

Leaflet



Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES
No 623 February 2013

Pulpit Diary

Feb 3

9.30am First Sunday Service led by Springboard

10.30am Morning Worship

Feb 10

10.30am Morning Worship

Feb 17 First Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship

Feb 24 Second Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship led by Uniformed Organisations

Mar 1 (Friday)

7.30pm Pre-communion service

Mar 3 Third Sunday in Lent

9.00am Communion

10.30am Communion (Springboard and Spectrum meet as usual)

3.00pm Communion (Braid Room)

For information about church organisations, please contact the Church Office (Mon–Fri, 9.00am–12.00 noon, 1.30pm–3.30pm):
Mrs Virginia Johnston

tel and fax: 0131 447 9969

e-mail: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

The pastoral team can be contacted through the Church Office:

Rev Alison Swindells

tel and fax: 0131 447 4032

email: alisonswindells@blueyonder.co.uk

Rev W. Peter Graham

tel: 0131 445 5763

Youth Minister: Rev Bill Stone

tel: 07883 815 598

email: billstoneiii@gmail.com

To make contact with any of the organisations described in this *Leaflet*, please use the telephone number given, if there is one. Otherwise contact the Church Office.

Website: www.greenbankchurch.org

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

I wonder if, like me, you grew up in a home where there was often a jigsaw on the go. In the days before computer games, Sudoku and 24 hour television, the jigsaw was a family activity. We had a board that used to slide under the couch. Whenever someone had time they would pull it out



and add in another few pieces. Sometimes on a Sunday the whole family would be on the floor at work building the picture together. I was reminded of all of this when I received a jigsaw as a Christmas present this year.

The jigsaw which I was given was a particularly challenging one – “After the Rain” – a copy of a painting by the Russian artist, Eugene Lushpin. The picture on the box-lid showed a city at dusk with lots of shadows. As soon as I saw it I knew it was going to be difficult. There were so many different areas of the puzzle that used the same colours. And of course the winter light over the holiday period did not help. Eventually I thought I had mastered it. Then I was left with seven pieces and seven holes – there was only one problem: the seven pieces did not fit the seven holes! I was sure that I had it right – so sure that I was already composing the letter to the manufacturer in my head!

But the next morning brought daylight and some sunshine. I took apart several different sections that looked similar. This time when I put it all together, I'm glad to say it worked! It was undoubtedly the most difficult and frustrating jigsaw that I have ever done. But there was a great sense of satisfaction in putting in the final piece and seeing the big picture complete at last!

Recently the jigsaw has experienced a bit of a revival. But the new jigsaws are different. Gone is the monopoly of one manufacturer. Gone too are the fully interlocking pieces, the great landscapes and skyscapes that took forever to complete. In their place are smaller puzzles showing very different

kinds of scenes. There are more companies producing them, each with their own hallmark. In some jigsaws the pieces don't immediately interlock – although you may recognise where a piece should go you cannot fix it in place until you have found all its neighbours – and it will keep moving

about! Then there are the Spot the Difference Jigsaw Puzzles where there are deliberate differences between the picture on the box lid and the actual jigsaw. You find yourself hunting for what you think should be a blue door and in fact the door turns out to be red! I could not help but think that what has happened to the jigsaw puzzle could be seen as a mirror of life in general. We live in a society which is much more diverse and provisional than that of our parents or grandparents. The old boundaries which gave shape and structure to our daily living have been swept away. Life's pieces no longer seem to fit together so simply, nor so permanently. Change has taken place at a rate that turns certainties into questions. And of course not all of this is bad. However it does bring new challenges for the Church. In a multi-faith, multi-cultural society perhaps we need to look again at all the old certainties. Perhaps we need to take apart and examine some of our cherished doctrines. Perhaps we need to be less fixed in our ways, more loving in our outlook. Perhaps we need to be more ready to have our eyes opened to new possibilities. But having said all of this, I still believe that there is a bigger picture and that bigger picture is of a new creation where God's rule of love, established in the world through Jesus Christ, is a reality. It is my hope and prayer that in 2013 we will be able to work together in building more of that picture here in Greenbank.

With warmest wishes,

Alison I Swindells
Minister

Christian Aid Collection 2013

Christian Aid Week 12th–18th May 2013

Christian Aid continues to be well supported at Greenbank but we need to continue this momentum as our thoughts turn to this year's house to house collection in May.

Last year's total for the house-to-house collection amounted to £3600.35; 22% of envelopes were also gift aided and this raised an additional amount of £1570.20. I was very grateful for all the support you gave me in my first year of co-ordinating this event. Although Christian Aid week seems some time away, preparation work is underway and, as always, we need a team of collectors to cover all the streets in the parish. Thank you again to those who collected last year and I hope that most of you will be able to collect again this year. I shall be contacting you over the next few weeks but for anyone who is thinking of retiring I would be glad if you could "ask a friend" to take over your houses, preferably before I speak to you! I am also looking for some other new collectors to share the load.

It always seems a bit daunting to take a collection on for the first time but believe me everyone actually enjoys the experience, which makes new connections in the community and boosts our presence on a wider front in Greenbank. It takes up to about an hour to deliver the envelopes and about three hours collection time through the week. Most people do this over two early evening slots and sometimes couples take on an area between them.

I am also looking for administrative help nearer the time to assist me preparing the envelopes for collectors and also for counting up at the end.

Last year we had a follow-up 'party' to share our experiences and as a thank you for helping out – a massive additional incentive!

Please contact me if you are able to help. I will contact existing collectors directly to check their availability.

Pam Jack

Church and Society Council

From the Council's newsletter

Welfare Reform There will be many changes over the next few years including various benefits being rolled up into universal credit and the cessation of universal child benefit. There will also be a shift to on-line applications. Anyone wishing personal money advice regarding the changes can contact the Citizen's Advice Bureau who are also willing to provide speakers to talk about money advice to local groups.

Go For It is a new Church of Scotland fund which is about funding change in church and community. It aims to encourage creative ways of working that develop the life and mission of the local church and are transformative for both communities and congregations. The focus is very much on 'the local'. The fund has already awarded grants to local projects such as one based at Dalziel St Andrews Parish Church in Motherwell, where the focus is working with isolated older people in the community.

For further details please look at the Church of Scotland website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/go_for_it/

Mission and Service Committee

Greenbank Church Guild

presents

Quern: "The Royal Mile" in Prose, Poetry and Song

On Tuesday 19th February
at 7.30pm in the Main Hall

Tickets £8, available
from Guild members
Wine and Savouries

Faith Seeking Understanding

The *Partnership for Theological Education in Edinburgh* presents **Faith Seeking Understanding**. This is an introduction to Christian Theology, a six-week course examining:

Theology	The Son
Scripture	The Spirit
The Father	Contemporary Challenges

The course will be held at Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church, 1a Mayfield Road, EH9 2NG.

Time: 7.30pm to 9.15pm on Tuesdays 12th February–19th March. (Tea and coffee available from 7.15pm.)

Cost £15. To book, please email: pte.edinburgh@gmail.com

Each session includes a lecture and discussion by New College Postgraduates specialising in their fields. No background knowledge is necessary; the course is open to all.

Sponsored by the Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Edinburgh, NCMS and Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church.

Children's Event

On a Saturday at the beginning of December 2012 yet another very successful Christmas Event was held in our church halls as more than eighty primary school aged children joined together to hear the Christmas story, play games, sing songs and enjoy Christmas crafts. This was all possible because so many people



in the congregation gave up their precious leisure time to help the children have fun. It was particularly wonderful to see the young people from Springboard and QII working with the children and bringing their energy and enthusiasm to the event. Thank you to everyone who helped in the planning and on the day. Look out for details of our Summer Holiday Club – **SPACE ACADEMY!** It all blasts off in the week beginning Monday 5th August 2013.

Alison Reid



World Day of Prayer

Friday 1st March 2013

The World Day of Prayer for 2013 is on Friday 1st March. At this time Christian people throughout the world will be joining in a service with the theme *I was a stranger and you welcomed me*. The service has been written by Christian women of France.

Each year the first service of the day is held on the island of Tuvalu in the Pacific Ocean close to the international dateline and services continue for a period of 36 hours until that same date concludes in Alaska just to the other side of the dateline.

In Scotland many churches and Christian groups will be hosting this same service and the Morningside district service will be held in Morningside Parish Church at 10.30am on Friday 1st March.

Bible studies in preparation for the service will be held in 121 George Street at 10.30am on Friday 1st February and Friday 22nd February. Details of the Bible studies will be in the pew leaflet on the preceding Sunday and on the notice boards outside the church office. Everyone is very welcome to come to either of these studies.

Margaret Barrowman

Congregational Board

At its meeting on 4th December the Board was briefed on recent work which had been undertaken and on the latest position regarding finance. The Property Convener, Ian Thom, reported that leaks in the Manse roof had been repaired and that arrangements for the redecoration of the affected areas had been put in hand. As a result of comments on the adequacy of the Church heating system in cold weather the Property Committee had concluded that the main problem was that, due to recent staff changes and changes to work patterns, there had been a loss of continuity and knowledge as regards the operation of the seven different timers which controlled the heating in the various parts of the Church building. Steps had been taken to remedy this.

The Treasurer, Robert Young, reported that the deficit for the period to 31st October was significantly higher than anticipated mainly due to income being lower than expected and to the impact of unbudgeted but approved property refurbishment costs. The Board agreed with the Treasurer's view that the deficit was running at an unsustainable level. The final outturn figures for 2012 would be available in advance of the Annual Business Meeting arranged for Sunday 17th March 2013. A budget for 2013 (prepared mainly on the basis of the projected 2012 outturn) was approved by the Board. It was noted that Dan Lean had agreed to become Assistant Treasurer responsible for Gift Aid and that Miraslow (Mirek) Pociask had been employed on a temporary basis as the Church's Caretaker / Handyman.

SLA Date for your Diary: *Book Café*

Due to the success of last year's event we are having another Book Café so please come along on Saturday 23rd February, 11am–2pm in the Main Hall at Greenbank Church.

On a cold, wet February morning why not warm up with a bowl of nutritious home-made soup and enjoy a chance to browse through our collection of new and used books? £5 ticket entitles the bearer to soup with bread and two books of your choice. Additional books and tea and coffee can be purchased as desired.

Make sure you don't miss this wonderful event by putting the date in your diary now, or better still by buying a ticket from the Church Office (Tel 447 9969) or Hazel Macaulay.

Hope Hunter

To everyone who attended Hope's Service of Thanksgiving – sent cards and letters of sympathy – telephoned me – and contributed to the fantastic sum of £862 for the RNLI, a charity close to Hope's heart, I send my sincere and heartfelt thanks. It was a great tribute to Hope, and a comfort to Neil, Jane and me at a very sad time.

Again, my sincere thanks to you all.

Isabel Hunter

The Peace Light

In the bleak midwinter, four Scouts, their families and the Scout Leaders from Greenbank Church made their way to Liberton to collect the Peace Light.

The Peace Light is lit every year from the Eternal Flame which burns in a small cave beneath the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem and given to the Scout Organisation. The Scouts then pass the flame troop to troop across Europe and across the Atlantic into USA, Canada and Mexico. In a moving service in Liberton Kirk we lit two candles from the Peace Light so we could bring it to our own Greenbank congregation.



The four Scouts, Andrew Dunbar, Fergus Mainland, Andrew Sommerville and Rory Young, were charged with the big responsibility of looking after the flames in their own homes from Tuesday until Sunday Morning. Sunday morning dawned bright and clear – and very windy! However Scouts know to ‘Be Prepared’ and the lights were transferred to big protective lanterns for the journey to church. The Peace Light was used during the Gift Service to light the Advent Candles before being placed on the Communion Table to mark the remaining hours until Christmas.

Job safely done: we could reflect on our small part in such a huge international undertaking and imagine churches the world over, all holding their own Peace Services with their own flickering, comforting, reaffirming Peace Lights glowing and lighting up the darkness.

For more photos and information please visit

<http://www.greenbankchurch.org>

and click on ‘Young People’ in the black bar and then ‘Uniformed Organisations’.

Lent and Easter Bookstall

On **Sunday 17th February** in the Main Hall you will find a selection of books from the Cornerstone Bookshop and recent Books of the Month. We will have books for all ages – please come and have a browse.

If there are any titles you would like to see on the Bookstall please contact us before 16th February.

John and Joan Ritchie

Book of the Month

Living and Loving the Mystery: *Exploring Christian Worship*

by **Duncan B. Forrester**

Saint Andrew Press, Price £9.99 (ISBN 978-0-7152-0911-0)

This is a stimulating little book. In the Preface Professor Forrester says that it is intended to help “people in the pews” to understand the principles of Christian worship and the structures within which God’s people have found that they may best glorify and enjoy their God. His reference to “enjoyment” reflects what is said in the answer to the first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1648: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.” Professor Forrester regards this as the best description of worship.

The book works on two levels. The first is that of the nature of worship. It is both intimate and transcendent. It is a reciprocal relationship: a recognition of the glory and work of God and the experience of his love. In the author’s view, because worship is enjoying God, the minutiae of liturgy and the details of worship are not important in themselves. He concludes the book by admitting that no language is really adequate for prayer.

On a more detailed level Professor Forrester distinguishes the nine elements which he regards as the usual pattern of movement in the Eucharist, the Supper or the Mass. He has wise words to say about the use of silence. He commends the use of ordinary language while acknowledging that prayer formulae have their place.

This book is informed by the author’s experience as a teacher at New College and a missionary in India. The book is also invigorated by the author’s conviction of the central importance of worship and the need for the individual worshipper to explore it in order, in the words of the title, to “live and love the mystery.”

Roger Bland

Thank You

We have received letters of thanks from HM Prison Edinburgh for the gifts donated at the Gift Service. One hundred children were given gifts and surplus toys were donated to the Visitors Centre at the prison and to the Parcel4troops scheme.

Colin O’Flaherty, who organised the distribution, said “Christmas Day was made all the more special for those children due to your kindness and generosity”.

Teresa Medhurst, Governor of the prison, said “I know that you have been donating presents for a number of years. This is particularly telling with the recent economic tensions that mean everyone is having to do more with less. So I wanted to take the opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution that you make to ensuring that Christmas remains a special time for those children who have to visit the prison and I also wanted to let you know that I appreciate that at a very busy time for all of us, you find the time and support to organise the presents.”

Have you looked at the new website?

www.greenbankchurch.org

Spectrum and Springboard Offerings in 2012

The Offerings taken at Spectrum and Springboard during 2012 totalled £912. As is the custom, the members of Springboard and Spectrum 3 were asked how they wanted the money to be used.

This year, Spectrum 3 again chose to sponsor a child through Plan International and then nominated that the balance go to support Children in Need.

Springboard chose to allocate amounts to Christian Aid, Whizz Kids, Mercy Ships, Sightsavers, ABF and Make a Wish.

£12 per month has been paid to Plan International, £292 to Children in Need, £76 to Christian Aid and £80 to each of Whizz Kids, Mercy Ships, Sightsavers, ABF and Make a Wish.

In addition, the Spectrum 3 Lunch held in March raised £540 which was donated to Water Aid.

Thus, in total our young members must be congratulated for having raised £1452 for charities during 2012.

World Mission

The Church of Scotland has had a long and fruitful relationship with China over the years. In 1940 there were 94 Church of Scotland missionaries spreading the Gospel in China, whereas by 1952, after the end of Japanese occupation and the rise of Communism, most missionaries had left either voluntarily or under pressure from the new leadership. Through the work of Scots missionaries, such as Dr. John Ross, Thomas Torrance, Dr. Mary Finlay and of course, Eric Liddell, much has been done in China. The era of foreign missionaries ended and the Chinese church set out on a new journey, proclaiming itself to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

Today, the World Mission Council is again actively involved in China and in developing relationships with churches, seminaries and the Amity Foundation. The World Mission Council is supporting the Amity Foundation's strengthening of civil society and empowering people with HIV and supporting the China Christian Council's provision of theological education.

"*Love never ends*" is the motto of the Christian-founded Amity Foundation which has done so much in sharing God's love in China and to share the reality of life in Chinese churches around the world. "*Love never ends*" is a good motto to remember when thinking about the church and what it is to be its witness in China today. Amity is an indigenous Chinese Christian NGO which runs a wide range of development programmes; one project in Longchuan Province, close to the border with Burma, is helping people living with HIV who are often reformed drug addicts, and who experience a high degree of stigma and discrimination within their own communities.

Amity gives training in farming methods, and through a micro-credit scheme, gives small loans to help people to get started with growing crops or raising animals. By helping families with micro-funding, it builds up self-confidence and health, and reduces stigma.

One World Stall

The next One World Stall will be on Sunday 3rd February where we will have a stock of Fair Trade goods for sale.

John Ritchie

Lent Study Course

While Christianity continues to grow, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it appears to struggle to even hold its own in some regions of the Western World. The course of studies to be held over the period of Lent this year considers some of the reasons for this and what it might mean for individual Christians, for churches and indeed for Western culture itself, in a world where alternative beliefs are increasingly promoted. This course will be held over five consecutive Monday evenings, with the first scheduled for **Monday, 18th February**. It is entitled *Handing on the Torch – Sacred Words for a Secular World* and uses materials developed and published by York Courses, who specialise in producing courses for Christian groups, without regard to their individual backgrounds or traditions.

The individual course sessions will commence at 7.30pm each evening, with tea or coffee available from 7.00pm. Those wishing to take part will find the course booklet an invaluable resource in giving contextual background and helping to inform the debate on the questions raised by the studies. Copies of this will be available from the Church Office from 4th February for those intending to attend the study course. Donations towards the cost of the materials and refreshments would be much appreciated!!

The Guild

Our first meeting in February is on Tuesday 5th when Virginia Russell is coming to tell us about our project for this year "Heart for Art" which involves setting up art classes throughout Scotland for people with dementia and their carers, to help build up self-esteem and to give them something to look forward to every week. Following on from this on February 19th we have our fund raising event, the proceeds from which are our contribution to the project. This year "Quern" presents "The History of the Royal Mile in Prose, Poetry and Song". We have had Quern before when they gave us a delightful evening on the life of Robert Louis Stevenson and so we can say with confidence that this will be a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Refreshments will be served. Tickets price £8 will be on sale from members of the Guild Committee in the hall after the service on Sundays. We hope that lots of you will come to help us raise money for the Project and to enjoy yourselves.

Ann Pirie

Friendship Club

Fred Daniels has now travelled in 83 countries, recently returning from his latest exploration, half way round the world. On February 6th, with his usual flair and enthusiasm and his fabulous photographs he is going to take us to the three "Deserts of Egypt". I know that this will be a very exciting and interesting afternoon so please encourage your friends to join us or, better still, bring them with you. Of course, anyone interested in any topic is welcome to come along to any of our meetings.

Kathleen's theme for her musical afternoon on the 13th is "Images", though probably different from Fred's, and on the 20th we will have some excellent advice and information about "Scams and Frauds" from Alex Jones, an Education Officer at the City of Edinburgh Council where he has been involved with Consumer Education for over ten years. We look forward to being forewarned and therefore forearmed.

At our first meeting in March, on the 6th, we will be visiting another far flung area of the world with the "Scotts in the Antarctic".

Val Smart

The Journey of the Magi

Pulpit and Lectern Falls for Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

EPIPHANY (from the ancient Greek ἐπιφάνεια, epiphaneia, “manifestation, striking appearance”) is an experience of sudden and striking realisation. Generally the term is used to describe breakthrough scientific, religious or philosophical discoveries. After Christmas comes the season of Epiphany meaning the manifestation of Christ.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
(Isaiah 60:3)

On the night of Christ’s birth, a mysterious light appeared in the sky which became a luminous star that persisted in the western heavens (see Matthew 2:1,2). Impressed by its importance, the Wise Men, Magi or Kings turned once more to the sacred scrolls and tried to understand the meaning of the sacred writings. They determined to go in search of the Messiah. Like Abraham, at first they did not know where they were to go, but followed the guiding star, which led them on their way.

The Gospel of Matthew, the only one to mention the Kings, states that they came “from the east” to worship the Christ, “born King of the Jews.” Although the account does not tell how many they were, the three gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh led to a widespread assumption that they were three. In the East, the Magi traditionally number twelve. Their identification as kings in later Christian writings is probably linked to Psalm 72:11, “*May all kings fall down before him*”. St. Matthew recorded that the Magi brought three gifts, each also having a prophetic meaning.

Gold, the gift for a king; Frankincense, the gift for a priest; and Myrrh a burial ointment, a gift for one who would die. St. Irenaeus (d. 202) in his *Adversus haereses* offered the following interpretation for the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh

respectively: King, God and Suffering Redeemer as well as virtue, prayer and suffering.

More importantly, the visit of the Kings fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament: Balaam prophesied about the coming Messiah marked by a star: “I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). Psalm 72 speaks of how the Gentiles will come to worship the Messiah: “The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts, the kings of Arabia and Sheba shall bring tribute. All kings shall pay Him homage, all nations shall serve Him” (Psalm 72:10-11). Isaiah also prophesied the gifts: “Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord” (Isaiah 60:6).

In the design for the **Pulpit Fall** we see the guiding star at the top directing the three Kings, symbolised by three crowns: one gold, one silver and one copper, each encrusted with jewels. A shaft of light penetrates the hearts and minds of the wise men and comes to rest on the object of their journey symbolised by the Christogram IHS – *Jesus Hominum Salvator*. The colours are the colours of the east and are hot and dusty. The **Lectern Fall** shows the three gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Each is made up of star constructions and is transparent to allow the contents to be seen. They surmount the words ‘LOVE — JOY — HOPE’. The colours are the colours of the contents of the containers.

Malcolm Lochhead
July 2012

The pulpit and lectern falls were donated by two members of the congregation, and dedicated on Sunday 6th January 2013.





The heart within Morningside

Greetings All. I hope this finds you well rested after the frantic preparations for Christmas and the New Year. I am glad to be able to tell you that things are starting to come together re the coffee shop repair and decoration. After a slow start we have chosen lights, colour scheme and are replacing the furniture and carpets, so next time you came it will be a whole new experience! We are hoping to open at the beginning of January (if possible – there’s a lot to do) but would like to have an official “Grand Opening” on **Wednesday 27th February** and you’re all invited. It will be Open House all day with free cups of tea!

The Christmas Fayre held early in December was a great success with £700 profit made. We are really grateful to all the Open Door supporters who sent raffle and tombola prizes and made home baking to sell. On a cold frosty morning, many supporters came for a bargain and they weren’t disappointed. So we wish to say a big thank you to everyone who made our morning so successful, thereby enabling us to continue our work.

We hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas and that the New Year may bring all you hope for.

God Bless.

Sandra Dixon, Manager (Tel 447 9757)

Congregational Register

Omitted

Welcome Teams

February

- 3 John Ritchie, Eric Brown, Stewart Coghill, Ralph Davidson, Susan Inch, Gill Sweetman, Ian Thomson, David Easton, Susan Jackman
- 10 Stuart Sanders, Moira Davidson, Stuart Macmillan, John Murison, Rachel Cadell, Jenny Wright, Sandy Cameron, Carrie Reid, Moira Land
- 17 John Rutherford, David Allan, Richard Denison, Kenneth Htet-Khin, Caroline Kehoe, Anne Kinnear, John Mowat, Jean Roynon-Jones
- 24 Roger Bland, Eileen Campbell, Richard Dunbar, Clifford Hastings, Chris Horne, Doris Laing, Enid Mowat, Robin Nimmo, Keith Winton

March

- 3 Alan Armit, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Iain Davidson, Hugh Cowan, Susan Black, Malcolm Watters, Nora Kellock, Elizabeth Mackay

Coffee Rota

February

- 3 Moira Davidson D31B
- 10 SLA
- 17 Wednesday Badminton
- 24 Chris Horne D37



Crèche Rota

February

- 3 Shona Murray
- 10 Sharon Hamilton
- 17 Eileen McKinnon
- 24 Janet Ferguson

March

- 3 Lucy Teall



Flower Rota

	<i>Provided by</i>	<i>Delivered by</i>
February		
3	Anne Innes	Janet Edwards
10	Isobel Brown & Anne Morham	Katy Maguire
17	Janet McAinsh	Caroline Kehoe
24	Jean Dely	Helen Aitken
March		
3	Isobel Aitchison	Fiona Connal



Material for the March *Leaflet* should be delivered to the Church Office or to the Editors’ pigeon-hole in the Main Hall by Sunday 10th February, or sent by e-mail by 9am on Tuesday 12th February to greenbankleaflet@googlemail.com

Some difficult sayings of Jesus

Keeping the Sabbath...

In the early 1930s Church leaders in Edinburgh were troubled by the introduction of flying exhibitions on Sunday afternoons. In the words of one critic, this was regarded “as a serious challenge to the Church of God and to the Christian sentiment of this community and as a further and wanton encroachment upon the quiet and sanctity of the Lord’s Day.” Later in the same decade there was vigorous opposition to plans for Sunday trading, to the opening of cinemas on Sundays and to the extension of the opening hours of Portobello Bathing Pool to Sunday forenoons. And BBC proposals to broadcast a “light programme” between 10.45 am and 12.30 pm on Sundays were attacked on the grounds that “The devil’s awa wi the Exciseman” was not a suitable item for Sunday forenoon broadcasting.

Controversy about Sunday observance is still with us, at least in some parts of our country. It is easy to dismiss what happens, or does not happen, in Lewis and Harris and elsewhere as a hangover from a bygone age and perhaps even from the Jewish religion. The first Christians were themselves Jews, brought up to regard the Sabbath as a day of total rest, on which no work of any kind was permitted. When the Church expanded out of Palestine into a non-Jewish world, and when most Christians had no roots in a Jewish background, the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, became an ordinary working day. In Christian practice the first day of the week gradually replaced the Sabbath as the Lord’s Day, when Christians met as and when they could for worship. Sadly, nowadays the Lord’s Day has become simply Sunday, for many people no different from any other day of the week. And most diaries and calendars treat Monday as the first day of the week!

Has the pendulum swung too far in the direction of a secular Sunday? Even if we wanted to, we cannot reverse a process which has been under way for a long time. We cannot put the clock back. The genie cannot be returned to the bottle. Can the words of Jesus help us? *The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.* These words form the conclusion of Jesus’ reply to some Pharisees who had criticised his disciples. One Sabbath day they had been walking through some grain fields. As they walked, they had pulled off some heads of grain and had rubbed the ears in their hands to separate the grain from the husk. Harmless actions, one might think, but plucking the ears was regarded by the guardians of law and order as technically a form of reaping and rubbing them to extract the kernel as a form of grinding. And reaping and grinding were two activities explicitly forbidden on the Sabbath.

In his response Jesus argued that human need came before slavish obedience to the letter of the law. He posed a question about the interpretation of Scripture by referring to an old story about David on a Sabbath. In an emergency David and

his followers had been given permission to eat bread reserved for priests at a particular sanctuary. In this instance human need had taken precedence over ceremonial law. It was almost as if he were teasing his critics by pointing out what they already accepted.

Then Jesus went to the very heart of the matter. The Sabbath was undoubtedly a very important institution, a God-given part of Jewish faith and culture. But why had God given it? According to the ancient commandment, God’s people were to keep one day in the week, the seventh, as special, because God had rested on the seventh day after finishing the creative work of the previous six. More than that, the Sabbath was given for the sake of those who need to rest after hard work. *The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.* (St Mark 2, 27-28)

The Sabbath was instituted to meet human need. What could be contentious or controversial about that? It seems so self-evident. This means that Sundays are intended for our benefit, affording as they do opportunities not only for rest and recreation, re-creation, but especially for worship. The priority for 21st century Christians must continue to be coming together with other Christians to worship the Creator who made everything good, on the day when God calls us to celebrate the new creation. When the first Christians chose Sunday as their principal day of worship, commemorating Christ’s resurrection, they laid aside the notion of enforced rest on the seventh day of the week and stressed instead, on each first day of the week, the coming of God’s new age.

Jesus, however, was saying more than that human need takes precedence over traditional rules and regulations. Everybody already knew that. Nor did he mean that every “son of man”, every human being, is free to do as he or she likes. Christ, the Son of Man, is *Lord of the Sabbath*. The followers of Jesus are not bound by the complex regulations with which sabbatarians ancient and modern have tried to encumber it. It is *Christ* who is Lord of the Sabbath and not we ourselves. Therefore we are not left to our own devices and at the mercy of those who maintain that anything goes. There are still those who would stifle us with demands for blind obedience to a set of rules. Around us are many who insist that all must be a law to themselves and take responsibility of solving all problems alone. But here Christ points to himself as one who stands above all rules and bears all responsibility for us. He does not say: On this day you must rest from every kind of work. Nor does he say: You must decide for yourselves what Sabbath rest really means. He says, *Come to me... and I will give you rest.* Not merely cessation from work but something positive and recreative. And in so doing we receive a foretaste of the joy-filled experience God intended the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day to be, a day of celebration and joy and renewal.