

Pollokshields Church of Scotland Glasgow

VISION

March
2010

Minister: The Rev. David Black 423 4000
Session Clerk: Mrs. Mary Morrison 632 1659



The Lenten Lily

Cover Comment is on page 3

'TIS spring, come out to ramble
The hilly brakes around,
For under thorn and bramble
About the hollow ground
The primroses are found.

And there's the windflower
chilly
With all the winds at play,
And there's the Lenten lily
That has not long to stay
And dies on Easter Day.

AE Housman

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Forthcoming Services

7th March	11 am	Morning Service, Junior Church and Crêche.
14th March	11 am	Holy Communion, Junior Church and Crêche.
21st March	11 am	Pulpit Exchange, Rev. A. Robertson, as David Black is at Kelvinside Hillhead on Interim Moderator Duty.
28th Match	11 am	Palm Sunday. Morning Service, Junior Church and Crêche. Followed by Annual Stated Meeting.
4th April	11 am	Easter Day Celebration

HOLY WEEK 2010

We hope to hold an act of worship each night during Holy Week this year.

Formats for Monday and Tuesday are to be confirmed but Wednesday evening will be part of the “Hear I AM” Lent Studies and there will be formal services on Maundy Thursday in Sherbrooke St. Gilbert’s and on Good Friday here both at 7 pm.

VISION. Copy date for the April issue of VISION is Sunday 21st March.

From the Minister

As we celebrate the season of Lent, looking forward to Good Friday and Easter, the high points for our faith and hope in Jesus Christ, so we are challenged not with the traditional giving up but to take on.

To take on something new which will help us reflect on what it means to be followers of Jesus in the 21st century.

If you have not already tried one of the “Hear I AM” series then why not join the one in March? It has a day and evening time slot and will offer a different way to look at some of the lesser known players in the drama that is Holy Week and Easter. (See page 2 for details).

Or if you have a computer why not try the 40 daily readings offered by the Scottish Bible Society?

Or just take time to read the Gospel afresh, for what it says to you uninterpreted by preacher or scholar is important - and if it leaves you with questions - come and ask.

As the national church faces up to its financial and theological struggles, as we all wrestle with a society which would tell us that Easter has no relevance, it is up to every one of us to take seriously the challenge of 1 Peter 3 v 15, which says: *“Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.”*

Share with someone this Easter the reason the bun has a cross on it and why we roll our eggs - for if you don't who can blame them if they think it is only to do with chocolate?

With all good wishes,

David R. Black

“Hear: I AM”

Listening to God in 2010

This month covers the period of Lent and looks forward to Holy Week and Easter,

Following a desire for more reading and understanding the Bible together we will offer a series called:

Exploring God's Word - Characters in the Holy Week Story

Time - 11am-12 noon or 7-8 pm on Wednesdays from 3rd March.

Place - Session Room

This series will tie in with the mid-week worship each week and the evening meeting repeats the morning one, so choose which suits you best to come to. We will look at **Women in the Jesus Story, The Jewish Leaders, the Disciples, the Roman Authority and Unfaithful Followers**, to build a better picture of the background against which Jesus' story unfolds.

The Minister says: “This series came from the discussions at the first series of “Hear I AM”.

They will have a variety of formats, to offer more people the chance to open up their own understanding of the Bible for themselves. I may have been invited to do more of the talking but don't expect a monologue! Come and listen and also have your say.”

Lent

GIVING up chocolates for Lent? That reduces the observance of this ancient Christian season to the level of a New Year resolution.

Yet self-denial is one of the traditional elements of Lent, which with prayer, penitence and almsgiving commemorates Christ's death and resurrection.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year fell on 17th February. The day before this, Shrove Tuesday, is the last day of feasting before Lent. Celebrations then vary from an exuberant Mardi Gras carnival to enjoying a simple pancake meal. (Pancake ingredients include fat, butter and eggs, which some folk would exclude from their Lenten diet.) On Shrove Tuesday people can be 'shriven' - sins are confessed and absolution given so that the person may enter Lent 'clean'.

On Ash Wednesday ashes gathered from the previous year's palm crosses may be mixed with oil and the paste used to make the sign of a cross on the forehead.

The 4th Sunday in Lent is 'Mothering Sunday'. The origin of this is the 16th century celebration of the Mother Church, although nowadays this has been watered down to be 'Mother's Day'.

The 5th and 6th Sunday are Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday.

***Cover Comment**

The Lenten Lily has been identified as a Hellebore, similar to the Christmas Rose, Helleborus Niger, which despite its name is white. The Lenten Lily has also been identified with the Daffodil.

Kings

Q. Who was the first king of Israel? A. Saul! *Correct, well done!*

Q. Who was the second king of Israel! A. David! *Sorry, wrong!*

When Saul died Abner, his army commander, proclaimed Ishbosheth King of Israel. However it was David who had been anointed king, so Ishbosheth reigned only two years before being assassinated by two of his officers. This left the way clear for David to become king.

We thus have a succession of great kings - Saul, David and Solomon. All three were mighty warriors and great kings.

Saul was not flawless and several times blotted his copybook.



David was whole heartedly

God's man. As general he had "slain his tens of thousands", but it was as statesman though that he asserted his authority on the warring tribes of Israel and welded them into one nation. When he was an old man his son Adonijah was next in line of succession, and indeed proclaimed himself king, but Bathsheba reminded David that he had promised his crown to Solomon. Almost

with his dying breath David summoned forces to quell the rebellion and put her son on the throne.

Solomon was also undoubtedly a great king. Militarily he maintained with Abner's help the cohesion of the tribal confederacy left to him by his father, but his real genius was elsewhere. By brilliant commercial trading he expanded his empire and became fabulously wealthy. He had hundreds of chariots and thousands of horsemen, and



initiated magnificent building projects. He was renowned for his wisdom and understanding. He ruled his people harshly - forced labour and swingeing taxes. He also collected hundreds of foreign wives and concubines and these turned his heart away from God.

He failed to pass on to his son his qualities of wisdom and judgement. The consequence was that his son Rehoboam's first recorded words to his people were "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

This ill-advised comment resulted in a split kingdom - Judah in the south with the rightful Rehoboam as king and Israel in the north under the rebel Jeroboam.

Two lines of kings followed. Judah *in general* had more 'good' kings, while Israel *in general* had 'bad' kings. Two kings of Judah merit special mention.

Asa was a 'really good' king. He was "fully committed to God", he removed idols, repaired the altar, smashed sacred stones and abolished cult prostitution. He even deposed the Queen-mother because she had made an Ashera pole. In his final years though his loyalty to God wavered as he looked elsewhere for help with military and personal problems.

Manasseh was 'a really bad' king, one of the vilest kings of Judah (which shows the danger of generalisation!) His reign was bloody and reactionary. He introduced illegal altars into the Temple, and even passed his sons through the fire in the valley of Hinnom. Eventually he was captured by the Assyrians and deported to Babylon, but here he miraculously has a change of heart. He humbled himself and repented and was released and repatriated.

One king of Israel stands out - Ahab. Wicked in himself, he was married to Jezebel, who was even more evil than he. She dominated him. He died in battle, killed by an archer, who in a memorable phrase "drew a bow at a venture". Finally we read "the dogs licked up his blood."

Places in the Bible

Kadesh Barnea

'if only...'

Kadesh Barnea is just an oasis in the desert, a few miles south of the Dead Sea. Yet that little oasis was the scene of one of the pivotal events in the whole history of the Jewish race.

Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt and they had wandered as far as Kadesh Barnea. This was not really 'just an oasis'. For two years it has been the home of the two million Hebrews who had fled Egypt.

Then Moses looked north towards Canaan. God had told him to explore that land, which he was giving to them. As instructed Moses detailed the leader of each of the 12 tribes and told them to head north to find out what sort of a land it was. "What is it like? Are the people there strong or weak? What kind of towns do they live in? Is the soil fertile or poor? And bring back samples of the fruit growing there!"



The report was that the land was rich and fertile BUT the people there were very powerful; some were giants. Joshua and Caleb were positive that with the help God has promised the land could be theirs, but ten of the twelve spies said they were afraid to go there, and proposed a new leader instead of Moses, who would take them back to Egypt. The Lord in his anger threatened to destroy them. Moses interceded for them, and God changed their punishment to forty years wandering in the wilderness.

What would have been the subsequent history of the Jewish

people if they had decided to go ahead into Canaan? Instead they suffered forty years of nomadic life. More than that, none of the rebellious Israelites, who did not trust God and who had been in Egypt, (except Joshua and Caleb) would live to see the fulfilment of God's promises,

Did this show that God did not really care for and love them? Rather, a new generation, without their elders' unhealthy memories, would have time in the wilderness to make a new start and to redeem themselves. They would be the ones fitted to inherit the Promised Land.

D.D.M

Biblical Connections

What single word connects all of the following?

- a) a horse
- b) cords on tassels
- c) David's resting place
- d) Lydia
- e) tumours

Answers are on page 13

Fairtrade Fortnight

22nd February to 7th March

The theme this year for Fairtrade Fortnight is **THE BIG SWAP**.

The Fairtrade Foundation would like everyone to swap their usual brand of tea, coffee, sugar, bananas, chocolate, wine, cotton clothing, flowers and cosmetics, for example, for a Fairtrade Mark product. These are just some of the items that carry the Fairtrade Mark. By doing so, this will help the farmers and producers in Africa, Palestine, Mexico, Brazil, India, Pakistan, Haiti and many more countries to sell their products at a fair price and enable them to earn a proper living for themselves and their families.



Many of us already do buy Fairtrade products but if you have not done so why not change your brand now? In addition, when you shop at your local supermarket why not ask them to stock Fairtrade products, if they have not done so already? There may be Fairtrade products that they already stock and by asking them to increase their range, it will result in greater benefits for the farmers and producers concerned.



Grace and David McRoberts regularly have a Fairtrade stall in the Hall on a Sunday, when you will have the opportunity to buy from a range of the products available.

Of course you don't have to change to Fairtrade products just during Fairtrade fortnight. Make Fairtrade your choice all year round.

K.C.

Points for Prayer

For the World	Pray for peace in the Middle East. (<i>Our God is a great God and can do it!</i>)
For Our Country	Pray that as a country we may all take Christianity seriously.
For our Church	Pray for wisdom for those planning the development of our Church, and for Grace for all of us to accept the changes.
For Ourselves	Pray that we may learn more about God and that we may love Him more.
For Colin Johnston our missionary partner	Pray that he may persevere with his language study and become more able to discuss fundamentals.
Give thanks	for all who make our Church a place of welcome and encouragement both to members and to visitors.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
2 Timothy 3.16

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
1 Thessalonians 5.16-18

“You gotta Ac-centuate the Positive...”

KEN SYMON's four-Sunday exploration of the theme 'New Year - New Church' ended with a mini-poll. Suggestions emerging from the earlier 'Dreaming' study were displayed on pew boards on Sunday 31st January. The congregation were invited to look at them after the morning service and to vote "Agree" or "Disagree". The results were:-

“We should sit closer together at Sunday morning services, nearer the front.”

Agree 42

Disagree 7

“We should stay for tea or coffee if it were served in the side aisles in the church rather than in the Hall.”

Agree 9

Disagree 30

“More people should be involved in leading Sunday morning services along with the Minister”

Agree 27

Disagree 7

“I would attend an alternative type of service which allowed 18-30 year olds to share more fully in worship.”

Agree 25

Disagree 7

“A stronger sense of liturgy (order and formality) would give a greater sense of the presence of God in a Sunday service.”

Agree 20

Disagree 7

“Would you come to the following type of events if held on Church premises?

Ceilidh

22

Games night

16

Badminton/table tennis

11

Whist or bridge

11

“Would you like transport to Church?” 8

HEAR: I AM 2010

Poverty and Justice

WHAT IS POVERTY?

Mary Morrison leading the 'HEAR I AM' discussions on Sunday 7th February outlined aspects of poverty:'

- poverty of income
- poverty of health
- poverty of education
- poverty of access to services
- poverty of housing
- poverty of crime.

Shona Morrison drew on her experiences in India to help one group explore the theme that poverty is relative. Similarly Yvonne McKissock with the other group heard of a girl who had little except a second-hand pair of shoes, worn and ill-fitting but who loved them - they were her own.

Two lines from a poem by theologian Fred Taban were food for thought:-

"The silent prison without walls". Poverty is a prison which denies freedom, freedom of choice, freedom of opportunity, freedom of self-esteem and even the freedom to make ones self heard.

and *"When will you forgive us? Oh poverty!"* Do people in poverty have a sense of guilt? Not all who are poor want, far less ask for, help.

Is relief from poverty always a good thing? A minimum wage may be less than the benefits lost.

Some countries are materially rich but spiritually poor.

Some countries are materially poor but spiritually rich.

"I ask you God - let me be neither rich nor poor. So give me only as much food as I need. If I have more I might say that I do not need you. But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God."

Proverbs 30.8b,9

HEATING THE CHURCH? NO PROBLEM!

I AM VERY GLAD to hear that the people of the Russian Orthodox Church of Glasgow are now using the sanctuary of the Church at Govan Old. It is good to think that the Church will continue to be used as a church and that the people of the Russian Orthodox Faith have found a Spiritual home. This is very much due to the good work done by the Minister Moyna McGlinn.

Two points arise out of this development. The Russians were told that they would have to contribute towards the cost of heating and lighting. They said that this was not really a problem as they normally never heat their churches. They do not mind the cold. After all “We are Russians.”

The other point I wondered about was, would they need to re-dedicate or sanctify the building. They said that that would not be necessary as the site has been dedicated for Christian worship since before the Great Schism and has been used continuously since then. I was quite taken aback when I heard this, but now that I come to think of it, I do not think there is any other church in Glasgow which can claim this distinction and prove it.

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Govan Old is to be held on St. Constantine’s Day, Saturday 13th March at 2 pm. After the business meeting we expect to hear a talk by Dr. S. Reid on the life of Andrew Melville, and the links between the Parish of Govan and the University of Glasgow. There will also be a short service at 12 noon. The newly published book on the history of Govan by Professor Driscoll will also be on Sale.

Everyone is welcome to come to the AGM on 13th March.

K.G.R.



The Great Schism of 1054 was the split between the Eastern and Western Churches, which led to the development of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

(Ed.)

Helping to solve the
church's heating problems

or

Getting ready for a red-hot
sermon



Biblical Connections

Answers to Puzzle on page 7

All are related to **colours** -

- a) a **red** horse (Rev. 6.4)
- b) **blue** cords on tassels (Num. 15.38)
- c) David lay down in **green** pastures
- d) Lydia was a dealer in **purple**
- e) five **gold** tumours (or emerods) were part of the peace offering the people of Ekron sent back with the Ark.

PARTNER PLAN

Colin Johnston - Israel
December 2009

c/o The Scots Hotel
PO Box 104
Tiberias 14100
ISRAEL

Continued from December VISION

A greater tension exists, however, between the Palestinian and Jewish communities. As you are probably aware from the newspapers, Israel has a number of settlements on the West Bank - new towns built to assert a claim to the land. Meanwhile many Palestinian communities are 'fenced in' by the 'security' wall, sometimes a fence. Many Israelis would claim that the wall is a good thing, as it has prevented suicide bombers entering Israel and creating havoc. Some do however see the inhuman effect it has on those living behind the wall. Inhabitants are prevented from accessing olive groves or other lands which lie on the other side of the Fence. (There are check points though, through which people may pass but many are often refused permission.) I met one man who has a job in Israel proper and has a work permit to allow him through the Fence, but it has just run out and would not be renewed, so suddenly his livelihood was taken away! Strangely enough my first visit to a Palestine community behind the wall coincided with the 20th anniversary of the coming down of the Berlin Wall. Ironical how we continue to divide and separate!

There are groups of Christians from different world churches, who live and work in West Bank communities, accompanying people to the check points to monitor any abuses of the system. I recently had a couple of South African 'accompaniers' stay for the weekend in Tiberias, and they commented on the tension that they live under, though conscious that they were only there for three months, while for the local Palestinians it is their life. I had actually visited a group of the accompaniers at Jayous, a village where the Guild supports a project, running a crèche, thereby allowing the mothers to work. While we were there,

an army jeep suddenly roared up the main street, causing panic, especially when a shot was fired!

However, despite this, there does seem to be a vibrancy to life in some of the bigger West Bank towns. I noticed this when I visited Nablus, which was a bustling, noisy town. We had gone there to visit a project, which seeks to use music as a therapy to help children traumatised by life in a refugee camp. A Scottish woman, Sheena Boyle from Prestwick, is involved in the project, and it was good to witness her work.

In the middle of Tiberias is a giant 8 pronged candlestick, commemorating Hanukkah, The Jewish festival of light. It is a time to remember how the Temple had been desecrated by the Greek ruler Antiochus in the inter-testamental period, but the light at the altar continued to burn for 8 days, despite the oil running out. I learned all this at my Hebrew class, including two nice songs! So when I went to a Hanukkah party, organised by the school which meets above the church, I fully expected to see the story acted out. It was, but somehow the emphasis was not on the oil, but more on soldiers killing one another, which was an interesting but disturbing take on the story. The school is run by a group of Messianic believers, Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah. They tend to celebrate the Jewish festivals, and not all of them will celebrate Christmas (and some of those who do celebrate it in October.)

Living in the Holy Land, one is aware of how important the Christian message of peace and reconciliation is. Please pray that the angels' message of peace on earth and goodwill to all may become a reality in this land and indeed throughout the world. I wish you all a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a blessed 2010!

More details on my blog: <http://colinintiberias.blogspot.com>.

Colin



The Guild

MARCH MEETINGS

Monday 1st **2.00 pm** **DESTINY ANGELS** Destiny Church

Monday 8th 7.30 pm **INTERFAITH SUPPORT** Guild Project

Monday 18th 2.00 pm **THE REFORMATION** Ken Ross

Monday 22nd 7.30 pm **A.G.M.**

Friday 5th March 2.00 pm **World Day of Prayer Service**
at Sherbrooke St. Gilbert's

Saturday 13th March 10.00 am **Coffee Morning**
Donations of home baking etc will be
most welcome

THE GUILD

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 13th March

10.00am - 12noon



BOOKS



HOMEBAKING

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

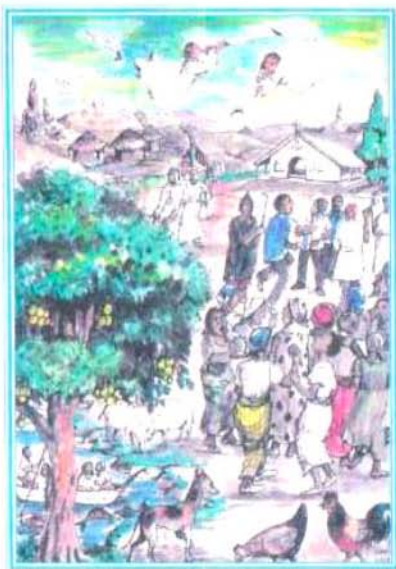
Friday, 5th March 2010

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Let Everything That Has Breath
Praise God



The World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee and Christian women of Cameroon, invite you to share in prayer and worship with people from all around the world.



A warm welcome which awaits you at your local service:

At

2.00 p.m.

In

Sherbrooke St. Gilbert's Parish Church.

CHILDREN'S PLUS ONE

Add one letter to each of the words in the list to give you the answer to the clue. Then place the letter in the centre square. The added letters from top to bottom make the name of a New Testament character.

ETHEL

GATE

DAGON

ROUBLE

SOLD

HERON

PLACE

FAST

MORNING

CURE

House of God

A precious stone

An imaginary creature

Distress

God's foundation

A mountain

A royal residence

A sacred festival

Time of sorrow

To wish evil upon

Answers are on page 3

Views expressed by contributors are their own
and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors
nor of The Church of Scotland

The purpose of VISION is to record the life and work of the congregation. No editors on their own can know all that people do and feel and want, so it is up to you, whether you are an office bearer, the leader of an organisation or an ordinary member, to keep us informed.

Be in touch!

***Send us original articles, views, snippets of news –
anything you would like to share with other people***

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