

February

Issue 147

The Link



An unexpected sunrise in Lestedo, Galicia.

The magazine for the linked congregations and communities
of the West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood.

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Letter from the minister

February 2023

Dear Friends

February is Stewardship month in our churches, and this year we are going to talk about TIME.

In Ecclesiastes 3 we read that “there is a time for everything”, and indeed there is. And this month, it’s *time* to think about how we use our *time*!

We are living in a time where so many things are replaceable. If something breaks or gets lost, we very easily just get a new one. But time is finite, and once a minute is over, it’s over, and we can never get it back. You can’t buy time, you can’t recycle time. And that is why it is so important to choose to use our time wisely.

A day goes by so quickly, and often, when I go to bed at night, I think about everything I’ve done that day, and realise (every single time!), how easy it is to waste time. If you start scrolling through your phone, for instance, an hour can be gone in the blink of an eye! And that time could have been spent doing something useful...

But to plough our time into church, is different. That is an investment. There are so many changes taking place in the Church of Scotland at the

moment, and if we can't justify that both our churches are needed in our community, we might not have them forever.

So this month I would like to invite every single one of you to evaluate the time you can give to the church – attending worship services and events, volunteering to help at special events or even just the day to day running of the church – every minute you can spare for our churches, will be a minute well spent. Because not only will it ensure that we will be able to keep our doors open and invite people into the house of God, but it will also mean that you will be working on your relationship with God. And I can't imagine any better use of our time, than spending it with God.

Because all those hours we so often use to procrastinate about things in our past or worry about things in our future, can be used to focus on the present – a gift given to us by God. Like Bill Keane said: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present."

May God give us all the ability to be good stewards of our time, to the glory of his name.

God bless,

Nanda

Reflection

- Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald -

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2: “*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die...*”

There is a beginning and end to everything. A time to be born and time to die. But in-between these times, there is a time to live. And that is where every single one of us are finding ourselves at the moment. And precisely because we know that this time won't last forever, we need to make the most of it. We shouldn't even waste a second. Because one day, if we look back at our lives, we want to feel happy with what we've achieved and accomplished, and we want to have special memories of cherished moments. But the only way in which we will be able to achieve this, is if we choose NOW to do these things. To not put it off until the time is right, because then we will never do it. The time never seems to be 'right'. So forget about waiting for that special moment, before you say the words you've been carrying in your heart for such a long time; and stop waiting for a sign, before you gather up enough courage to make that change you know you should have made ages ago – the time is NOW.

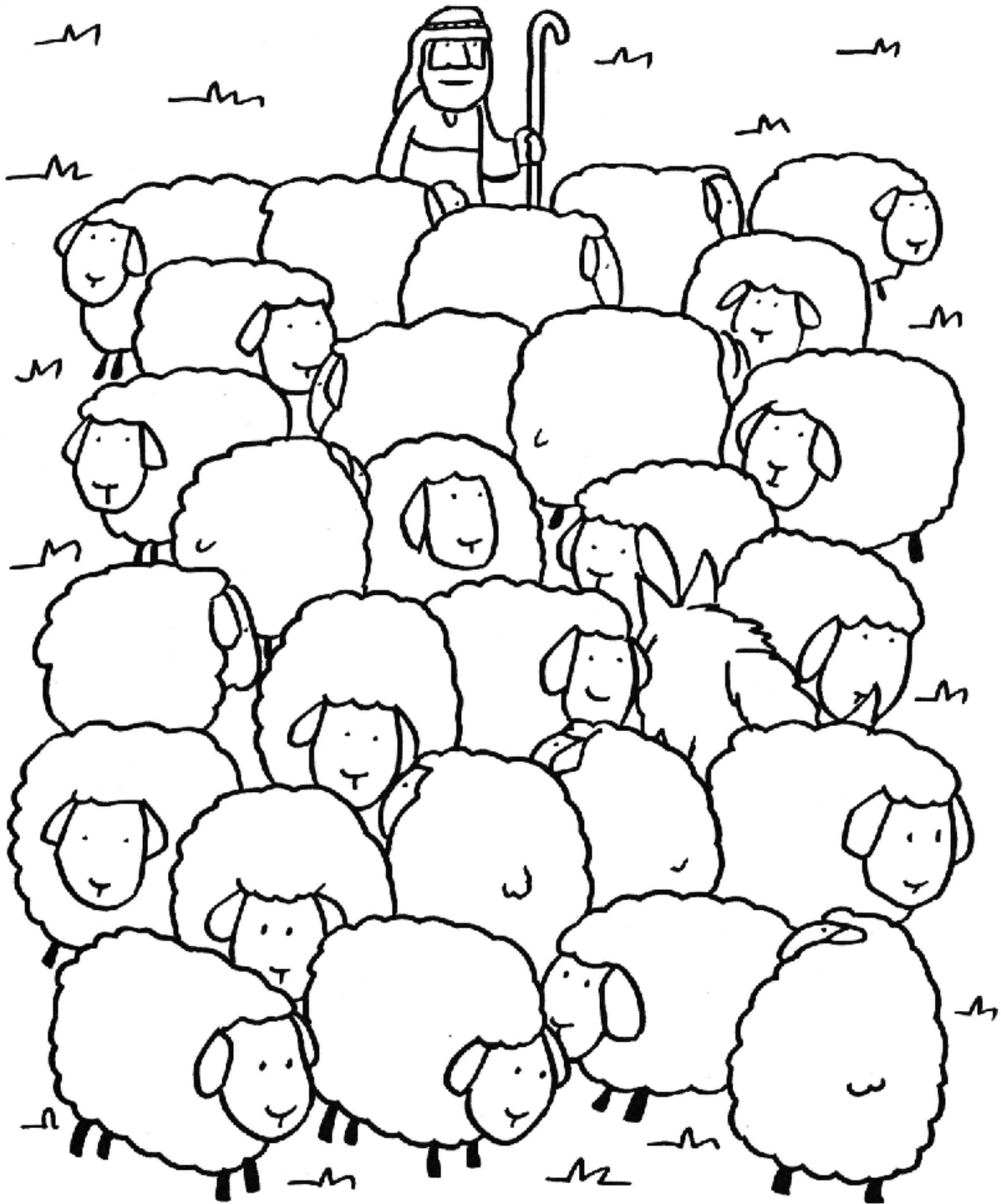
Live your life, say your peace, ask forgiveness, give a cuddle, laugh out loud, read that book, run that marathon, and most importantly – live out your faith, come to church, and celebrate the fact that you belong to a God who holds all your times in his hands...

Prayer: *Loving Father, thank you for giving us time. Please help us to use our time wisely, and to never waste it, as we know that every minute is a gift from you. Amen*



The watchful shepherd

colour in the wolf which is hiding among the sheep.



Travelling into Egypt –

Answers-Item that start with the letter D.

(Diamond, daisy, duck, doll, donkey, desert)



The Kirk at Christmas



For many, thoughts of Christmas have now faded, and we are now looking towards summer and holidays!

But I would just like to take a moment to reflect back on the very wide range of events and services that we held in our linked churches, from mid-November onwards into the New Year. A huge thanks goes out to our minister Nanda & her exceptional helpers, Alison and Suzanne for so many uplifting services over this period.

Both churches held Festive Fayres which didn't just happen. Lots of our wonderful members and helpers pulled out all the stops to make these events the huge success that they were.

Thanks to the parents, youth leaders and helpers for their commitment to our churches and dedication to their children, leaving us with happy memories of our united Nativity service, led entirely by children, such a special event, I am sure you will all agree!

Events you may not have been aware of, were the three services held towards the end of the school term. The first- and sixth-year pupils from West Calder High school came to the West Kirk for their own Christmas service. Just over 250 children attended! Then a day or so later Parkhead primary school filed into the church and we had over 300 that day! In Polbeth there were around 150 children from Bellsquarry Primary who came along to hold their Christmas service. It was truly wonderful to see so many children sitting within our churches.

When so many churches are preparing to close their doors for good, I think we have so much to be thankful for. Let's all pull together to ensure we continue to support our Churches and keep these wonderful traditions and events in our villages for many, many years to come.



Yes! our Annual Quiz will take place at –
West Kirk of Calder, Church Hall.

On Monday 20th of February 2023

At 7pm

Teams of 3, the cost is £1 per person

To enter your team contact:

Evelyn Paterson: 01506 871442

(Closing date for entries 19th February)

A fun sociable evening, which ends with some
light refreshments.

Spectators are very welcome.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Is it too late to say, “Happy New Year”?

For a “finance” update for this edition of The Link, we had a look at the Stewardship resources available on the Church of Scotland website, and thought this useful and thought-provoking:

Jesus said, “No one can have two bosses. He will hate the one and love the other. Or, he will listen to the one and work against the other. You cannot have both God and riches as your boss at the same time”. Matthew 6:24

- We honour God when we use money well.
- We partner with God as we are led to use our money wisely, both in our giving and in investing it ethically for growth, as a reflection of the generosity shown to us.
- Giving to God is a privilege and allows us to participate in His plan of generosity in the world. People in the early Church gave generously to help those in need (Acts 4:34-35), to support other Churches (Romans 15:25-28) and to enable Mission and Ministry (3 John: 5-8).



Share / consider stories about:

- How your background or life experiences have influenced your attitude to money
- How money has been given and used to good effect within the life of the church
- A time when your congregation used its financial resources for the good of the community



Reflect on:

- Your own stories and on those you have heard from others
- What it means to be good stewards of our money
- How your faith affects your relationship with money
- Where you place your giving to God in your priorities
- How our monetary gifts might better enable our churches to share our faith and serve our communities



You might consider acting on:

- Choosing a time to evaluate your current personal giving to God
- Exploring additional streams of income or funding for your congregation and its projects
- Looking at ways your congregation could reduce unnecessary expenditure
- Celebrating and sharing the impact of your Money stories

The expense of keeping our Church doors open is also high, and we would ask that you consider your regular giving. If you can make an increase, either one-off or regular, this would be greatly appreciated and of significant benefit to our Churches to help with ongoing running costs.

Please contact your Elder or Treasurer if you need:

- A form to make your donation direct through your bank
- Giving envelopes
- A form to allow us to reclaim gift aid (or update us if you've already completed this and your circumstances have changed)

Karen Elliot and Sandra McCabe



Date for your Diary!



Spring Kirk's Café

18th March 2023



Refreshments, home baking, tombola,
children's crafts and much more! Hope you
can join us!



Dates to remember:

Sunday 5 February:

Board & Session Conference for both our churches at Polbeth Harwood Church, starting with lunch at 12:30.

Young people:

1 February – The Bridge

19 February – Teen Time

24 February – Youth Group

Thursday 23 February:

Zoom Bible Study. Please get in touch with Nanda if you would like to attend. All welcome!

The Camino de Santiago: More than just a Very Long Walk

The Camino de Santiago (“Way of St. James”) has been walked as a Christian Pilgrimage since the Middle Ages, with the first attested pilgrim, Alfonso II “the Chaste” of Asturias, walking what is now known as the Camino Primitivo (“Original Way”) probably around 815 AD. At that time, most of Spain was under the control of the Moors, Jerusalem was not accessible, and it was dangerous to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome. When the reputed burial site of St. James the Greater was re-discovered around 814 AD in northwest Spain, therefore, it must have seemed like a blessing: a pilgrimage site that could be easily defended, and which was accessible by sea as well as by land. Over time, the shire of St. James (now the patron saint of Spain) became a church, then a cathedral, and by the high Middle Ages tens of thousands of pilgrims a year would undertake the trek to Santiago de Compostela (in what is now Galicia), mostly as a pious devotion. The church declared, however, that anyone that undertook the pilgrimage, made confession, and partook of communion through the mass would be granted a Plenary Indulgence, wiping clean any sins to that point (including for loved ones that the church taught were caught in Purgatory). In many parts of Europe, therefore, judges would sentence high-born criminals to walk to Santiago as an alternative to incarceration or execution. This is still done today in some jurisdictions in Spain.

By the end of the Middle Ages, however, the idea of pilgrimage had gone out of fashion a little, and the (Catholic) Church was more preoccupied with the Reformation and the challenges of Humanism. The infrastructure of Pilgrim Hospitals, roads, causeways, and bridges that had grown up around the Camino faltered, then faded, and even the notion of the Camino fell out of common knowledge. By the start of the

20th century, perhaps a few hundred people a year would walk to Santiago, and it looked likely that the Camino would disappear entirely. During the Franco period, however, the Camino was used (or abused, perhaps) as a symbol of national unity, and infrastructure started to be re-established. A series of books by authors such as Paulo Coelho (*The Pilgrimage*, 1987), Jack Hitt (*Off the Road*, 1994), Shirley McLaine (*The Camino*, 2000), and Hape Kerkeling (*I'm Off Then*, 2009) made the Camino more visible, and Hollywood attention (*The Way*, 2010 with Martin Sheen and his son Emilio Estevez, who also directed) brought it to widespread attention. This year, it's being reported that the total number of pilgrims to walk at least the last 100 km of the Camino (the minimum required for the cathedral to recognise the effort with a certificate of completion called a Compostela) might approach 500,000.

One of them was me.

The Camino is unusual in that it doesn't have a defined starting point. The end point is clear: you have to get to Santiago de Compostela; but any route that gets you there is a Camino. Traditionally, pilgrims (peregrinos in Spanish) would just start walking from their house, but over time certain routes became more common. Mainly, this was because they were safer (often being guarded and patrolled by first the Knights Templar after their expulsion from Holy Land, then the Knights of the Order of Santiago), but eventually it was because an infrastructure of hospitals, inns, and even villages grew up around the common routes, making the journey easier. Today, there are a number of recognised routes all over Europe (including over a dozen just in Spain) from as far away as Poland, and it's arguable that the concept of Europe was born out of the Camino, since the first pan-European laws were written to protect Peregrinos on the Way. By far the most commonly walked route however, according to the Pilgrims' Office, is the Camino Francés, which I walked. Starting in St. Jean Pied-de-Port in southwest France, the route

takes you approximately 800 km (500 miles) over the Pyrenees then through Pamplona, Burgos, León, Sarria, and finally into Santiago. The majority of people only walk partway, but typically it takes 30-40 days to walk the whole thing (mine was 32 days), depending on fitness and the number of rest days preferred. And, of course, the blisters.

An obvious, and common, question is: why? Although people still walk the Camino as a religious observance, in truth there are as many different reasons as there are Peregrinos. I met a young couple walking the Camino to celebrate their marriage; I met an older couple walking the Camino to commemorate their divorce (it turned out they were better friends than they were partners!); I met just graduated students working out how to start their careers; and I met retirees walking in memory of loved ones gone before. The common thread, however, seemed to be a sense of searching, of looking for answers, or potentially questions, related to life, career, or faith. A key aspect of the Camino is that the discipline of walking 25-30 km a day, every day, for a little over a month simplifies your life significantly. Each day you wake, have breakfast if you're lucky, then start walking. Stop for second breakfast like a hobbit, then lunch. When you get to your destination - or just when you get tired - find a bed, wash clothes, have dinner, go to bed. And repeat. After a couple of weeks, you can feel the simplicity sweeping the noise of modern life out of your head, at which point you find that there is time and space to consider problems you've been ignoring, or to resolve issues that have been difficult in the past.

This is not always comfortable. A phrase you'll hear often is "the Camino provides". That could mean free laundry when you didn't expect it, or a hostel that finds you a bed against the odds just as the sun's going down. But the Camino is not entirely altruistic: it gives you what you need, not necessarily what you want. So, while it can be the cheapest therapy you'll ever have, it can also be challenging physically, mentally, and spiritually. The rewards, however, are more than worth the effort.

And in the meantime, you'll walk through some of the most spectacular, variable, and historic regions that you're likely to find. By some estimates, there are over 1,800 buildings and sites of global historical or cultural significance along the Camino Francés from the archaeological sites in Atapuerca, which are some of the oldest human habitations in Spain, through medieval towns that haven't really changed in centuries, to the glories of stained glass in León cathedral, made in Germany and then imported (in the Middle Ages) to north central Spain when the population of the city was only 5,000 people. If you prefer nature, you can climb mountains and look down at the clouds; walk through vineyards and olive groves, and past endless wheat fields in the middle; or pick your way through farmyards trying to keep your shoes clean. You can stay in current and former monasteries, converted cow barns, simple guest houses, or five-star hotels. And you'll meet the most varied, interesting, and engaging group of people, all with their own stories. There is also wine ("No Vino, No Camino" is common graffiti). And then, after about a month, you walk down some stairs, under the Episcopal Palace, past the Parador hotel, and into the square in front of the cathedral. Suddenly, after all that time, with both gratitude and relief, it's over. Of course, you can go to the Pilgrims' Office and get your Compostela, be in the cathedral to see the world's largest thurible swing over the heads of the congregation and sit in the square and be grateful for the lessons the Camino has taught you. But what do you do next? Most people, I found, started planning their next Camino. Mine, I hope, will be in May 2023, when I will walk the Camino Inglés to Santiago, then the Camino a Fisterra y Muxia to Cape Finisterre (literally, to the Romans, the end of the Earth). Not so long this time, just about two weeks, but I'll get to walk it in very good company. And that, it turns out, is both the most important lesson of the Camino, and more than enough.

Buen Camino! Brian Calder

Photos along the way

(Front cover photo also courtesy of Brian)



Alto de Perdón, just after Pamplona, “where the Way of the Stars crosses that of the Wind”, a monument to pilgrims through the ages.



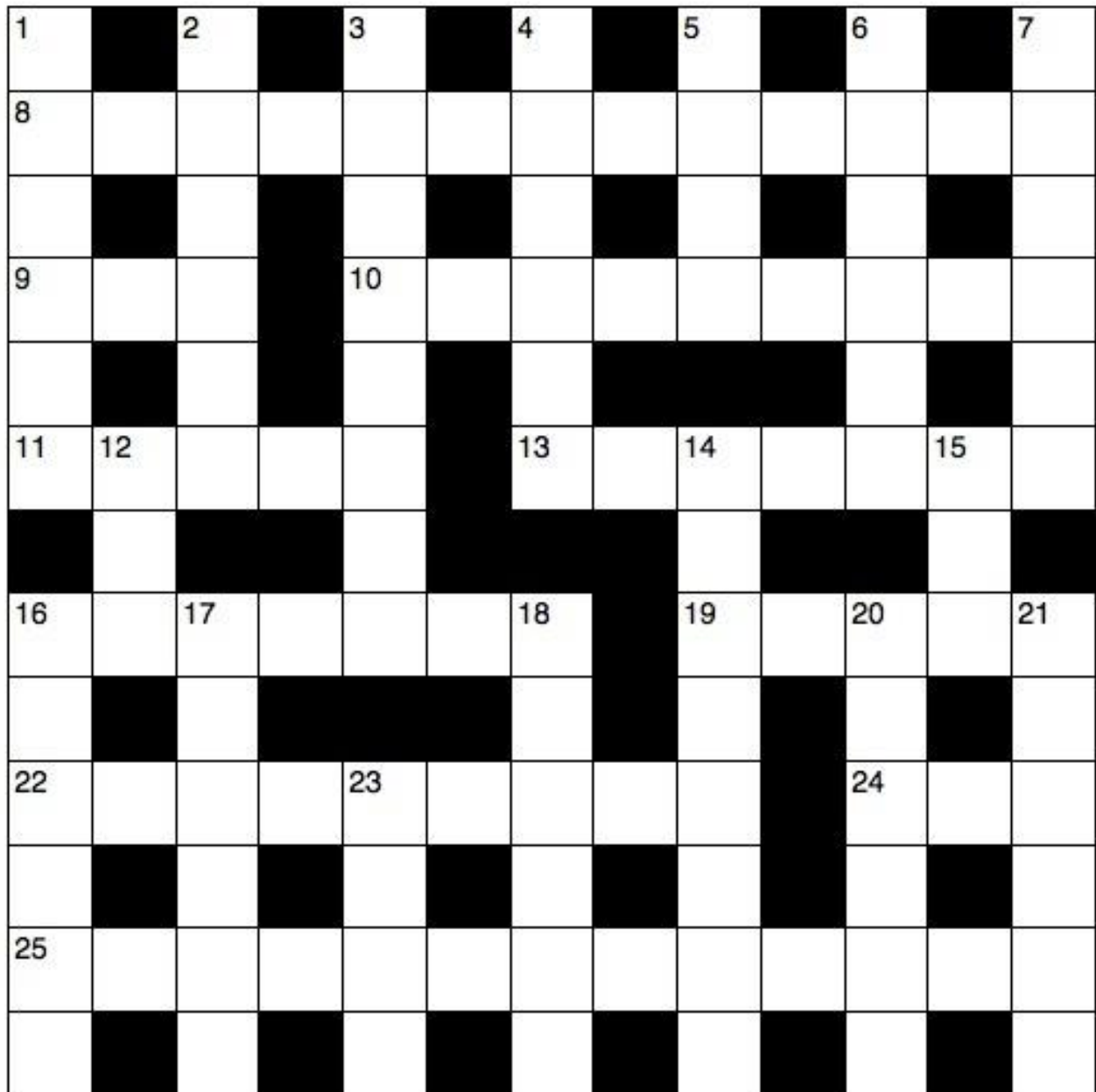
The Chapel of the Constables in the Cathedral Church of St. Mary, Burgos.



The Creation in four languages on the side of a cow-shed in Rabé de las Calzadas, Castile and León.



Arguably the essence of the Camino on a marker on the last 12km into Santiago de Compostela. It reads “I might not give you all the answers, but I will accompany you all the way.” (or maybe “all the Way.”)



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)

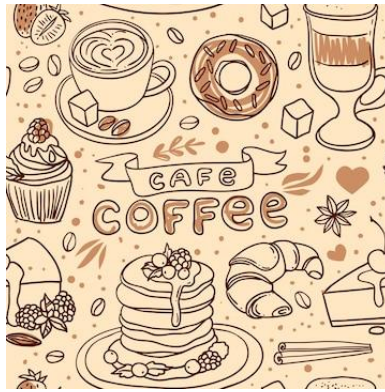
21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)

23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

Answers to Issue 146

ACROSS: 1, Hide. 3, Disgrace. 9, Sonship. 10, Oaths. 11, Tutti. 12, Ignore. 14, Foreknowledge. 17, Ashram. 19, Men or. 22, Aroma. 23, Nineveh. 24, Amethyst. 25, Trod. **DOWN:** 1, His staff. 2, Do not. 4, Imprisonments. 5, Groan. 6, Altered. 7, Easy. 8, Shrink. 13, Searched. 15, Restore. 16, Lament. 18, Reach. 20, Never. 21, Jada.

A VERY important date: Sunday 26 February



You might wonder: Why is this date so important?

Because... It's Nanda's birthday!

But that's only a very small part of why the 26th of February is a special day this year. This Sunday I would like to invite every single one of you to come to church to not only celebrate my birthday, but to also celebrate the fact that we are privileged to have 2 such lovely churches.

We are going to have "Café Church", an informal service, and time to chat about how we can take our churches into the future. All this, while we are enjoying a cuppa and cake.

Please come along – whether you are young or old (fun activities planned for kids), whether you have been a member for as long as you can remember or have only recently starting attending church – we need input from everyone to make decisions about our future. It's important.

Can't wait to see you there!

Nanda

February 23

Sunday	5 th	Stewardship Morning Worship Bible Class	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood West Kirk	09.45 11.15 09.45
		Joint Conference	Polbeth Harwood	12.30
Wednesday	8 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	9 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
Sunday	12 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Sunday	19 th	Morning Worship Teen Time	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood West Kirk	09.45 11.15 18.30
Monday	20 th	Quiz Night	West Kirk	19.00
Thursday	23 rd	Bible Study	Via Zoom	19.00
Friday	24 th	Youth Group	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	26 th	Café Church Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15

March 23

Thursday	2 nd	Board & Session	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	5 th	Holy Communion Bible Class	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood West Kirk	09.45 11.15 09.45
Wednesday	8 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	9 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
Sunday	12 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Saturday	18 th	Spring Kirks' Café	West Kirk	10.00

Parish Record

Deaths

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

16th November – Annie Carlin, Dickson Court, West Calder

20th November – Jean Hawes, Limecroft Care Home, Livingston

24th November – Jeanie Patrick, Woodhurst Care Home, Carluke

26th November – Valerie Jeffrey, Mossend, West Calder

5th December – Janet Mackay, The Glebe, West Calder

5th December – David Tod, Blackhill Farm, West Calder

14th December – William Duffy, Langside Gardens, Polbeth

14th December – David Watters, Dunlin Brae, Livingston

20th December – Samuel Stevenson, Langside Gardens, Polbeth

29th December – William McGill, Harburn Drive, West Calder

3rd January- Janet Porter, Livingston Care Home, Livingston

10th January – Jessie Easton, Woodlands Care Home, Livingston

11th January – Margaret Sibbald, Dickson Court, West Calder

13th January – John Hamilton, Langside Crescent, Polbeth

13th January – Richard MacKenzie, Dickson Court, West Calder

17th January – Chrissie McCormack, Peacock Care Home, Livingston

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

Gracious and loving God,

There are times when we find ourselves in a wilderness of doubt and overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness. Help us in these dark moments to put our faith in you, trusting that your light will finally shine again and equip us for life ahead. Amen.