cunningham who was a friend of Colportage.)

AN OLD LOCAL NEWSPAPER

The old copy of the "Bellshill Speaker" which I found was printed in September 1968. Why was this paper kept? It tells the story of our former minister, Rev Thomas Swanston, who together with two Scottish friends was in Prague when the city and other parts of what was then Czechoslovakia was invaded by Russian tanks. He was roused very early, they hastily packed and the three set off in their car to escape. After a difficult journey they finally reached Germany.

The article tells how the local Czechs had painted over road signs and were directing the soldiers in the direction of Poland in order to confuse them. Earlier the Czechs and the Russians had been friends but this invasion changed that.

What I remember vividly is the fact that whoever was preaching on the Sunday morning following the invasion began the service by telling the congregation that the minister and his friends had escaped and were fit and well.

Contact with the friends, even after this episode, were maintained and a further visit was paid to the country the following year. These friends were Christians, some of whom had been forced to do certain jobs in spite of their professional training.

ARE YOU LOST?

The story is told of friends coming off a busy motorway and finding themselves in a side road. They spotted a church notice board. On it were written the words "If you're heading in the wrong direction, remember - God allows U-turns."