

February/March 2025

Issue 167

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

Minister

Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald

3 Johnsburn Road Balerno EH14 7DN

Phone: 0131 261 7977 Mobile: 07846 539841

Email: minister@west-kirk-polbeth-harwood.co.uk

Ordained Local Minister

Rev Alison Quilter Mobile: 07741 985597

Email: AQuilter@churchofscotland.org.uk

West Kirk	Polbeth Harwood
Session Clerk	
Alison McNaught	Thomas Griffin
01506 871617	
sessionclerk@westkirkofcalder.co.uk	sessionclerk@polbethharwood.co.uk
Treasurer	
Neil Webster	Sandra McCabe
07732 553027	01506 872593
treasurer@westkirkofcalder.co.uk	
Safeguarding Coordinator	
Douglas Horn	Eleanor Davidson
01506 419656	01506 873590
West Kirk of Calder (Church of Scotland)	Polbeth Parish Church of Scotland
Charity SC004703 Congregation 020161	Charity SC017373 Congregation 020156
Copyright Licence No. 218743	
Link Editor: Sandra.dixon71@gmail.com	



Dear Friends

This edition of the Link Magazine will cover the months of February and March. I think the combination of these two months is very appropriate, as February is traditionally known as the month of love (because of St. Valentine's Day), and Lent starts in March. And I can't think of a more perfect expression of love, than the love God showed us when he sent his son Jesus to become our Good Shepherd.

Jesus came to earth to show us the true meaning of life and love. He took all the fences that could hinder a relationship with God away. Through his death and resurrection, he made it possible for us to live freely, there is nothing that holds us back from being who God wants us to be.

Have a wee look at the photo – the sheep are waiting behind the gate, not realising that the fence is no longer there... Let's not be like them – limiting ourselves, waiting for gates to be opened for us. If we feel stuck, let's take a step back to assess the full picture of our lives, because if we do that, we will realise that Jesus took all the barriers away. We can go wherever we want to. It's our choice. So let's choose right. Let's follow Jesus. Because if we stay close to him, we will always be well taken care of, as that is what a good shepherd does – he takes care of his sheep, at all costs.

May God bless you all to live freely in his abundant love.

Much love,

Nanda

Reflection 1 Samuel 3:4-9

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. ⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realised that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

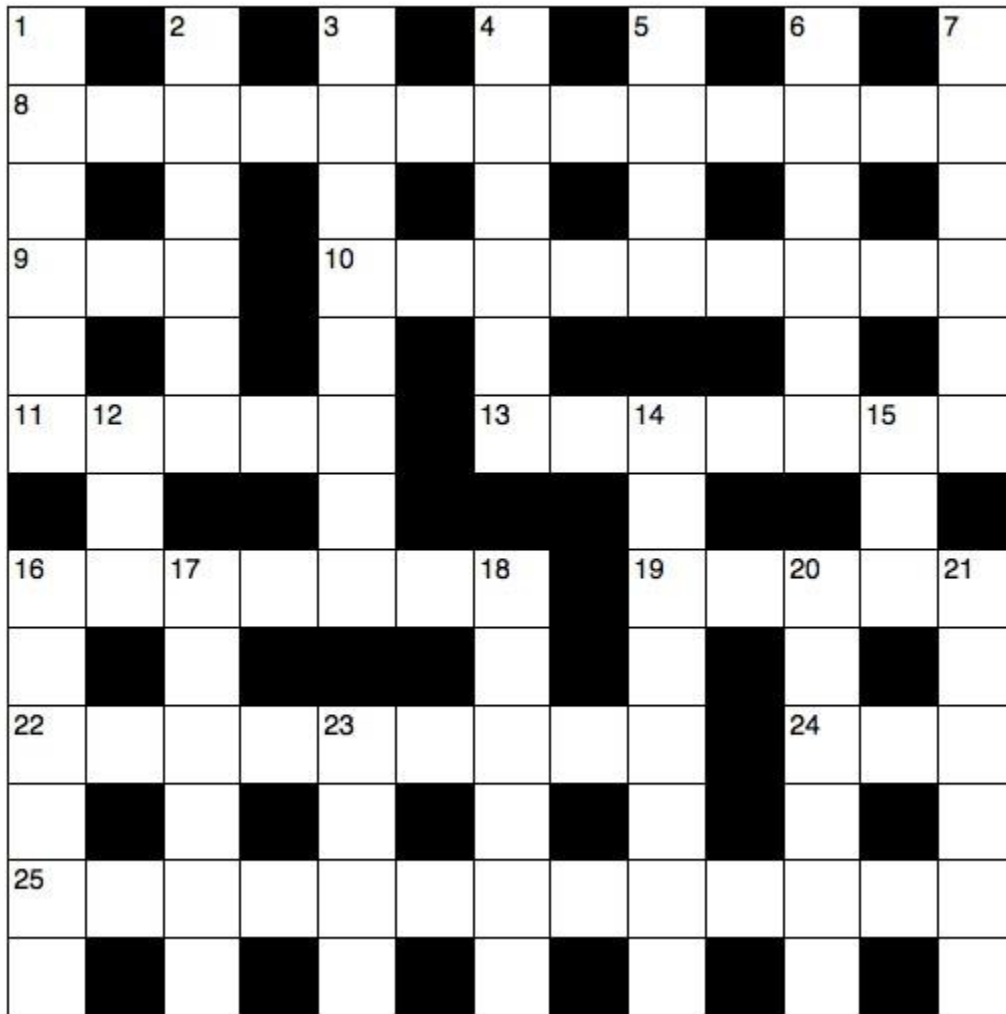
I wonder what would have happened to Samuel, had it not been for Eli? Would he finally have realised that the voice he'd heard was God calling him, or would he have gone on forever imagining it was someone else speaking? It's an interesting thought, and one that highlights the ongoing problem of recognising God's voice. All too many people believe God has called them

to some particular task when it is patently clear to other folk that they are mistaken. Equally, there are some who appear manifestly called by God yet who, for reasons best known to themselves, cannot or will not believe it.

Samuel's story reminds us that even the greatest spiritual leaders are by no means always certain when God is speaking to them. Equally important, it reminds us that it can take a third party to help us recognise God's call. Sometimes those around us can see what he is saying to us more clearly than we can see it ourselves.....is God calling you for a special task.....?

Prayer

Living God, time and again I ask you to speak to me, to reveal your will and give me your guidance, but all too often when your call comes I fail to recognise it. Open my ears to the many ways you are able to communicate, and help me not only to listen but also to understand what you are saying. Speak now and help me to respond. Amen



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 from Issue 166

ACROSS: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.

DOWN: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.

SAVE THE DATE!



- On the 9th of March, the 1st Sunday in Lent, we are going to have a special **pancake** related Kids' Talk, with lots of fun and games afterwards at Sunday Club & JAM Club. Please encourage our youngsters to bring a friend or 10 along!
- On Friday the 14th of March there will be a special social evening at the West Kirk of Calder for everyone in both our congregations. More information to follow in intimations and on social media.
- Our Annual Stated Meeting will follow straight after our café service, as this is a lovely opportunity for sharing in fellowship with each other:

West Kirk of Calder: 16 March 9:45am

Polbeth Harwood Church: 23 March 11:15am

The Bridge



'16 to 25 year olds'

'The Bridge' for young folk aged 16 to 25 years old is held quarterly. A get together and have a blether, sharing a meal or light snack and explore our faith and discuss things that matter to you as young folk in 21stC.

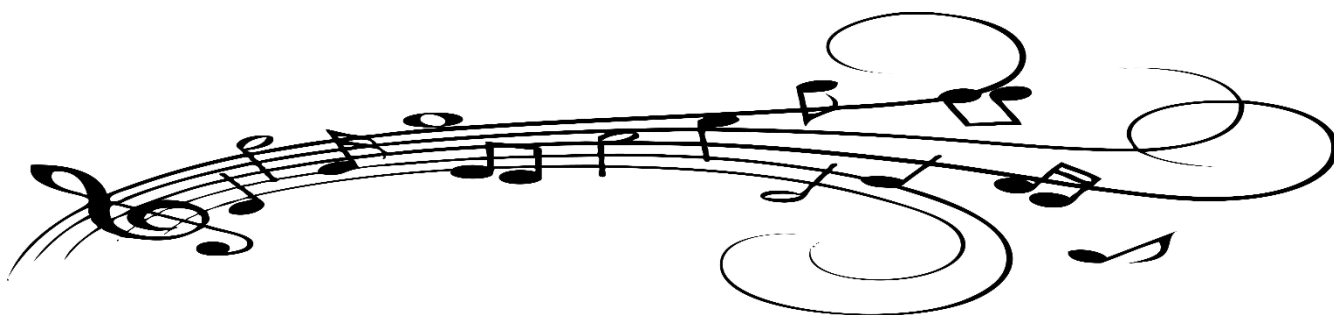
If you are interested please get in touch with myself or Nanda and bring a friend along too!

We meet once a quarter in Polbeth Harwood Church Café Area on a **Wednesday at 7pm**. Our next quarterly scheduled meeting will be in **Wednesday 5th March**.

The Bridge let's stay connected! Look forward to seeing you there!

Nanda, Sandra and Alison

THANK YOU!



Thank you to everyone who supported the afternoon of music in Polbeth Harwood Church in January. It was a lovely afternoon and we were treated to wonderful music, song and prose.



The Quiet Service

The next quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will be held on **Wednesday 12th February at 3:30pm** in the 'quiet room'. All are welcome to this short service followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a 'blether'. Entry via the Ramp Door.

Anyone who would like to come and needs assistance with transport should call Sandra Dixon on 07855861223.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Sandra, Alison and Thomas

Future dates 12th March



I hope you and yours had a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Thank you, for your support for the Edinburgh prison Christmas gift collection.

Your kindness and generosity made sure that two hundred and twenty-three children had Christmas presents to open on Christmas morning.

The gifts were given out at the six Christmas parties organised between the family contact officers and the Barnardo's staff from the visitor's centre. The Christmas parties took place in the visit room in the prison allowing the children's parent or guardian to take part. Gifts were also given out directly from the visitors, collected by the parent or guardian of the children.

The number of children who received gifts was down on last year's wonderful achievement. This was because the number of children that passed through the visitor's centre was down on last year. We achieved our aim, which is to ensure that every child who visited the visitors centre received Christmas presents.

We did receive some media interest the Scotsman and the BBC did an article about the gift collection. The Justice Minister Angela Constance, when she heard about the gift collection, took time out of her schedule to visit the visitors' centre and helped with the wrapping of some of the gifts. You can read the news article using this link:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr56e4z98rgo>

My thanks as always go to you. Without your support the Edinburgh prison Christmas gift collection would have stopped a long time ago.

My thanks also go to the Barnardo's staff in the visitors' centre Shona, Patrizia and Ann all played an important part in making it a success.

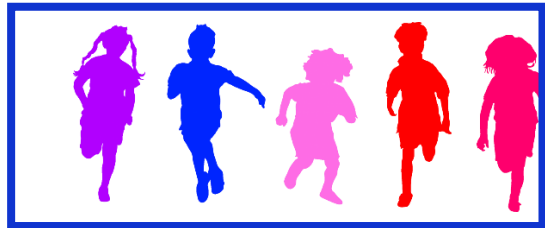
My thanks also go to the senior managers of the prison for supporting me and allowing me to organise the gift collection.

I am already looking forward to this year's 2025 Christmas gift collection. It will be the fortieth year in a row that the gift collection, started by Rev John Murie, will have taken place.

Thank you again.

Colin O' Flaherty

DATE FOR YOUR diary



Our 2025 Holiday Club will run from 4 – 8th August 2025

As you plan your year ahead, please remember we value your support at our big summer fun event.

New volunteers are always welcome, and more information will follow on how you can get involved this summer.

WEST KIRK OF CALDER FUND RAISING GROUP

The Fund Raising Group held their first meeting of 2025 after the service on 19th January and the first event of this year will be a **coffee morning** to be held on **Saturday 1st March from 10am – 12.30pm**. As this is St David's day it was decided that it will have a Welsh/daffodil theme. There will also be the usual stalls , Tombola, Raffle, Craft & Home Baking.

Tickets priced £5 will be available nearer the time from members of the fund raising group.

Other dates to keep in your diary with more details to follow nearer the time Saturday 17th May and Saturday 30th August.

Having had a successful year in 2024 we hope you will continue to support us in our endeavours to boost the funds of the West Kirk.

Thank you,

Margaret Hogg.



Birds of the Bible – Swallow



Swallows are small, agile birds known for their swift flight and distinctive forked tails. In the Bible, swallows are mentioned in a few passages, often symbolizing freedom, transience, and the natural world's order. These birds are part of the larger biblical narrative that uses nature to illustrate spiritual truths and human experiences. It is likely that the birds we know today as swifts would have been included in the term 'swallow' in biblical times.

In biblical literature, swallows are often associated with themes of freedom and the fleeting nature of life. Their migratory patterns and ability to navigate vast distances reflect the transient journey of human existence and the soul's longing for a permanent home with God. The swallow's presence in sacred spaces, as depicted in [Psalm 84](#), symbolizes the soul's rest and security in divine fellowship.

Their mention alongside other birds in Proverbs and Jeremiah serve as a reminder of God's sovereignty over creation and His expectation for His people to live in accordance with His will. The natural world, including the behaviour of swallows, is portrayed as a testament to God's order and wisdom, offering lessons for spiritual reflection and growth.

In ancient Israel, swallows were common and familiar birds, often seen darting through the skies in search of insects. Their presence in biblical texts reflects the everyday life and environment of the people, who would have been well-acquainted with these birds' habits and characteristics. The use of swallows in biblical imagery would have resonated with the original audience, providing vivid and relatable illustrations of spiritual truths.

In most of Scotland the swallow is a common summer visitor normally arriving in mid to late April. Most will depart again for their African wintering grounds in September. During the time they are here they will mate, nest and rear their young (often more than one brood if the weather permits) in the easily identifiable cup shaped nests under our eaves and in farm buildings. Prior to migration in the autumn, we see them gathering in sizeable flocks to feed and to perch side-by-side on our roadside wires. Then one day when the time is right, they disappear until the next year.

EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

© 2013 KrazyDad.com



The very first Valentine card - a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers.

He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer.

The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed.

Just before his death in Rome on 14 February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

MISSION GROUP NEWS

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer Service this year takes place on Friday 7th March at St. Mary's Church, Dalmahoy. The Theme of the Service is "I made you wonderful" based on Psalm 139 V 4. The service has been prepared by the Women of the Cook Islands. It will be an afternoon service. The time has still to be confirmed.

Bibles for Bairns

A Scottish Bible Society initiative for children baptized in 2023.

In the West Kirk three babies were baptized and registered to receive a Share a Story Bible on their first birthday, and each year thereafter until their fifth when they will receive an early reader Bible to take them through their primary school years.

Babies born in 2023 will each receive two Bible Buddies books this year one all about colours in the story of Noak's Ark and the other about numbers in the Christmas Story.

Currently 300 babies are set to receive their 1st Birthday gifts in 2025.

May they and their families know how much they are loved by God.

I am delighted to say that this initiative has now become one of the Guild's four Projects over the coming three years. Their vision now is to offer every baby born in Scotland a free Share a Story toddler Bible on their first birthday. Every birthday after that, until age five. they will be sent a Bible related gift.

Reflection - Acts 4:36, 37

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

When we read the pages of Scripture, hear dramatic stories of testimony, or meet sparkling Christians, it's hard sometimes not to feel a little daunted. Few of us have eye-catching gifts and it is unlikely that any contribution we may make will hit the headlines. That's why stories like that of Barnabas are so important. He wasn't one of the apostles, nor one whose name has gone down in history for stunning signs and wonders, but I suspect had you taken a poll among early Christians as to who in the Church meant something to them, Barnabas would have been one of the leading contenders to come out on top. Why? Well because Barnabas had the most precious of gifts: the ability to encourage. In the verses above, it was through his generosity. In Acts 9:26, 27 we see it through his trust, introducing the newly converted Paul to the apostles when others still doubted his conversion. In

Acts 15:36-39 he did it again, this time bringing encouragement to Mark, giving him a second chance when Paul felt it too risky. We see it, yet once more, in Acts 11:23-24, where we read, 'when he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord'. He was an unsung gift but a vital one; the sort that releases all kinds of gifts in others. Are we the sort of people who encourage others, or do we discourage instead: seeing difficulties, highlighting weakness, and stifling enthusiasm? There is no excuse: we may not possess show-stopping gifts but all of us, without exception, can offer a ministry of encouragement.

Prayer

Gracious God, teach me to recognise people's gifts and nurture them, to understand their problems and share them, to acknowledge their successes and applaud them, to appreciate their efforts and affirm them. So I may help them to believe in themselves, discover their abilities, appreciate their worth, and fulfil their potential. Amen.



February 25

Sunday	2 nd	Morning Worship Bible Class	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood West Kirk	09.45 11.15 09.45
Sunday	9 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Wednesday	12 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
	12 th	Reflective Service	Polbeth Harwood	15.30
Thursday	13 th	Beyond Kirk Wall Services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Sunday	16 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Sunday	23 rd	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Friday	28 th	Youth Group		19.00

March 25

Saturday	1 st	Coffee Morning	West Kirk	10.00
Sunday	2 nd	Holy Communion Bible Class	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood West Kirk	09.45 11.15 09.45
Wednesday	5 th	The Bridge	Polbeth Harwood	19.00
Thursday	6 th	Session Meeting	West Kirk	19.00
Friday	7 th	World Day of Prayer	St Mary's Dalmahoy	TBC
Sunday	9 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
Wednesday	12 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30

Wednesday	12 th	Reflective Service	Polbeth Harwood	15.30
Thursday	13 th	Beyond Kirk Wall Services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Friday	14 th	Social Evening TBC	West Kirk	
Sunday	16 th	Café Church & ASM	West Kirk	09.45
		Morning Worship	Polbeth Harwood	11.15
Sunday	23 rd	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
		Café Church & ASM	Polbeth Harwood	11.15
Friday	28 th	Youth Group		19.00
Sunday	30 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15

April 25

Tuesday	1 st	Parkhead School Easter service	West Kirk	09.30
	1 st	Bellsquarry School Easter service	Polbeth Harwood	13.45
Sunday	6 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk Polbeth Harwood	09.45 11.15
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	9 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	10 th	Beyond Kirk Wall Services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Sunday	13 th	United Palm Sunday Worship	West Kirk	09.45
Thursday	17 th	Maundy Thursday Worship	Polbeth Harwood	19.00
Friday	18 th	Good Friday Worship	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	20 th	Early Ecumenical Service	Auld Kirk Yard West Calder	07.00
	20 th	United Easter Worship	Polbeth Harwood	

Parish Record



Deaths

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

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

27th November – Andrew Rennie, West Torphin farm, West Calder

30th December – Peter McNaught, Hermand Estate, West Calder

May God draw near when the hour of trouble strikes;
may Jacob's God be your strength and shield;
out of the sanctuary, out of his home,
may God provide in your time of need.

CH4 Hymn 11; verse 1

From Psalm 20

