

February & March 2021

Issue 129

# The Link



The magazine for the linked congregations and communities of  
the West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood.  
[www.west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk](http://www.west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk)

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# Letter From The Minister

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February 2021

Dear Congregations

Almost a year ago (can you believe it?!) the first lockdown started, and here we are again... Every day feels the same. We are not going anywhere, not meeting up with our friends and family, not doing anything exciting, but hopefully this will soon be nothing more than a distant memory. A few of our members already received the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine, and once we've all received it, our days might start to look a little more **'normal'** again.

One of the things I miss most at the moment, is worshipping God and spending time with my church family in our lovely churches on a Sunday. Although our days seem to all be exactly the same



just now, I think it's important to **make a point of making a Sunday different**. We might not be able to be at church, but Sunday is still the day we should be setting aside for God. So why not mark this day in a special way? Light a candle, sing a hymn, say a prayer, watch the online worship service, phone a family member...

No matter what is going on in the world around us, a Sunday will always be **the day Jesus rose from the dead**. And that is something worth celebrating, even if this is just done in a small and ordinary way. Let's break the monotony of our days on a Sunday by doing something special to the glory of God. I guarantee you that this will not only cheer you up, but also **give you the strength** to face the rest of the week!

Remember the words of Psalm 42:11: *"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God."*

May God be very close to you all.

Much love, Nanda

## Lockdown Tales

This time Nanda asked the Rev Sheena Orr (West Kirk of Calder) and Gordon Erskine (Polbeth Harwood) to tell us a little about what they have been up to during lockdown so far.

### Sheena says:

Well, who could have imagined that 11 months on we would still be in lockdown? Apart from family quizzes on zoom I have not seen two of my sisters in person since Christmas 2019 -one of them lives in Kent and the other outside Stirling. The third sister and I saw much more of each other as we often met up for live theatre in Edinburgh. Alas, apart from a short visit during one of the brief lifting of restrictions, I have not seen her either. But, perhaps the most difficult thing has not been seeing our eldest son, Niall and daughter-in-law,



Katie. Living in Glasgow they have been very cautious about visiting outside their council area and it was on one of the three occasions that we have seen them that they announced that Alastair and I are going to be grandparents. Such joy...such agony! Such exciting news and yet restricted to little more than an elbow bump by way of celebration. Heart-breaking when you want to hug someone and can't.

On a lighter note, I have been able to play doubles tennis from August until this most recent lockdown. The winter rota runs from October to December on a Tuesday evening. Our clothing is rather different from the whites of Wimbledon but we have plenty of fun and fresh winter air on the floodlit courts at Hatton (just inside West Lothian boundary – phew!). And talking of winter... and

snow... my mind turns to skiing. Last year we were amazingly fortunate to be able to go on a family ski holiday in Bulgaria that we had all been looking forward to. That was the first week of March 2020. Little did we guess that there would be no ski holiday this year. That is why when we had a few inches around the house I was out there in my skis making the most of it. It might not be the Swiss Alps but at least I got a chance to feel snow under my skis and glide down the field in front of the house – all 40 metres of it. Now I never would have done that if not for Covid!

### **Gordon says:**

It is a new way of life, and it's hard to get to grips with... Talking of grips, I have had them put onto my walking boots!



We acquired a small Jack Russell in April, called OZ, and believe it or not, I go out each day at about 8am for an hour— somehow I have not once got wet! So much for Scottish weather...

I am fed up clearing snow from the drive: snow, thaw, snow, thaw, what next ???

For years my left knee has bothered me, so I have had an x-ray done of it and am waiting for the results.

I (along with lots of folk) have missed going to meetings, but it has given me time to work on my stamp collection, 12 albums. This stops me from doing housework, which Patricia does not like me doing!!!!

I am sure several men help their wives in this way, ironing etc.

# Reflections

## **Revelation 3:18 *Through the eyes of Jesus*** **(Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald)**

*“Here’s what I want you to do: Buy your gold from me, gold that’s been through the refiner’s fire. Then you’ll be rich. Buy your clothes from me, clothes designed in Heaven. You’ve gone around half-naked long enough. And buy medicine for your eyes from me so you can see, really see.”*

John writes these words to the people of Laodicea – a well-to-do community, where most people thought they had it made. They had enough money, beautiful clothes, and clever doctors to treat them. But the message here is that they might not be wanting for anything in earthly things, but that doesn’t mean that their lives are complete, because the most important thing in life was missing from their lives, and that was a passion for the love of God. If they really wanted to be rich and look good, they had to look at others through the eyes of Jesus, because then they would be able to **REALLY** see...

None if this is news to us. We know that **real** riches can’t be found in earthly things, but how about looking at others through the eyes of Jesus? Someone who looks broken to us, will look like someone who is about to be healed to Jesus. Someone whose life looks like a mess to us, will look like someone on the verge of a new beginning to Jesus. Jesus doesn’t see our dark pasts, he sees our bright futures. Jesus doesn’t see our mistakes, he sees opportunities to change, to teach, to love.

So during this time, where people seem to judge so easily, let’s do our best to look at all those around us through the eyes of Jesus. Let’s see what he would see, and then act accordingly. And let’s never forget that he looks at us in that same way too. We are forgiven, we are loved.

## **Prayer**

*Loving Lord, thank you for teaching us how to live. Thank you for giving your life for us. During this time of year, when we remember your suffering and pain, help us to look at all those around us with gentle eyes, like you look at us too.*

**Amen**

## **Karen Elliot BEM**

I have some very exciting news to share with you about Karen Elliot!

Some of you will know her as the girl you taught in Sunday School, some of you will know her as Marion's daughter, some of you will remember her as one of the Hamilton's from Burngrange, we all know her as our West Kirk Treasurer, but let me tell you a little bit more about Karen Elliot.

Karen comes from a military family, with her father Drew having served in the Royal Air Force. When the family resettled in West Calder, Karen was a regular at our Sunday School. She attended West Calder High School and left school with more qualifications than she cares to remember, it's fair to say she was bright!

Karen wasn't content with life in West Calder and following many visits to the Royal Navy Careers Office in Lothian Road, Edinburgh, she left home on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1984, travelled to HMS Raleigh in Plymouth and joined the Women's Royal Naval Service as a Wren. Karen loved life as a Wren, meeting new people and experiencing new adventures. Her specialism of Radar meant that on completion of her basic training she travelled to the Royal Navy's Maritime Warfare School HMS Dryad, in Southwick Village, Hampshire (where D-Day was planned) to learn her trade.

On successfully passing out Karen became a trainer and taught officers in preparation for their roles on warships, this included a member of the Royal family as well as other officers who went on

to command ships. In December of 1984 Karen volunteered to forfeit her Christmas leave and stayed at her base to guard against attack from a paramilitary group who were taking part in a mainland UK bombing campaign, the camaraderie she experienced during this time is something she holds dear to this day.

Karen continued to study hard and looked for ways to gain more experience. She again volunteered to form part of a team that were pulled together from across the country, to review the Falkland War signals. Don't ask her about it as she'll tell you it's a secret!

The next step in Karen's Naval career brought her closer to home and following vetting, and many interviews, she successfully took up her position with Naval Intelligence at Maritime Headquarters Pitreavie (just outside Dunfermline). This was at the height of the Cold War and during this role she worked more closely with senior officers, including her former Captain at HMS Dryad, Admiral Sir Jock Slater (a legend in Karen's eyes).

In September 1987, the Reverend Tom Dundas married Karen and her Sailor Stephen in the West Kirk, shortly afterwards Stephen deployed to a war zone. Stephen tells me that Karen was a wonderful Naval wife, always thinking of others and sending food parcels and gifts all over the world.

Despite loving the life in the Senior Service and being selected for promotion, in 1989 Karen decided that it was time to leave, settle down, create a home and raise a family. Karen threw herself into life in East Calder, volunteering and supporting others as well as being a fantastic wife and mother, and being successful in her newfound profession as a Business Analyst.

Service has always been something that Karen has held dear, and thinking that she had cut her service to her Queen and country short, she decided to join the Association of Wrens and the Royal Naval Association. Although I say joined, she really shook up the old guard, and immediately started to make a difference. Her

service continued and she became more involved in the Armed Forces and Veterans Community, across Scotland and beyond. Karen has continued to march forward and hasn't been perturbed by the odd setback. In 2017 she led the Scottish planning team that delivered the Royal Naval Association National Conference in Perth, and in the same year she also planned and executed three centenary events for the Women's Royal Naval Service, including a celebratory dinner on the Royal Yacht Britannia.

As well as other positions in military charities, Karen is the Scottish Area Secretary and the Social Secretary of the City of Edinburgh Branch of the Royal Naval Association, she is the Chair of the Edinburgh and District Branch of the Association of Wrens and Women of the Royal Naval Service, she is also a National Trustee for the charity and an Ambassador for the Wrens Benevolent Trust. **In the 2021 New Year's Honours List Karen was appointed a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty the Queen.**



This is so well deserved, because all of you who know Karen know that she can't do enough to help others and make a difference. She stepped up to the role of treasurer without any hesitation, because she knew her church needed her. And if I ask for help with / volunteers for church projects / events, Karen is always there.

If a member of her church family needs support in any way, Karen quietly and humbly does what she can to make their lives a little easier.

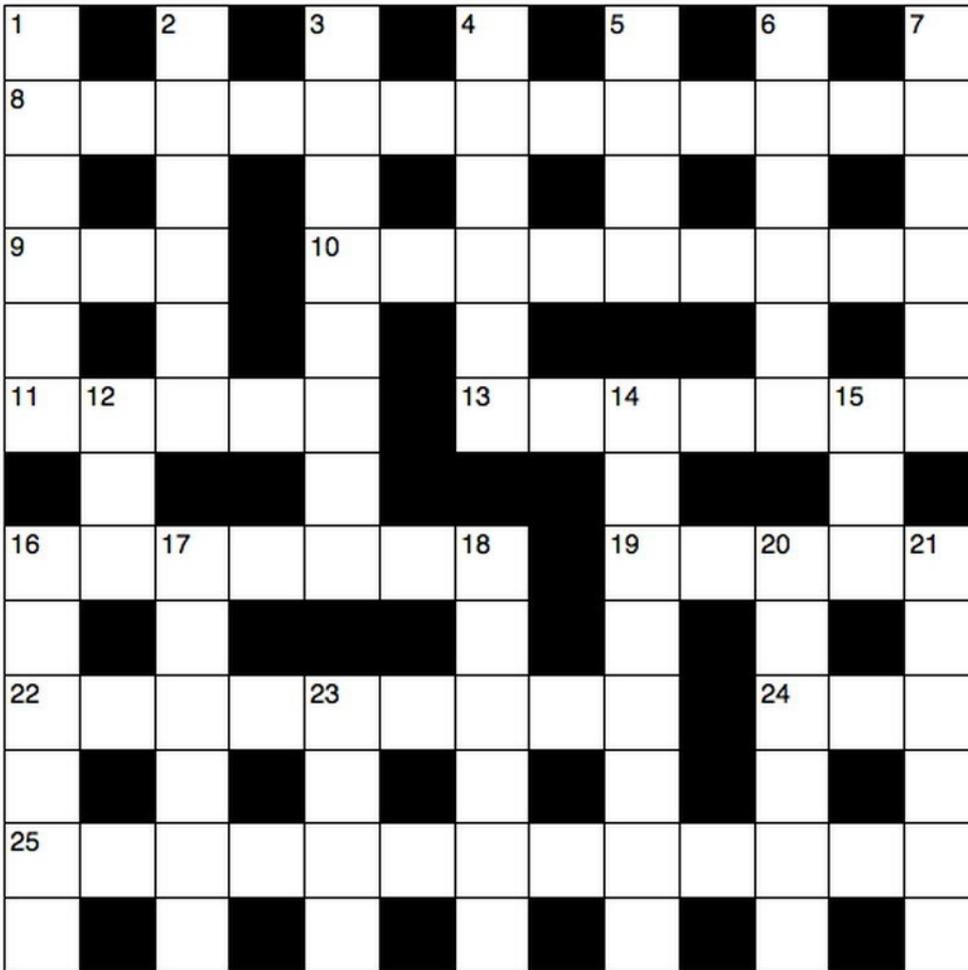
The following words are engraved on the medal: "For meritorious service: For God and the Empire". That is exactly what Karen does – she serves God and her country wholeheartedly.

Congratulations Karen, we are very proud of you!

May God bless you,

Nanda

# February Crossword



## Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
- 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
- 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
- 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
- 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
- 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
- 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
- 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
- 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

## Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)

- 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
- 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
- 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
- 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
- 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
- 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
- 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
- 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
- 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
- 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
- 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
- 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
- 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

## Last Edition's Wordsearch Solutions: Dec. 2020

Silent	First	Christmas	Young	Melody
Night	Sung	Eve	Priest	Single
Loved	Stille	Father	Organist	Bing
Carol	Nacht	Joseph	Midnight	Version
Austria	Heilige	Mohr	Mass	Third

# In Memory of Victor Ferguson

22.9.1942 – 19.12.2020

Victor was ordained as an elder in the West Kirk of Calder on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1981. He's been a faithful member of our church, attending services almost every single Sunday, singing in the choir, and participating in lots of different church events and socials – always touching lives with his kind manner.

Victor was born and brought up in Edinburgh, as the youngest child of Daisy and John Ferguson. He had two big sisters - Margaret and Ruth. He went to Broughton High School and was a clever pupil with a passion for all things maths and science, this led him to a career as an analytical chemist, working with Ethicon and Johnston and Johnston.

As a young and handsome chemist, he caught the eye of an equally young lab assistant from Seafield, Jeanette. Jeanette looked for *any* excuse possible to drop things off - such as test tubes and needles - to the lab that Victor worked in, in the hope that Victor would notice her. Her plan was successful, it didn't take long for him to notice her. A shy young man, Victor finally plucked up the courage to ask her out.

They were married in Blackburn and Seafield Church, on Jeanette's 19<sup>th</sup> birthday (a week before Victor's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday), on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1962. A year later, they welcomed Corrine to the world, and four years after that, Marnie. Victor worked full time as well as studying, in order to provide for his young family.

There are many fond memories of the annual summer holidays to Lossiemouth – where the family enjoyed time on the beach with their beagle Bonnie, listening to live folk music in local pubs, and eating butteries from the bakery! More exotic holidays came later – when Corrine and Marnie had left home. These holidays became a massively important part of Victor and Jeanette's life. Most

memorable of which were the trips to Hawaii, Alaska, Turkey, Canada, New York and Nashville. Live music was a key feature in the lives of the family. Victor's other great passion was whisky – which led to many visits to distilleries across Scotland.

Other than travelling, live music and whisky, the most joy in Victor's life came from spending time with his grandchildren – Rachel, Jamie, Laurie, Viggo and Suvi. Although the grandchildren brought Victor much joy, life was never the same for him after Jeanette passed away. From the first time she met him in the labs in Ethicon, she was the one who gave him courage and confidence to grab the world by the horns and live life to the full. Without her, he was lost.

During the final weeks of Victor's life, what gave the family strength and hope was the belief that finally, Victor and Jeanette would be back together, and he would feel complete again. Victor passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, at St John's hospital.

## Reflections

### Shrove Tuesday Reflection

#### **Psalm 32:1-5 *Something to celebrate?* (Rev Alison Quilter)**

*Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.' And you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Mention Shrove Tuesday to my work colleagues and they immediately think of one thing: pancakes! And then the office competition comes along where the various teams and individuals battle it out to see who can make the best pancakes and top them off with various fillings – no

nothing plain will do. So for them it is a day to celebrate and look forward to and make the most of the occasion.

When it was first instituted, centuries back however, the mood it aimed to inculcate was rather different. It was designed as a solemn occasion, a time for sober reflection and earnest soul-searching; for recognising and confessing one's sins so that in the ensuing days of Lent one could strive to overcome them.

Which, then, is the right approach? Despite the Church's original intention, Shrove Tuesday swiftly became associated with fun and revelry, celebrated in some countries with carnivals, in others with parties and feasting, in others with pancake races. Aware that Lent involves 40 days of fasting or giving up some of their usual routine for Lent, people were determined to indulge themselves before Lent started – to eat, drink and be merry. The rationale may be questionable, but they were right nonetheless to celebrate, for Lent, like every Christian season, should finally be about rejoicing. The clue as to why is in the word 'Shrove', from the Old English term 'shrive', meaning to hear confession and grant forgiveness. During Lent, Christians give time to personal examination and to reflect on their relationship with God. As part of our reflecting during Lent we acknowledge our sins in Lent not to brood upon them but to receive forgiveness. That's what God offers every one of us – pardon today, tomorrow and everyday: something indeed truly worth celebrating!

### **Prayer**

***Loving God, help me to grasp more fully the breadth of your mercy, to understand that you do not seek to condemn but delight rather to forgive, always being ready to wipe the slate clean and offer new beginnings. Help me to acknowledge my faults, not in despair over them but rejoicing at your grace, not dwelling on my weaknesses but exulting in the generosity of your love.***

***Amen.***

## Finance Corner



Whilst protection measures continue, we remain positive, resilient and hopeful. We may not physically be in Church again, but Nanda, Alison and the team continue to deliver Worship and pastoral care support in a variety of ways, including, 'Church from your Couch' and 'Midweek Message', and the costs to maintain the Church and keep it going continue.

Many thanks to all who continue to make financial contributions to the Church during this unprecedented time, your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

If you do not already have a **Standing Order**/direct bank payment set-up, and would like to pay by this method, please contact your treasurer (details on page 1 of the magazine).

Alternatively, you could make a payment, either one-off or regular, via direct bank transfer to the **Bank Details** set out below:

### **West Kirk of Calder:**

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland  
Name: West Kirk of Calder – Kirk Session  
Account: 00185142 / Sort Code: 83-28-03

### **Polbeth Harwood Church:**

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland  
Name: Polbeth Harwood Church of Scotland  
Account: 00235085 / Sort Code: 83-28-03

If you usually donate via **freewill offering envelope**, and you are not able to do bank transfers, please keep putting your money in the envelopes and just keep them until we meet again or contact your Elder to arrange collection.

We also have a **DONATE** button on our Church website – all you need to do, if you would like to make a donation this way, is to click on the **DONATE** button (separate buttons for the West Kirk and Polbeth Harwood) and you'll be instructed on how to proceed.

We can continue to claim some tax back on donations received, from HMRC, where we have a valid **Gift Aid** declaration in place. The Gift Aid declaration, once signed and submitted to the Church, continues until we receive an updated instruction from you. Many thanks to all who have signed and returned a Gift Aid declaration – the tax reclaimed from HMRC significantly helps with the costs of running the Church.

It is vital that we only reclaim on valid Gift Aid declarations, therefore, if your circumstances (which includes a change of address) change, please do let your Treasurer know, so that our records can be kept accurate and up-to-date.

If you're unsure, please don't hesitate to contact your Treasurer or Elder for guidance.

Your continued support of the Church through your Freewill Offering is greatly appreciated.

Stay safe and well. Karen & Sandra

## Gift Aid

I'm sure we don't need to go into the details of it all again ... more just to remind those that have signed a Gift Aid Declaration that:

- a. it remains valid until they advise that it should be cancelled or amended; and
- b. that they should let us know about any changes (e.g. change of address).

We can reiterate that the GA Declaration and Bank Standing Order forms are available from  the Treasurer and/or to download from the Church website  too.

## Lent Bible Study

LENT  2021

*During week 1 to 6 of Lent, Rev Dr André Groenewald will present a Bible Study about the Passion of Christ. These Bible studies will be co-presented by the Ministers of the St James Church in Utrecht (Jacobi kerk). André invites all of us at the West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood Church to watch these Bible Studies on our own website and Facebook pages. A transcript of each week's session will be available on the website to print.*

*André wrote a wee extract of what will be discussed:*

During the long existence of the church, there were several ways of remembering the traumatic events that took place in Jerusalem with the condemnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. In nearly every Catholic church in the world, you will “see a series of simple crosses or fourteen images depicting the passion of Jesus” (McBride 2016 :1). This is known as the “stations of the cross”. In the Protestant world a different approach was taken focussing on the grace of God’s forgiving love on the cross. The Reformers emphasized and looked at the traumatic events before, during and after the crucifixion through the lenses of the Resurrection. In the Resurrection event of Jesus God’s forgiving powerful love triumphs over violence, sin, trauma, and death. Amid violent trauma, and injustice Jesus does not stop loving humanity (see Borg & Crossan 2008: viii). He does not strike out with violence or curse his persecutors. “In a way it’s as though trauma, the violence, tries to imprison him and fails” (Jones 2019: xvii).

Currently we live in turbulent and traumatic times as well. Covid-19 is disrupting and threatening our lives, livelihoods, and existence. How do we make sense of it? Tom Wright (2020:1-2) says in his book *God and the Pandemic* “And suddenly there was no safe space on the planet. There is no neutral zone. No medical equivalent of wartime Switzerland, where you could escape for a while, relax, and ponder what ought to be done”. One mistake that we can make is to

underestimate the traumatic nature and impact Covid-19 is making on our lives, livelihoods, and existence.

In the light of all the above, I am sure that the passion narrative of Jesus can become a powerful message of faith, hope, grace, and love to all those who suffer from trauma, violence, and injustice.

## Church During Lockdown

We are not allowed to have church services during the current lockdown restrictions. But please remember: While our buildings might be closed at the moment – THE CHURCH IS STILL OPEN! Please don't hesitate to contact Alison or Nanda if you need any kind of support, or even just want a wee blether!

Every Sunday on our Church Website: [www.west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk](http://www.west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk), as well as on our Facebook Pages: West Kirk of Calder / Polbeth Harwood Church, you can join in Sunday worship from the comfort of your own home. There are 3 clips available: Church from your Couch, Hymns at Home, and Kids' Kirk. These are available from 10am, but can be watched at any time after that. We also have a phone service, which means that if you don't have internet access, you can dial 01506 286 884 to listen to the worship service (this service has recently been upgraded, the sound is much better now). A transcript of the sermon is also available on the website.

On Wednesdays at 4pm there is a Midweek Message on the website and Facebook pages, and also look out for details about a Lent Bible Study. Every now and again there will be an invitation to meet via Zoom over a cuppa after church. The log-in details will be posted with the service.

As soon as we are allowed to open our church doors again, we will do so – please keep an eye on the webpage / Facebook for details about this and any other events.



## Reflections

***Ecclesiastes 1:5 The sun never sleeps (Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald)***

*The sun rises and the sun sets,  
and hurries back to where it rises.*

On a bitterly cold day, I phoned my dad in South Africa and asked what their weather was like. “Well”, my dad said, “I am sitting here outside in the sun, but I have just put my jacket on, because it’s cold here today too!” When I asked him what the temperature was, he said 22 degrees! As you can probably imagine, I burst out laughing! 22 degrees is almost like a heatwave here. I guess if your average summer temperature is 37 degrees, 22 *can* feel cold. I looked out the window as he mentioned that he was sitting in the sunshine, but I couldn’t see the sun for all the clouds. That got me thinking... We have some pretty grey days here. Days when the sun is nowhere to be seen. Yet we all know, that just because we can’t see the sun, it doesn’t mean that it’s not there. From where we are standing, we can only see the clouds. The clouds might sometimes obscure our view of the sun, but the sun is still there. Always, every day. And when it’s night-time, the sun is shining somewhere else in the world. The sun never sleeps.

And just like that, God is always there for us too. Sometimes it’s very easy for us to see him, and we can bask in his love (as a matter of speaking) but sometimes our circumstances can obscure our view of God’s presence in our lives. That doesn’t mean that He is not there! It only means that we are focussing so much on what is going on with us, that we can’t see what is behind it... So, if your day, or maybe even your life at the moment, feels a little grey – please remember that the light of the love of God NEVER stops shining. Sometimes we just need to look a little harder, or sometimes we need to wait patiently for the clouds to disappear.

And if we ever come across someone who feels the cold, why don't we share the love of God with them, and in this way warm up their hearts and lives like Jesus taught us to?

### Prayer

*Loving Father, we want to praise you for your constant presence in our lives. Please forgive us for the times we fail to see it, and help us to share the wonderful news of you love with all those we meet. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

N N E S T B O X A R E C L  
L F L A W E D D I N G T E  
T O P M A T T H I A S T G  
C O M E D A R T R I A F A  
O G E L A H N O R L O C I  
F Y T D R E M H O R B S R  
F S P N L A C C T A E V R  
E O O A N G O N N C G A A  
E R V C E H I A I N L N M  
L P E E C G N T I D N A I  
O E R E H A S M N A N D N  
V L T T S U A C O L O H A  
E O Y D J N O E M I S A S

# February Wordsearch

## Candlemas

February opens with Candlemas – the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people. February also celebrates the love between a man and woman: Valentine cards and romance abound. 'Love' as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, and National Nest Box Week.... Love is truly needed by everyone!

## Reflections

**Matthew 28:20b** *You'll never walk alone* (Rev Alison Quilter)

*'I guarantee that I will be with you every day, to the very end of time'.*

'Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart, and you'll never walk alone'. You will recognise those words and no doubt some of you will have sung them as you read. The words were originally written by Oscar Hammerstein, but they will be remembered by many people from the classic version sung by Gerry and the Pacemakers in the 1960s and many a football fan, especially of Liverpool FC, will have sung them lustily on the terraces and stands at football matches. The tune alone compels you to sing along, and persists in the mind long after you hear it, but it is Hammerstein's words that truly capture the imagination. Simple they may be, but they resonate deep within, touching a primeval fear and requirement. We need companionship – people to mingle with, to relate to, to be part of our lives – and the idea of having no one to turn to, no one concerned about our welfare or with whom to share life, is something we all dread and scarcely contemplate.

Few, thankfully, find themselves living in total isolation, although we have all been put to the test this past year. Sometimes though we can feel lonely in a crowd – when we have people around us. Does anybody really care for us, value us for who and what we are? And more fundamentally, are we mere specks in an empty and impersonal universe? The testimony of Scripture is that, however things may seem, *we are not, and never can be, alone*. God is not remote, disinterested, aloof watching with clinical detachment as we struggle along life's way. He has promised, through Jesus, to be with us always, here, there and everywhere, and nothing can separate us from his love. With him we can truly walk on with hope in our hearts, for we will indeed never walk alone. As the chorus in the song goes: ***Walk on, walk on with hope***

*in your heart and you'll never walk alone. You'll never walk alone.*

**Prayer**

*Father God, thank you that I am never completely on my own; that, however much it may sometimes seem otherwise you are always with me, a constant friend and companion in the journey of life. Help me to recognise your presence and to feel your love reaching out to me, each moment of every day through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.*

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		3	7	1	5	2		
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		8		7	9	5		
2	9				6			8
	3			2		7		

**February  
Sudoku**

**Last Edition's Crossword Solutions: Dec. 2020**

**Across:** 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

**Down:** 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

# **On Leave In The Holy Land – 2nd Instalment**

By a West Lothian Soldier, transcribed by Meg Stenhouse.

**West Lothian Courier 25<sup>th</sup> August 1944**

## **At Jerusalem**

Jerusalem was reached fairly early in the forenoon, and my first real view of the city was from the top of Mount Scopus. The coach took me right to the top for the roads are very good here and the hill is not really steep. There, spread out before me was the City on the Hill with all its towers and minarets, domes and spires, and the old city wall prominent in the foreground. It is an impressive sight this city which is so steeped in history of mankind. I viewed it long and had pointed out to me many of its famous landmarks such as The Dome of the Rock, which is built on the site of Solomon's temple; the Golden Gate, through which Christ passed many times, one of them the time when his path was strewn with palms. But the Golden Gate has been walled up by the Muslims in fear of Christ's second coming. The long bare valley between Mount Scopus and Jerusalem is the Valley of Cedron and legend has it that it was in this valley that David met and defeated Goliath so long ago.

I crossed over to the eastern side of Mount Scopus and there spread out before me were miles and miles of bare hilly country as far as the eye could reach. Away on the horizon, barely visible through the haze were the Mountains of Moab and further south a long narrow shining ribbon peeping from the valleys was the River Jordan. Far away to the south a corner of the Dead Sea could just be seen between the hills. The wilderness before me was the Judean Desert in which Christ himself had wandered in the long ago. Nearby, and seemingly only a stone throw away, stood the Mount of Olives, and below it the Garden of Gethsemane. There is little doubt that I was looking on a scene which remains today much as it was nearly two thousand years ago – a sight which must have been familiar to the multitude which crowded upon Olivet in New Testament days.

## In the Garden of Gethsemane

I visited the Garden of Gethsemane where a beautiful modern church stands – The Church of All Nations. It has twelve domes and each has been dedicated by a particular nation. I went inside and saw the huge flat rock upon which Christ is said to have spent some of his last hours. Three magnificent paintings cover one wall. They are by Italian painters and depict familiar New Testament scenes.

On leaving the church, I was presented with two leaves from the olive trees which grow in the garden. These trees are certainly very old, and it is said that they might possibly have existed in Christ's time. Even if they did not, it is at least reasonable to suppose that they are offspring of the original olive trees.

My next excursion took me to the town of Bethlehem which lies about five and a half miles south of Jerusalem. The road passed the ancient tomb of Rachel which I was allowed to enter. A few people were at prayer standing round the tomb itself.

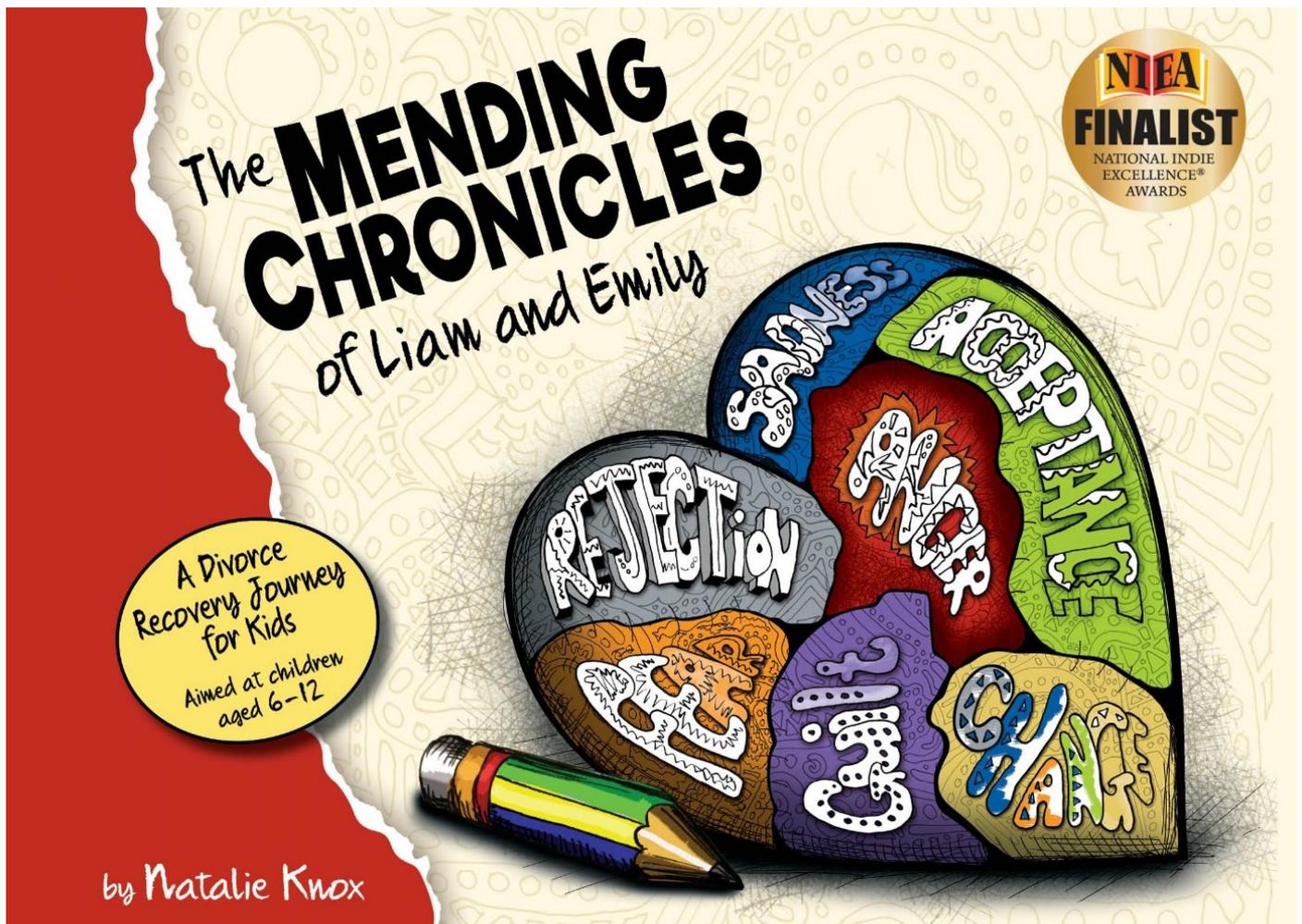
To be continued...

6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
3	8	9	1	6	4	5	7	2
7	2	4	5	8	9	1	6	3
5	7	1	8	3	6	9	2	4
8	4	2	7	9	5	6	3	1
9	6	3	4	1	2	7	8	5
4	3	7	9	5	8	2	1	6
1	9	6	3	2	7	4	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	1	3	9	7

**December  
Sudoku  
Solution**

# The Mending Chronicles

*Do you know any children struggling to cope with their parents' divorce? The Mending Chronicles is a book written from a Christian perspective, to guide them through this challenging time:*



The Mending Chronicles of Liam and Emily is a compelling self-help divorce recovery handbook for kids. It aims to provide a safe space for children to process their emotions and responses to divorce and empower them to communicate effectively with those around them. The divorce recovery handbook also potentially highlights any misconceptions surrounding the divorce that children could have which may affect future relationships.

- Liam and Emily's story is accessible and relevant to most children and is interspersed with attractive and fun activities

offering reflection, strategic problem solving, and self-expression.

- Highlighted in the story are these common emotions and responses to divorce: Rejection, anger, fear, guilt, grief, accepting change, independence, and loving others.
- Emotional intelligence is promoted through lots of emotional vocabulary and interactive activities. Readers will benefit from improved social skills, self-confidence, and emotional well-being.
- Spiritual inspiration is found through references and scriptures from the Bible offering hope, faith, and healing.

Aimed at children aged 6-12, *The Mending Chronicles of Liam and Emily* can be used by families, counsellors, teachers, and community workers.

**Review:**

**“A treasured piece of work, beautifully illustrated, outlining the difficult emotions and way of recovery for every child facing the impact of divorce on their family. Natalie tenderly leads the reader and child through a range of possible emotions which undoubtedly will help children identify and talk about their deepest fears. Along with the spiritual wisdom and guidance from the story of Liam and Emily, this book has the capacity to ensure children develop a healthy strategy for life as they negotiate change. Useful not only for parents or main caregivers, but also for any adults involved in helping children and their families finding healing through their pain.”**

**Carolyn Rae**

**Director**

**Hope Counselling, Aberdeen, Scotland**

If you would like to find out more, here is the website:

[mendingchronicles.com](http://mendingchronicles.com)

The book can be purchased from most online retailers. Amazon is the most commonly used. Here is the link: [www.amazon.co.uk/Mending-Chronicles-Liam-Emily-Recovery/dp/1999349903](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Mending-Chronicles-Liam-Emily-Recovery/dp/1999349903)

## Teen Time



I hope you are all well. I plan to restart Teen Time in February, this time we are going to try a Sunday evening at 6:30pm. I hope you can join us on the following dates: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March. Further dates will be announced as we learn more about lockdown measures! I do hope you can join us then.

In the meantime here is a parable for you all to ponder. Do you know what a parable is? A parable is a story about earthly things that teaches a lesson about heavenly things. Jesus often used parables because the stories caught people's attention. Even people who were not church goers could listen to a parable and learn from it. Sometimes, the meaning of the parable puzzled people, and they had to think about the story for a long time. The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Good Soil and The House Built on the Rock are some of the parables Jesus told.

### Who was the Good Samaritan?

*Jesus told a parable about the kind man from Samaria, a man most Jews would consider an enemy. The Story went like this:*



*A long time ago a Jew was travelling on a lonely road when he was attacked by robbers. They took everything he had, beat him, and left him beside the road to die. Soon a priest from the Temple (Church) came down the very same road. He saw the man lying in a pool of blood, but the priest did not stop. A short time later, a Levite (temple helper) passed by. He also saw the man and heard his groans, but he did not stop to help the man either.*

*Finally, a Samaritan came down the road on his donkey. When he saw the injured Jew, he washed the man's wounds and helped him up on the donkey. The Samaritan led the man to an inn and cared*

*for him that night. The next morning, the Samaritan left money with the innkeeper to pay for any medicine or food that the man might need.*

*Jesus asked His listeners, "Which of these men was a good neighbour?"*

*"The Samaritan," they answered. "Then go and do the same thing he did!" Jesus said.*

Take care, Alison

## **Stories For One Another**

I can hardly believe that after all this time we are now back to home schooling again! I am sure that mums and dads everywhere groaned at the thought of having to help with schoolwork, and children are missing their friends and teachers.

This got me thinking. Can we use this time to do something nice for others? Then it came to me! I don't know of anyone who doesn't love listening to stories read by others and right now this is a very lonely time for many of us.

What I would love, from as many boys and girls as possible, is for you to send me a video of you reading your favourite story or your reading book from school. I always loved listening to Iona doing her reading, and I know I would love to hear all of you too.

If I get a big enough response, I plan to put them all on to a DVD and then give this to some of our congregation who would really benefit from the joy of a story read by our very own children.

**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** ask your mums and dads to record you and send them to me at [Sandra.dixon71@gmail.com](mailto:Sandra.dixon71@gmail.com) or via WhatsApp on 07855 861223.

I look forward to hearing all your stories.

Sandra

## Thank You

We would like to say a humble thank you for the wonderful generosity of the financial donations that Polbeth Harwood and the West Kirk of Calder collected for SAFE FAMILIES over the Christmas season.

What a wonderful blessing – we are so grateful for such a loving partnership with your churches and all those belonging to them.

As we continue to support an increasing number of struggling families across West Lothian, these gifts will bring light into the darkness. Thank you so much.

We look forward to continue to partner with you in 2021.

With blessings on you all,

Kate, Andy and the Safe Families Team

**Who said only wee ones can have fun in the snow?!**



Well done Shirley!!

# Joshua

## **The walls that fell down (Joshua 2:1-22; 5:13-15; 6:1-23)**

*When Moses the great leader of the Israelites died, God said to Joshua, 'Get my people ready and lead them into the Promised Land. Be brave! I will be with you'. Joshua came to the river Jordan. On the other side was Canaan, the land God had promised to his people. There were people already living in the land so Joshua sent two spies to gather information about the city of Jericho.*

*When the spies arrived in Jericho, they met a woman called Rahab. She helped them. 'I know that God will let you capture Jericho,' she said. 'Everyone knows that God is with the Israelites!' The spies promised to keep Rahab and her family safe when they made their attack. Then they escaped from Rahab's house, and made their way back to the camp.*

*Joshua led the Israelites across the river. Then he gathered his army, and made his way towards Jericho. Suddenly he saw a man standing in front of him. The man held out a sword in his hand. 'Are you for us or against us', asked Joshua. 'I am the commander of God's army,' he said. Joshua knew then that God would fight with them. The people of Jericho stayed in within the city walls. The gates were tightly shut. Everyone was afraid.*

*'Every day for the next six days, march your soldiers once around the city walls', God said to Joshua. 'Make seven priests march in front of the ark of the covenant, blowing trumpets, but do not speak. On the seventh day, march seven times around the city walls. Ask the priests to blow their trumpets. When my people hear the long trumpet blast, tell them to shout. Then the city walls will fall down!'*

*For six days the Israelites marched around the city walls. On the seventh day, they marched seven times. The ark of the covenant went ahead of them, and the priests blew their trumpets. When he heard the long trumpet blast, Joshua gave the people the signal. They shouted as loudly as they could. Immediately the city walls collapsed and crumbled,*

*and the Israelites charged forwards, taking the city. Only Rahab and her family were saved.*



# Joshua Bible Story



After 40 long years in the wilderness, God decided that His people were ready to enter the promised land.

Joshua was now the leader. Joshua told the people what God had said, just like he had told them all that time ago. "We need to go and take the land."

This time the Israelites believed God.



Joshua would lead Israel into the new land.

How exciting it must have been for him!

God had rewarded Joshua's trust in Him.

Joshua had trusted God for a long time.

He knew that God would always do what He said.



Joshua knew that there were big giants in the land. He knew that there were strong soldiers. He had seen all the cities with their big, tall walls.

Did Joshua doubt God? No! He said, "God will do great things for us. We do not need to be afraid. God goes with us always. Be strong and courageous."



Joshua taught his family about God. He wanted them to make good choices.

He knew some people would love things more than God but He and His family choose God first. They said, "We will serve the Lord together."

God is very happy when families worship and serve Him together.

## Mothering Sunday March 14th

# Mothers Day Word Search

Find the hidden words.

F R C B Y Y H C L Y L I M A F  
G S E T H O U E V U U O G I M  
N O N S N P G L F K M V M O X  
I U E O P W S T W M D P T X U  
V R R M I E H E Y O D H M E B  
I F D T C G C W I W E E K K A  
G R L A U G H T E R V H I Z Y  
Z C I O R R W O R O O E S L J  
Y Z H S W E E T L A T M S Q P  
H T C T J E P O Z I E O E Q W  
V W M G N I R A C H D H S M H  
V L A I C E P S M W A A K N T  
T I R F Q D R D S K N I Y K T  
K W E T N J X A Z T T O N N H  
L P R S L U P T P C J R O S G

CARING	GIVING	KISSES	NURTURE
CHILDREN	HEART	LAUGHTER	PARENT
DEVOTED	HOLIDAY	LOVE	RESPECT
FAMILY	HOME	MEMORIES	SPECIAL
FLOWERS	HONOR	MOMMY	SWEET
GIFTS	HUGS	MOTHER	THOUGHTFUL

Remember to send Nanda a picture of your spring bulbs when they are in full bloom.

# Parish Record

## Deaths

Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life."

27/11/20	Isabella Mackie	Tippethill Hospital
19/12/20	Victor Ferguson	Parkhead Gardens, West Calder
10/01/21	Lucy Wilkes	Mossend View, West Calder
14/01/21	James McCabe	Langside Gardens, Polbeth
15/01/21	Jemima Haggarty	Blackfaulds Nursing Home, Avonbridge
16/01/21	Jean Campbell	Burngrange Care Home, West Calder
24/01/21	Morris Hastings	Burngrange Care Home, West Calder

**To all who have lost a loved one we extend our sincere sympathies and prayers.**

Loving God,  
When life is hard, and days are dark,  
in these isolating times,  
wrap us in Your arms and  
surround us with Your loving care;  
walking with us through times  
of suffering and pain;  
of uncertainty and disruption;  
to bring us reassurance and hope  
for the days ahead. Amen.

## Baptisms

*"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as them."*

13/12/20	Emie Hunter	infant daughter of Christopher Hunter and Carla Laird
13/12/20	Carly Shanks	infant daughter of Iain Shanks and Leigh Wilson

HAPPY  
MOTHER'S DAY



