

## **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**

**OCTOBER 2015**

Dear Friends,

Charles Dickens once said in his book 'A Christmas Carol' - "There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humour."

We were talking recently in church of laughter, our need for laughter and of God's laughter - which we perhaps don't always think about!

We were also talking of why it might be good for all of us to join in with God's laughter occasionally - to try and look for it everywhere in life - even we Presbyterians - in fact, maybe especially because we are Presbyterians and have that Presbyterian image!

I have to say as we travelled down to Carlisle on our recent church outing the bus was very subdued and quiet - people were conversing with each other, catching up with the news of their lives and no doubt looking forward to their day together.

On the return journey however, it was quite a different story!

The bus was full of conversation and indeed sitting at the front of the bus, as I was, all I could hear coming from the back was waves of riotous laughter!

Then as if 'geed-up' by all the riotous laughter at the back of the bus soon the front of the bus was in uproar too as people sitting across from each other engaged in jovial conversation, great fun and good humour (poking fun at each other too by the way!!) and generally just got to know each other better in a different setting than 'Sunday morning church'!

And the laughter was indeed contagious - and irresistibly so - for soon we were all laughing together at the front of the bus too!

Doesn't laughter lift your heart; it gives you a warm, cosy feeling inside so that even just for a moment you can forget everything else in life which might be bothering you?

Laughter comes freely - costs nothing - and it comes most when we engage with others and find a common sense of humour!

As you know one of the 'big things' in my ministry is relationships - building them, getting to know each other better, getting to know our community better and so getting to know God and his ways better!

It strikes me that every time we have a social event in our church family and choose to take part in that event we get to know each other better. For in doing so every time, we get to see a different 'side of folk' and that's how we build solid relationships within our fellowship - relationships where laughter can be just a natural part of the them and that in turn is how our fellowship becomes strong and sound, loving and caring.

Some folk see laughter as trivial - but I feel laughter can bring folk together - and there was no denying that my heart was certainly lifted and delighted by all the fun and laughter that was going on in that bus on the way home!

God made us to be in community, not on our own, and to be in community we need to get to know those around us better -



warts and all!

We need to build sound relationships with each other - to make new friends and acquaintances - and what better way to do that than during social occasions, such as our outings or Christmas Dinners or Spring Fayres or Church Clean-ups or by joining our organisations!

All of these occasions provide plenty of opportunity for getting to know each other better and in my experience of all these events so far - loads of laughter which rightly lifts our hearts and gladdens our souls!

So why not come and join in the laughter occasionally - and see God laughing too - for aren't we all made in the image of God?

Blessings  
Caryl

## **FLOWER LIST**

October 11 Betty Reid  
          18 Betty McKenzie  
          25 June Bell  
November 1 C Boyd

## **THANK YOU**

Winifred Menzies would like to thank Una and the Ladies from the Keep-fit class for the lovely cards and flowers received from them and also the flowers from the Church. They were much appreciated.

## **A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

Advance notice: We shall be having a Christmas Dinner in the Hall on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December. More information will be given later.

## **THE GUILD**

The new Session of The Guild will begin on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 7.15 pm in the Michael Sherry Facility, Main Street, Holytown. This session the Guild will be meeting every week. The programme for the first few weeks is:

Oct 14	Open Night
21	Harmony Entertains
28	Re-Dedication Service - Rev Caryl Kyle
Nov 4	Wood Turner

Do go along - you will be made most welcome.

## **DEAR RUTH**

Dear Ruth,

Ruth went to her letter box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again.

There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter:

Dear Ruth,

I'm going to be in your neighbourhood Saturday afternoon and I'd like to stop by for a visit.

Love always, Jesus.

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table, "Why would the Lord want to visit me?"

I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets, "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner." She reached for her purse and counted out its contents, Five pounds and forty pence. "Well, I can get some bread and cold meat at least."

She threw on her coat and hurried out the door.

A loaf of French bread, a half pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk . . . Leaving Ruth with a grand total of twelve pence to last her until Monday.

Nonetheless she felt good as she headed home, her meagre offerings tucked under her arm.

"Hey lady, can you help us, lady?"

Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans, she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the close, a man and a woman, both of whom dressed in little more than rags.



"Look lady, I haven't got a job, you know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, Lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both.

They were dirty, they smelled bad and frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to.

"Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts of meat and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him."

"Yes well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway."

The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley.

As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart.

"Sir, wait!" The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest."

She handed the man her grocery bag.

"Thank you lady. Thank you very much!"

"Yes, thank you!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering. "You know, I've got another coat

at home. Here, why don't you take this one." Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street . . . without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest.

"Thank you lady! Thank you very much!"

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him.

She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope stuck through her letterbox.

"That's odd. The postman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the letterbox and opened it.

Dear Ruth,

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. and thank you, too, for the beautiful coat.

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed.

*My dearest Lord, be thou a bright flame before me,  
a guiding star above me, a smooth path beneath me,  
a kindly shepherd behind me, today and for evermore.*

*St Columba of Iona*



## CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Ross Baillie on becoming this year's Junior Champion and Captain's Trophy winner at Holytown Bowling Club.

## THE GEEZER CALENDAR

This calendar describes what was happening on the land month by month. Curiously it begins not with January but with September. The original list had been written by a boy using the same sort of rhyme as we use for the length of the months - thirty days hath September . . .

Sept/Oct	Olive Harvest
Nov/Dec	Planting grain

Jan/Feb	Late planting
March	Hoeing up of flax
April	Barley Harvest
May	Harvest and festivity
June/July	Vine tending
August	Summer fruit

The crops planted during January and February are millet, peas, lentils, melons and cucumbers.

## **RULES FOR HARVESTING**

Rules to be observed when gathering in crops are set out clearly in the Bible. If a sheaf was forgotten, it was to be left. When the olive trees had been beaten, everything remaining on the trees was not to be stripped off. Likewise when the grapes were picked anything left was not to be gleaned.

But, what was to happen to any residue? Any stranger or orphan or widow could pick whatever was left. Was this an old-world method of helping the poor? Nowadays it is doubtful with today's methods of harvesting if anything worthwhile would remain. (Cf Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

## **THE SOUL, LIKE NATURE, HAS SEASONS, TOO**

When you feel cast down and despondently sad  
 And you long to be happy and carefree and glad,  
 Do you ask yourself, as I so often do,  
 Why must there be days that are cheerless and blue?  
 Why is the song silenced in the heart that was gay?  
 And then I ask God what makes life this way,  
 And His explanation makes everything clear -

The soul has its seasons the same as the year.  
Man too must pass through life's autumn of death  
And have his heart frozen by winter's cold breath,  
But spring always comes with new life and birth,  
Followed by summer to warm the soft earth . . .  
And oh, what a comfort to know there are reasons  
That souls, like nature, must too have their seasons -  
Bounteous seasons and barren ones, too,  
Times for rejoicing and times to be blue . . .  
For with nothing but sameness how dull life would be,  
For only life's challenge can set the soul free . . .  
And it takes a mixture of both bitter and sweet  
To season our lives and make them complete.

Helen Steiner Rice

## OLIVE OIL

In Jerusalem it was interesting to see the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is reckoned that these are the same trees as those which were there at the time of Jesus' betrayal. They are really gnarled and are certainly not pretty to look at but nevertheless they still produce olives and these olives are used for many purposes. Personally as I am allergic to olive oil, it would be unwise for me to eat any of them.

Olive oil was used for cooking instead of butter or cooking fat. Due to this it was part of the meal offering. It is described in Leviticus 2:1; "When anyone presents a grain-offering to the Lord, the offering shall be of choice flour, the worshipper shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it."



Oil was also used as fuel for lamps. In Matthew 25:3-4 we read, "When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps."

Oil had also a cosmetic use. When it was boiled with soda it became soap. Oil also was rubbed into the skin to make it shine and put on the head to make the hair gleam.

Oil was also used to consecrate prophets, priests and kings. Some will recall that at our Queen's coronation oil was used to consecrate her service to the nation and the Commonwealth.

Oil is also important for healing. Think about the story of the Good Samaritan who poured oil on the wounds. It still works today when you rub olive oil on a bump which is likely to bruise.

Olive oil has been well tried and tested over the years from biblical times right up to the present day.

## **THE FLOWER OF FRIENDSHIP**

**Life** is like a **Garden**  
And **Friendship** like a **Flower**  
That blooms and grows in beauty  
With the sunshine and the shower  
And lovely are the blossoms  
That are tended with great care  
By those who work unselfishly  
To make the place more fair  
And, like the **Garden** blossoms,  
**Friendship's Flower** grows more sweet  
When watched and tended carefully

By those we know and meet, . . .  
And, like sunshine adds new fragrance  
And raindrops play their part,  
Joy and sadness add new beauty  
When there's **Friendship** in the heart . . .  
And, if the seed of **Friendship**  
Is planted deep and true  
And watched with understanding,  
**Friendship's Flower will bloom for you.**

Helen Steiner Rice

## **HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

Many will recall the hymn "Burdens are lifted at Calvary", which was written by John M Moore. Although John Moore has lived for many years in Ontario, Canada he was born in Kirkintilloch. John was involved with the Tent Mission in Glasgow as well as having been minister of the Baptist Church in Inverness. He does visit Scotland. I met him when he came to the Colportage Conferences in Arbroath.

Recently my Colportage colleagues gave me the words and music of a new hymn which John Moore has written and the music he composed for it. He is now 90 years of age but his zest for new hymns has not diminished. The hymn is entitled "Reach beyond".

Reach beyond! Let Christ inspire you  
Reach beyond! The need is great  
Reach beyond! It's time for action  
Reach beyond! The people wait.

Reach beyond! Let Christ inspire you.  
Rise and pray in Jesus' Name.  
Satan's chains and powers are broken  
By the Gospel we proclaim.

Reach beyond! Prepare to serve Him.  
Cleansed in heart from every sin  
Be His servant, fit and ready,  
Needy souls for Christ to win.