

March

Issue 148

The Link



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

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Dear Friends

I would like to start by saying thank you to everybody who attended our Café Church on Sunday the 26th of February! There was such a buzz, in both our congregations, and I thought it was lovely to meet in an informal way and truly share in the fellowship of believers! Thanks also for all my lovely birthday cards and all the kind wishes – I felt very special.

I think there is certainly something to be said for sitting around a table and looking each other in the eyes. Normally on a Sunday we look at the back of each other's heads, but it's very important to make sure that we truly see each other. Because sometimes in life, we only see what we want to see, and don't see what actually is in front of our eyes. Have a wee look at the picture. At first glance it looks like a very aggressive dog, showing its teeth. But have a closer look... It's not teeth in the dog's mouth, it's a pinecone!



So that is not a scary, aggressive dog, it's a very playful one!

In Mark 8, Jesus was trying to explain something to his friends, but they didn't understand what he meant, even after he's shown them so many times what it means to believe in him. And then he says to them: "Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"

Let's not ever be in a position where God has to ask us that question. Let's go through life with open eyes, to see where God needs us, and what he needs us to do; let's notice the people around us, and see them as valued people made by God, just like us, and then notice if they have any needs that we could maybe be the answer to. Let's never just assume someone is not kind, just because they seem to be 'showing their teeth'. They might be so used to always having to defend themselves, that they have forgotten how to look kind...

Let's look, and really see. Because God sees us. Truly sees us. Always.

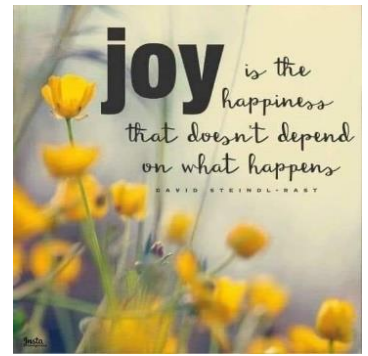
May God bless you all this month.

Much love, Nanda

Reflection

By Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald

Romans 12:12: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”



In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul tried to encourage the believers in Rome to stay strong in their faith, despite living in very difficult circumstances. It's hard to imagine feeling joy, if your life could be on the line simply for believing in Jesus...

But have a wee look at this definition of “joy”: *Joy is the happiness that doesn't depend on what happens.*

Isn't that just lovely? I think that describes exactly what joy is. We can easily think that happiness and joy are synonyms, but actually, if you believe in God, you can have joy in your heart, even when you are unhappy or sad.

We might not be persecuted for believing in Jesus today, but sometimes people who don't share our beliefs don't treat us kindly. Not even to mention all the difficulties we have to face through the course of our lives – relationships breaking up, losing a job, struggling with family, not making ends meet, illness, bereavement... Life can sometimes be very hard.

But if we just always remember that our lives are in God's hands, and that even in the most difficult circumstances he will always be by our sides, then we will be able to feel a blissful joy in our hearts. So, let's be patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer, because our God loves us – on the easy days AND on the hard ones.

Prayer: Dear God. Help us to never stop praying, to never stop believing, to never stop trusting. Help us to feel the joy of belonging to you in our hearts, even when our circumstances make tears stream down our faces. Amen

EVERYTHING you've always wanted to know about your ELDERS...

Each month Nanda is asking an elder from our churches to answer a set of questions, and in this way we can get to know each other a little better!

This month we will hear from...Juanita Allan

Thank you for sharing a little bit of yourselves with us!

1. Where did you grow up?

A mining village in Yorkshire.

2. How many siblings do you have?

I only had 1 brother.

3. How long have you been a member of the Church of Scotland?

About 40 years.

4. When and where did you get ordained as an elder?

West Kirk of Calder about 25 years ago.

5. What do you like most about being an elder?

Chatting to my members.

6. What is your favourite Bible passage?

1 Corinthians chapter 16 verse 14. "Everything should be done in love"

7. Tell us a little about your family.

I have a son who is a teacher in East Anglia. He has twin daughters who are 24. My daughter lives in Broxburn and

she works in finance. She has 1 son who is 19. I am very proud of my family!

8. Where do/did you work?

I was a school meals supervisor at West Calder High School.

9. What is your favourite colour?

I dye my hair purple, so it has to be purple!

10. Do you have any hobbies/interests?

I enjoy knitting, reading and going out with friends for lunch.

11. What is your favourite food?

Sunday roast.

12. What is your favourite film/TV-series/book?

Emmerdale and Coronation Street. Reading thrillers.

13. Are you a morning-person or a night-owl?

Neither!!

14. Name one thing you have always dreamt of doing.

Living in a fairy-tale castle with lots of servants.

15. Any words of wisdom you would like to share?

- If you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all.

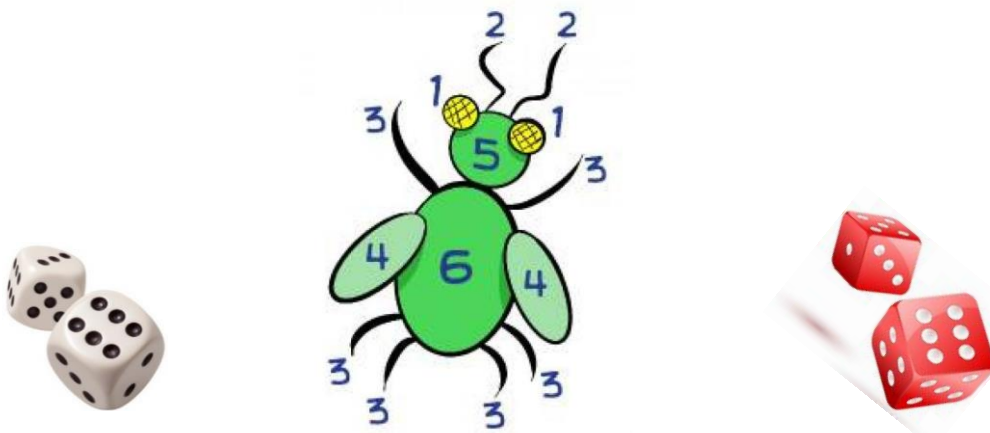


Date for your Diary!



Our 2023 Holiday club will run from Monday 31st of July until Friday August 4th. We will disclose the theme and meeting dates in the next edition of the Link. If you know of anyone who might like to be part of our team please share this item with them.

West Kirk of Calder Fundraising Beetle Drive



Friday 14th April

At 7pm in the West Kirk Church Hall

Tickets cost £4 (over 18s) £2 (under 18s)

Available from Lorna Graham / Karen Elliot

Never participated in a Beetle Drive before...

Don't worry, its very easy to follow and lots of fun.

Raffle and buffet – all donations gratefully received



Jesus Loves Me!



Jesus loves me, this I know
Though my hair is white as snow.
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

YES! JESUS LOVES ME....

Though my steps are oh so slow,
With my hand in his I'll go,
On through life, let come what may.
He'll be there to lead the way.

YES! JESUS LOVES ME....



Sunday March 19th is Mothering Sunday, a day when we all say a special thank you to someone, some very special person in your life and they are perhaps not necessarily your mum.

The Sunday club & JAM club will be handing out small voile bags with a wee treat inside to mark this day, and to say thanks for all you do for us. We ask you to please fill the wee bag with your loose change and bring it back to church before the end of April when we will send off the monies raised to the special Christian Aid earthquake appeal.

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Draw a line between the two identical palm leaves.





Spring Kirk's Café



Saturday March 18th

West Kirk Church Hall

Refreshments served from 10:30am

Soup & Rolls / Sandwiches served from 11am – 12:30pm

Why not bring along someone special and treat them for
Mother's Day?

We will have a selection of stalls to tempt you. Home baking;
always a favourite! Tombola, Spin the wheel, Raffle,
Handmade crafts, etc.

There will also be things for the kids to do whilst the adults
enjoy cake and coffee! Giant Jenga, Bead craft, Festival hair
styling (braids, space buns, glitter) Plaster models to paint for
yourself or someone special, and pocket money gifts.

Don't forget to bring the kids!

Any donations are very gratefully received.

These can be handed in either on the day or between 2-3pm on
Friday 17th when we will be setting up for the coffee morning.

We do really hope you can join us as these events are not so
often these days, which makes them all the more special!



Heidi Macdonald Fitness

***Bring you a fabulous
Gentle Exercise Class
to Music you will Love*** 

When: Thursday 23rd February '23

Time: 11am – 11:45am

Where: Polbeth Community Hub

(Stay for a well deserved post-class cuppa & chat)

No need to book, just turn up!

Singing for Health

Ageing well project in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland

Are you 50+ and would like to join a singing group?

Here is a great opportunity for you to have fun, meet new people, socialise and become healthier all at the same time. This is an informal "sing-a-long" session where emphasis will be on fun, laughter and building friendships.



Xcite Ageing Well in partnership with Polbeth Community Hub

Monday 27th February, 13th, 27th March 2023

Village Hall Polbeth West Calder
EH55 8SD

Tea and Coffee and Social time 1pm-1:30pm
Followed by the "sing-a-long" 1:30pm-2:30pm

Everyone is welcome to join in these sessions.

For more info contact Avril on 07768 090 008/01506 237950

West Lothian Leisure (known as Xcite) is a Scottish Charity, SC027470.

XCITE





Prospects works with all churches across Scotland and its aims are:

- To raise awareness among Christians in Scotland about the needs of people with learning disabilities.
- To equip churches to be more effective in how they welcome people with learning disabilities and share the good news about Jesus in a way they can understand.
- To provide opportunities for people with learning disabilities to take part in church and develop a relationship with Jesus.
- To highlight the gifts of people with learning disabilities and how they can build up the church.

The "Friends of Jesus Group" has met in Breich Valley Church for many years now providing an opportunity for people with learning difficulties and autism to come together in Christian fellowship. It is the only such group meeting in our wider area. We meet at BVC on 3rd Saturday of the month at 2.00pm. As time has gone on and as a consequence of COVID our numbers using and supporting the service has diminished to the point we are trying to publicise and encourage people to be a part of this fellowship.

You may have time to come along and support this; you may even know of someone who would benefit from it.

We are inviting you or someone from your congregation, along to our service at 2.00pm on 18th March to meet us, join with us in

celebrating the Good News and see what we do in the hope that you may encourage others to come along. This is a crucial mission facing towards an often-discounted section of society.

We usually have a cuppa and a snack after worship, and we'd love to get to know you better. Please let us know if you will attend so we can organise teas etc.

Richest Blessings

Robert

Rev Robert Craig BA BD(Min) DipRS CertCS PGCertHC

Breich Valley Manse

49 Main Street

Stoneyburn

West Lothian EH47 8AU

Telephone: 01501 519085

Breich Valley Parish Church

5 Cannop Crescent

Stoneyburn

West Lothian EH47 8EF

Origin of the Candlestick

The following was written by John Angus Moffat. It tells the story, in its own words, of the creation of the Candlestick which adorns the West Kirk chancel.

My story goes back a hundred years or maybe more. I was cradled on the grassy banks of the stream running through Limefield Estate, owned by James “Paraffin” Young, the great oil industrialist. I grew from a twig or “stick” to become a proud Elm Tree. Over the years I witnessed many changes to the Estate and then it was sold, and I was unceremoniously chopped down.

However, as luck would have it two men were passing just then. “What’s happening to that tree?” they asked. “ Oh, anyone who wants it can have it” replied my tree surgeon..

The man that I will now refer to as my creator, John, asked if he could have a piece about one metre long. This was agreed and I was carried home on his shoulder and set to rest in his garage for another year.

Then one day in strolled two familiar men. “Is that the log from the tree that we picked up last year?” John’s buddy asked. “What’s your plan for it?” “I’m going to save this fellow’s life and make him into a candle stick. If it meets with the minister’s approval it could become part of the West Kirk’s furnishings” replied John

“Right what’s the plan and when are you starting?” asked his friend. “I don’t have a plan; I’m searching for inspiration” said John.

Then in January 2000 I was suspended on a lathe, and my bark removed, revealing my smooth unblemished form with lightly grained features. My creator John did not want to alter my height or my natural appearance. He wanted people to recognise me still as a tree trunk and I was glad to hear that.

While I was on the lathe John received a Christmas Card from Turkey depicting a Dove, which represents “Peace of the Deepest Kind” And off we go on an adventure.

I was dreading the first assault which began my transformation. However, I worried needlessly. The Dove was carved with miraculous detail, and I never felt as much as a tingle of pain. John was so enthused with the result he carved an identical one on the other side. I was perfectly balanced with wings on both sides. Now a third Dove came, bearing a Laurel Leaf in its beak.

John's next project was the main feature. The Scots are proud and passionate when it comes to their history and culture. Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland provided the history; the Celtic Cross, the culture.

How the cross came to be can only be briefly told. The search started in graveyards, every nook and cranny were inspected. On one occasion John stopped all the traffic at the West End of Princes Street when he spotted the majestic cross at the fringe of the gardens. Nothing was suitable, he did not want to copy another cross. So, he sat down one evening, armed with a jotter, two wine glasses and a book on Hebridean Celtic Embroidery. "What is going on with my wine glasses?" asked his wife. "If I turn them upside down and draw round them" replied John, "I get two different sizes. That is going to be the circle within the cross of my own personal Celtic Cross. The embroidery pattern will form the inlaid panel."

After completion of the design and carving of the cross, I thought I must be the only embroidered cross with a halo styled by wine glasses.

Two serpents were the next idea, to be added one to each side of my lower body.

"Slow down John. Is it not time you told Miss M, the minister, what you are up to?" asked his wife. "She might not approve"

The following day I was draped with a towel and placed on a small table in the living room. I wondered if this was my final curtain.

When the towel was removed a pleasant looking woman, I took to be Miss M was carefully eyeing me up. Finally, she spoke "Oh this is lovely!" she exclaimed. "But what is it?"

"It is intended to be transformed into the candlestick you wanted" John explained. "But please be honest with me, if there is anything you are not happy

with, don't be afraid to tell me. If you think it is not suited to your needs we will forget the whole project."

"Don't suggest such a thing, John, I want this unusual carving and I implore you to carry on. I cannot wait to see it finished. However, you told me to be honest and I am being honest in telling you I do not like those hideous serpents. If you could remove them and replace them with something else."

This request presented John with another problem. To eliminate these meant roughing up my fine surface which could have looked like two huge open wounds. But with sheer determination and dedication the problem was solved. My rough surface became the sea, with Jesus and his disciples depicted fishing on the waters.

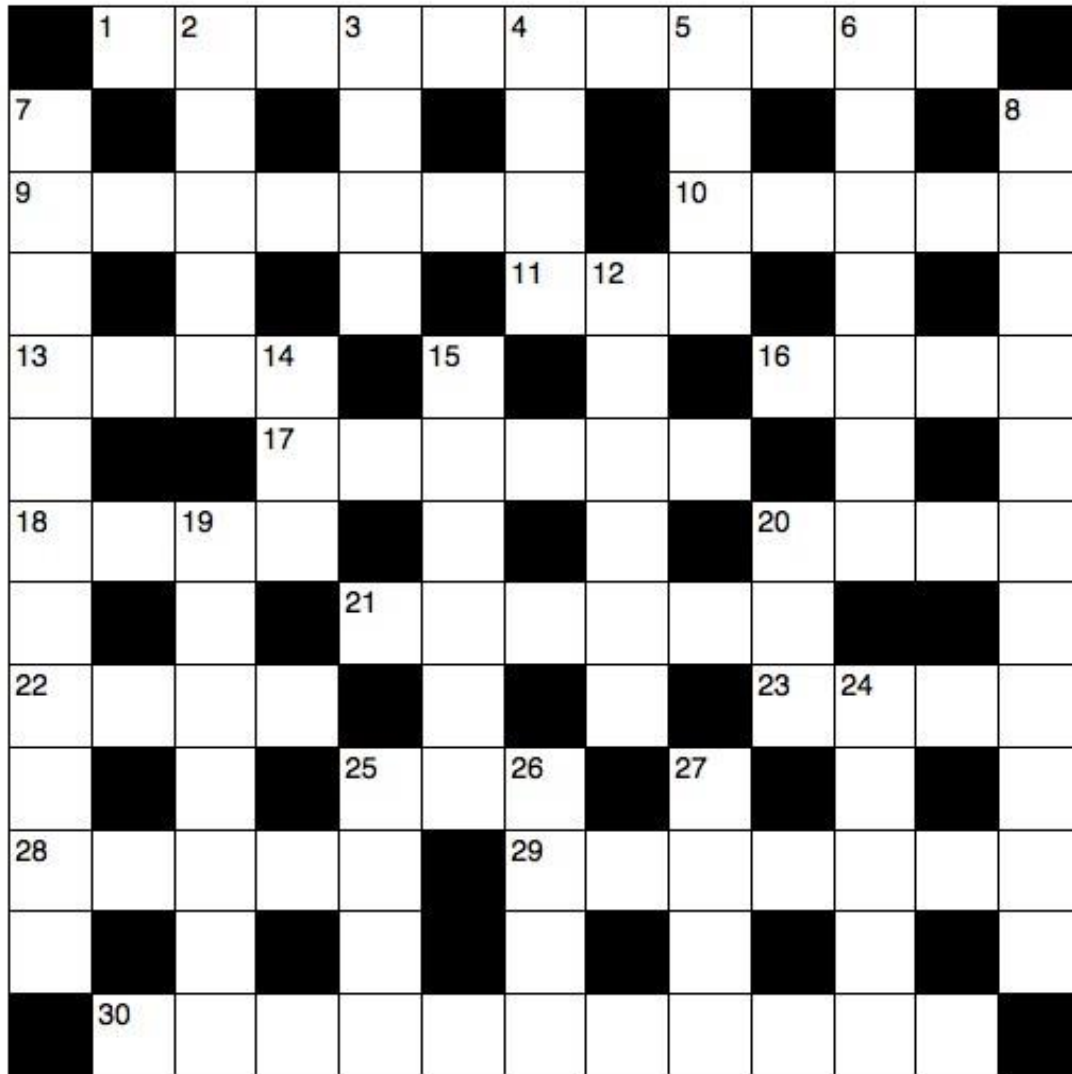
I was finally finished. We all agreed it was well done. The following is what to spot the next time you come to say hello.

Celtic Cross, Doves 3, Praying hands (spot the deliberate mistake), open Bible (find a word), cross draped with a cloak, Jesus and his disciples fishing, Star of Bethlehem, Jesus riding on a donkey, sunflower, Stewardship Emblem, Communion Silver drinking cup, olive tree, Marie Curie logo, Ichthyophiids fish (earliest symbol of Christianity), Hymn singing chorister. See if you can find them. See if you can spot the elephant's head.

The candlestick was dedicated to the West Kirk on 11th June 2000 by Miss M. On the 19th May 2002 there was another addition to the church, the Millennium Cross. This was constructed and crafted in rich Elm like me, we are now lifelong friends. We stand in the same corner of the church and it towers over me. The tapestries on the cross depict past industries and the life of the church.

Finally, I promise to serve this church for as long as I am needed. My flickering candle will, I hope, welcome all who worship here for years to come.

John Angus Moffat



Across

- 1 These letters come between Romans and Galatians (11)
 9 'You will not — me to the grave' (Psalm 16:10) (7)
 10 King of Moab to whom the Israelites were subject for 18 years (Judges 3:14) (5)
 11 Town possessing mineral spring (3)

13 Mede (anag.) (4)

16 High-fidelity (abbrev.) (4)

17 He succeeded his father Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kings 14:31) (6)

18 A son of Simeon (Genesis 46:10) (4)

20 Controversial religious book of the 1970s, The — of God Incarnate (4)

21 'He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you — — and hear' (Acts 2:33) (3,3)

22 'You — me together in my mother's womb' (Psalm 139:13) (4)

23 Edit (anag.) (4)

25 'Who has believed our message and to whom has the — of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1) (3)

28 Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:23) (5)

29 'When Mordecai learned of — that had been — , he tore his clothes' (Esther 4:1) (3,4)

30 Sympathetic (Proverbs 11:16) (4-7)

Down

- 2 'That was why his parents said, "He is — —; ask him"' (John 9:23) (2,3)
3 Integrated Services Digital Network (1,1,1,1) 4
4 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his — of thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7) (4)
5 Concept (John 8:14) (4)
6 'Do we, then, — the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law' (Romans 3:31) (7)
7 Industrious (2 Timothy 2:6) (11)
8 'I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be — in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you (Ephesians 1:18) (11)
12 'Out of the same mouth come — and cursing' (James 3:10) (6)
14 This was how many of the Jewish leaders described Jesus (John 10:20) (3)
15 Vitality (Job 20:11) (6)
19 He urged David to kill Saul at Hakilah (1 Samuel 26:8) (7)
20 'So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul — with the church and taught great numbers of people' (Acts 11:26) (3)
24 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord — — ' (Deuteronomy 6:4) (2,3)
25 Parched (Matthew 12:43) (4)
26 'In the image of God he created him; — and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27) (4)
27 Disparagement (Psalm 15:3) (4)

Answers from issue 147

ACROSS:

8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi. 13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account. 24, RAC. 25, Sovereign Lord.

DOWN:

1, Oceans. 2, Hophni. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar. 6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe. 16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21, Recede. 23, Cure.

I WONDER IF YOU KNOW

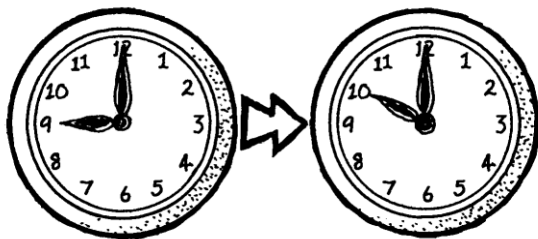
I wonder if you know,
the work your body has done today.
And every day.
How much disease it has fought off.
How many times it could have failed but battled on,
how many ways it could have broken but did not.
I wonder if you know,
the work your body has done today.
And every day.
And each day it has done this amazing job,
without your help,
without your approval,
your acceptance,
your kindness.
Each day it has soldiered on,
regardless of the constant stream of negativity,
pulsing its way from your brain to your cells.
Not good enough.
Not attractive enough.
Not the right shape.
Perhaps it's time to see your body for what is truly is,
An amazing and mind-blowingly competent machine.
To get your soul to where it needs to be in this life.
To let you live.
I wonder if you know,
how much better you would be as a team.
I wonder.

Donna Ashworth
From 'I wish I Knew'

March 23

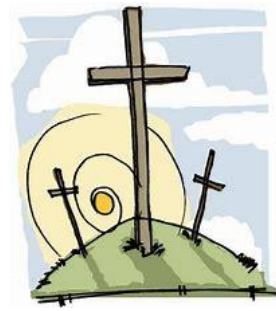


Thursday	2 nd	Board & Session	West Kirk	19.00
Friday	3 rd	United World Day of Prayer	East Calder Church	14.00
Sunday	5 th	Holy Communion	West Kirk	09.45
		Bible Class	Polbeth Harwood	11.15
			West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	8 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	9 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
Sunday	12 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		ASM	Polbeth Harwood	12.30
Saturday	18 th	Spring Kirk's Café	West Kirk	10.30
Sunday	19 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
Sunday	26 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Annual Stated Meeting	West Kirk	10.30
Wednesday	29 th	Parkhead School Easter service	West Kirk	09.30
Thursday	30 th	Bible Study	Via Zoom	19.00



Sunday 26th March

April 23



Sunday	2 nd	United Palm Sunday service	West Kirk	10.00
Thursday	6 th	Maundy Thursday service	Polbeth Harwood	19.00
Friday	7 th	Good Friday service	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	9 th	Ecumenical early morning Service	Auld Kirk Yard	07.00
		United Easter service	Polbeth Harwood	10.00
Wednesday	12 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	13 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
Friday	14 th	Beetle Drive	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	16 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15

Mathematical Equation for Christians

1 cross + 3 nails = 4given

Parish Record

Deaths

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

3rd February – Edward Fleming, Pumpherston Road, Uphall Station

9th February – Richard Douglas, Woodlands care Home, Livingston

9th February – William McKechnie, Langside Gardens, Polbeth

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

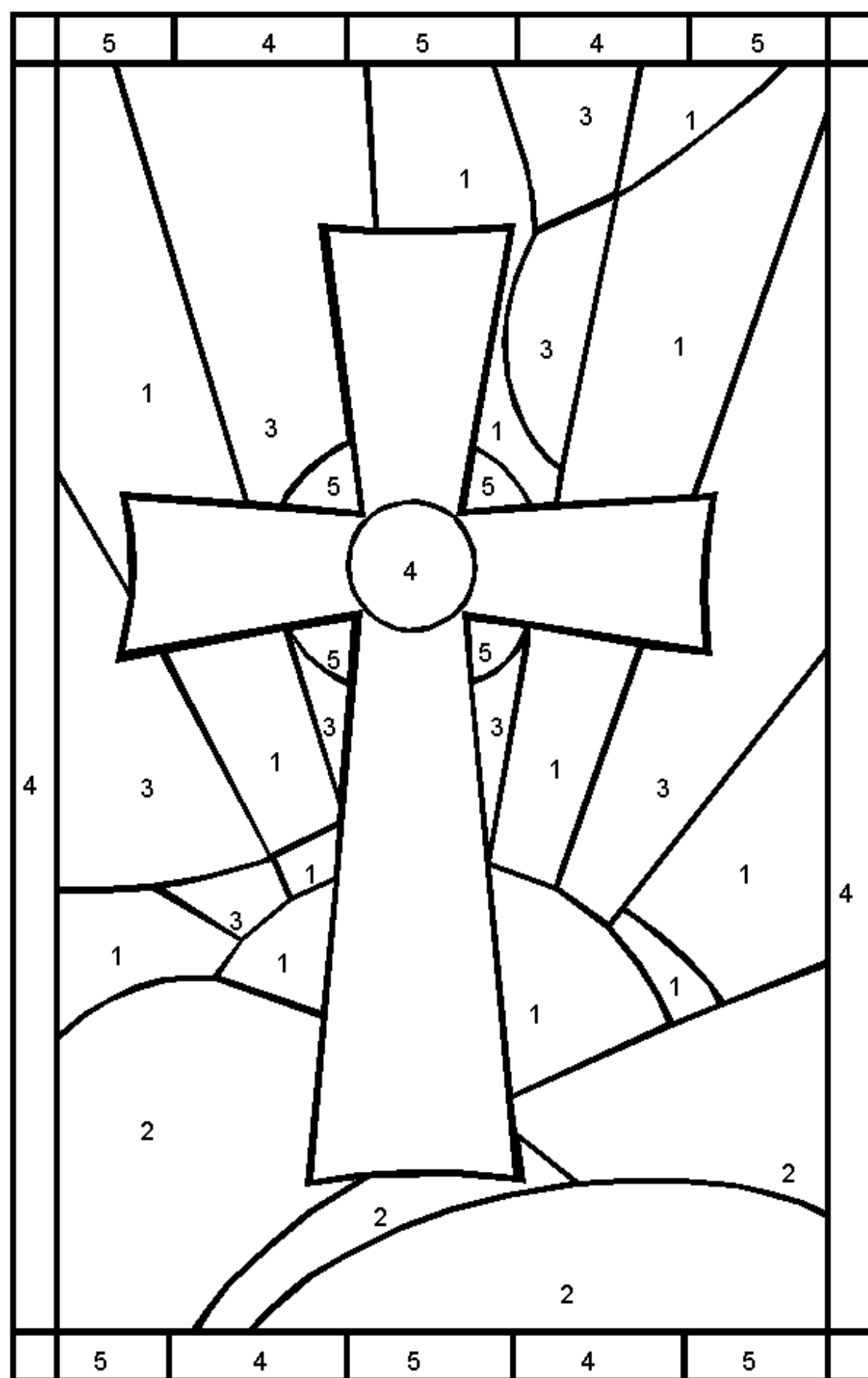
Caring Father,

We thank you for the way you protect
and enfold us every moment of every day.

Be especially with all those
whose journey through life is
hard, dangerous exhausting or confused.

In the days ahead
help us to put our trust in you
as we journey into the future
with all that it may hold.

Amen.



1 – yellow

2 – green

3 – blue

4 – purple

5 – red