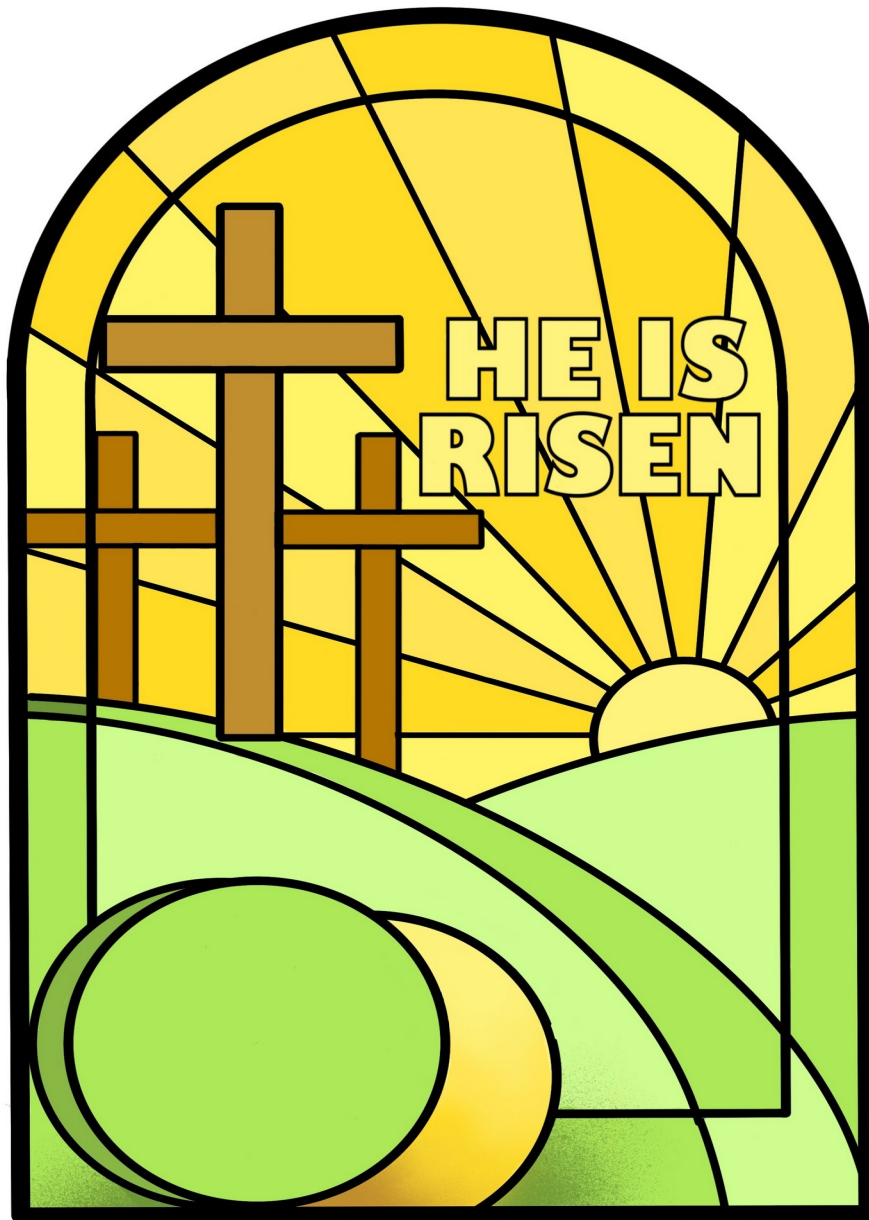


# PORTREE PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



# EASTER 2023

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Roll Keeper	Miss D McEwan	612266
Treasurer	Mr W Marshall	650405
Clerk to the Congregational Board	Mrs M MacKay	612690
Fabric Convenor	Mr N Bruce	612480
Hall Convenor	Mrs H Quaye	612071
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Prayer Secretary	Mrs C Sutherland	640318
Prayer Fellowship Convenor	Mr L Gillies	611837
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## CHRIST THE WISDOM AND POWER OF GOD.

***For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God***, - says Apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians 1: 18. From this a question emerges: - Does it have a special meaning that Christ was crucified and did not die in a different way ? Yes, indeed, it has. In the Old Testament we read: - *If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, he is under God's curse for sin* ( Book of Deuteronomy 21: 22–23 ). In the New Testament Paul says, - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree* ( Galatians 3: 13 ).

Jesus always invites the weary and burdened to come to Him and find rest for their soul ( Matthew 11: 28–29 ). It is He who tells us not to let our hearts be troubled as we trust in Him, and accept the peace He offers ( John 14: 1, 27 ). All this because He knew what it is to be troubled in soul or spirit for many reasons and went on to bear the sins of the whole world as He suffered and died in agony on the Cross. What a faithful encouragement of Salvation, offered by God, those who by God to all those who believe in Him !



*Christ in front of Pilate*

We are approaching the glorious celebration of Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the assurance of God's love and grace. Perhaps many of us are weary and troubled at present. We live in an age of turmoil with wars in progress, the threat of Covid, with atheism and secularism gaining ground, and with a sharply rising cost of living. Beside all these we may be burdened by many personal, physical and spiritual troubles and concerns. As Easter is coming, we may be tempted to envy those who saw the Risen Christ with their physical eyes, to gain an eternal perspective of His peace, and being able to ask Him as many did at that time to be given help, a blessing or even a miracle. Jesus, however, told Thomas: - *Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believed* ( John 20: 29 ). Faith is that wonderful "spiritual sight" that enables us to perceive even the invisible, but "real presence" of our Lord and Saviour.



*Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)*



***O soul, are you weary and troubled ?*** – asks a well-known hymn, and continues – *No light in the darkness you see ?/ There is light for a look at the Saviour,/ and life more abundant and free !* And the answer is in the refrain: - ***Turn your eyes upon Jesus,/ look full in His wonderful face;/ and the things of earth will grow strangely dim/ in the light of His glory and grace.***

For Apostle Paul the ***Wisdom and Power of God*** is directly related to the ***Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ***. On the ***Cross*** the spiritual forces of evil were defeated, highlighting the central message of our Christian Faith: - ***The Victory of Light over darkness, of Good over evil, and Life over death***, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



*Golgotha*

Jesus has risen, He has risen indeed !

Happy Easter to you All !

Sandor, Your Minister.



### **MIHÁLY MUNKÁCSY ( 1844 – 1900 )**

*Mihály Munkácsy*, a Hungarian painter, was born in 1844 in the town of *Munkács* (today: *Munkachevo*, Ukraine) as *Mihály Leó Lieb*; later adopting the name of his birth-place as his artist-pseudonym. He is one of the most prominent figures of the Hungarian visual art. Munkácsy's *Realism* made his paintings highly valued not only at home but also all over in the world. In his early works he painted mostly scenes from the daily lives of peasants and poor people, and then became a *landscapist* of the Great Hungarian Plane and the woods of the Transylvanian Alps. At the apogee of his career are these three large-scale Biblical paintings: *Christ in front of Pilate* , (1882), *Golgotha* 1884), and *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man) in 1886.

In this *Biblical-Trilogy* the artist depicts the *Humanity of Jesus Christ* in the context of the social complexity of the era, as well as the *deep individual suffering of the Saviour*.

Being on the walls of my Divinity College, these three paintings somehow became part of my *Vision of Christ* in my ministry, and I thought I should share them with you in this Easter Magazine.

Sandor

## **SESSION CLERK'S REPORT**

It's wonderful to see how in the last few months the church has returned to almost the way it was before Covid. - No necessity to wear face-coverings, the Word of God back on the pews so it can be read as well as being listened to, tea and coffee being served at the end of morning worship enabling fellowship opportunities, a weekday service, Sunday School back in session – and most importantly, more people, including visitors, returning to church.

These are all visible signs of a thriving church with an active membership, but behind the scenes much unseen work is done to enable the church to operate safely.

In terms of our buildings, our Fabric Convenor, Norman Bruce, ensures all necessary repairs are undertaken timeously and that legally required annual inspections of electrical and gas appliances are carried out by trained professionals.

Another major area is the matter of Safeguarding of Young People and Vulnerable Adults. This is the area of responsibility carried out by our Safeguarding Coordinator, Fiona Marshall. She is responsible for ensuring that everyone involved with children has completed all the necessary procedures. The people who are involved in this way are the Minister, the Church Trustees (members of the Congregational Board and Kirk Session), Sunday School and Crèche volunteers.

In addition to having Disclosure checks carried out and subsequently being approved by the Safeguarding Service of the Church of Scotland to work with the young and vulnerable these members of our church have to undergo regular training on safeguarding. This training must be done every five years to ensure that all are fully up-to-date with current practice and policy.

In recent years there has been no Safeguarding Trainer for Skye & Lochalsh who could conduct this training, but now Fiona has been able to arrange that training opportunities offered by Fife Presbytery are available via Zoom to our people.

At the time of publication of this magazine 18 people will have been fully trained with a further four awaiting their course dates.

We would hope that the knowledge of all the above would encourage more young people to come to the church and for others who have not yet returned following the Covid situation to return to the pews where a warm welcome will be waiting for them.

Finally, a big thank you to those who have volunteered to “meet and greet” at the church door, produce the projections for Bible readings and hymn lyrics, read the lessons, serve the teas & coffees, assist in the rota for cleaning the Church Hall, tending the church garden and all the other “invisible” tasks (there is still space for more volunteers !)

God bless you all.

Bill

## **TREASURER'S REPORT - "GIVING TO GROW"**

Up until the end of 2022, the largest annual expenditure for any Church of Scotland congregation was its Ministry & Mission payment to the central church. This payment was based on the average unrestricted income of a congregation over the preceding three years and was used to pay the stipend for each minister (plus associated costs), administrative costs, mission in Scotland and abroad.

The 2022 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland agreed to a new system for calculating the contribution from each church. This system was called *Giving to Grow* and would start from January 2023. It was designed to be more open, transparent and easy to understand system by letting congregations see exactly what they are contributing towards the cost of their minister.

It dispensed with the three-year rolling average of income for calculating the "Income Base" for Ministry & Mission contributions and replaced it with the last available single year. This is called the *Income Base*. This method removes the problems caused by sudden changes in income, such as experienced with church closures for Covid.

Three components make up a congregation's Giving to Grow commitment :-

Ministry Here : 50% of Income Base, but not exceeding total cost of full time minister which currently stands at approximately £47,555 which includes Stipend, Employers National Insurance, Employers Pension contribution, and Death in service benefit.

This figure shows what we are contributing and whether we are meeting the costs of our minister or are being supported by other congregations

Ministry Elsewhere : 35% of excess income which is defined as income over twice the cost of a minister

Shared Activities : 10% of Income Base . This contribution funds the services provided by the National Church including Legal, Financial, HR, and IT services, Safeguarding, Mission initiatives and Start-up funding for new presbyteries

For 2023, Portree Church's contributions to the three components given above are £30,000, £0 and £6,000 respectively giving a total of £36,000. Prior to the periods of church closures due to Covid, our annual unrestricted income was in the region of £41,000 indicating that our Giving to Grow contributions are less than they would have been under the previous scheme.

While this may sound good it should be remembered that these figures indicate there has been a significant decrease in the annual income to the church while expenditure has increased, and that other, more wealthy churches, are subsidising the payment for our minister.

I hope this summary of *Giving to Grow* meets the General Assembly's aims set out in the second paragraph above.

Bill

## PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Passion Week.

It began on Palm Sunday. After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following.

On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded. Jewish people were arriving from to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 year earlier.

Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey. He was greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom.



The next day they returned to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds.

On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Later that day Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution.

By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Him to them.

Jesus and the 12 disciples gathered on the Thursday evening to celebrate the Passover meal. This is known as the Last Supper. During the evening, Jesus initiated a ritual still marked by Christians – Holy Communion – which commemorates His death. Jesus broke bread and shared it and a cup of wine with His disciples.

Judas then left to meet the other plotters. Jesus continued to teach the others and then went outside into an olive grove to pray. He even prayed for all future believers. He agonised over what was to come but chose the way of obedience. The Bible book, Luke, records Him praying, '*Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done*'. Minutes later Judas arrived with soldiers and the chief priests and Jesus was arrested.

## Amazing Grace – 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

It was a Sunday afternoon on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and I sat down for a bit of relaxation and switched on the TV. Songs of Praises was on and I was intrigued as the program was dedicated to 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Amazing Grace. The program concentrated on the history of its writer, John Newton, where it was written (Olney, Buckinghamshire), how it inspired one young man, played the song itself and told how it inspired other praise songs based on Amazing Grace. This program inspired myself to look for further information about Amazing Grace to enable me to write this article and also to look into how we could include a different version of it each week in the music we play in the church before each service.

The program was presented by Claire McCollom, a BBC reporter who is a Christian and she started the program with this quotation

*‘Grace is at the heart of the Christian message, the Love of God that we cannot earn and do not deserve!’*



### What is the background history of its writer John Newton?

John Newton was born in Wapping, London in 1725 and his mother died of tuberculosis when he was 6 years old. As his father was at sea, he was raised by his emotionally distant stepmother and whilst he was at boarding school he was badly mistreated. At the age of 11 he joined his father on a ship as an apprentice, where his seagoing career would be marked by disobedience. He was charged for insubordination and during this time he turned his back on God and became an atheist. He eventually ended up being a crew member on a slave ship, trading slaves from West Africa.

In March 1748, whilst aboard the ship, Greyhound, a violent storm came upon the ship, where crew members were swept overboard. Newton had a spiritual awakening and began to pray to God, asking the Lord to have mercy on him.

Newton's conversion was not immediate and for the next six years he continued to work on slave ships. During this period he improved his moral standing and eventually left the slave trade in 1756 and began teaching himself theology. Along with his wife, they immersed themselves into the church community and Newton's passion was so impressive that his peers suggested he became a priest in the Church of England.

In 1764 he became a curate in Olney where his preaching was unique in that he shared many of his own experiences from the pulpit. At this time Olney was very Ecumenical, where the Church of England, Baptists and Independent Chapel would take it in turn to preach a sermon on New Year's day to the young people of Olney. In 1773 it was John Newton's turn to preach the sermon and as it was at this point he wrote Amazing Grace to accompany it. Many writers think that he undoubtedly saw himself as 'the wretch' that sought undeserved salvation.

In his later years he utterly renounced the slave trade and became a key figure in the movement that led to its abolition, even mentoring William Wilberforce. The Bill to prohibit the slave trade was passed in 1807, just months before John Newton died.

### Has the hymn changed much since its inception in 1772?

The original version of the hymn had six verses and it is not known whether it had a tune or was sung as a chant. On the Songs of Praise program, two leading choirmasters stated that a hymn's enduring power often comes when words meet their perfect melody and in the case of Amazing Grace, this occurred 30 years after Newton's death, when the American, William Walker penned the tune 'New Britain'. This fits the words like a glove and creates the hymn we all love today.



Another verse was introduced in Harriet Beecher Stowes' immensely influential 1852 anti-slavery novel Uncle Tom's Cabin, where Tom sang in his hour of deepest crisis – 'When we've been there ten thousand years; Bright shining as the sun; We've no less days to sing God's praise; Than when we first begun.'

Nowadays most versions comprise the first 3 verses along with 'When we've been there', whereas you find in the mainstream church's hymn books, it uses the first 4 verses of the original.

#### How has Amazing Grace influenced Cultures/People?

If you asked people in Britain, what their favourite hymn is, I'm sure Amazing Grace would be a popular answer. But I don't think this was always the case. When you think it is now 250 years old, I find it surprising that you can only find it in the latest edition of the Church's Hymnary. Whereas it has had a great influence in the United States, especially amongst the African American culture. It has been used by them as the 'paradigmatic Negro spiritual' because it expresses the joy felt at being delivered from slavery and worldly miseries.

In the sixties the song took on a political tone when the Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson used it for Civil Rights marches. Later in the same decade Folk Singer Judy Collins used it in the marches against the Vietnam war and personally she claimed that the song helped her to 'pull through' from alcohol abuse to recovery.

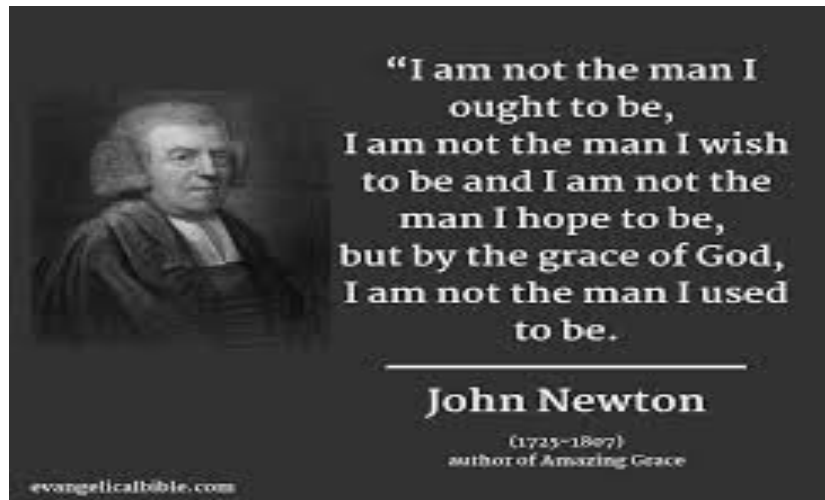
On the Song of Praises program it told the story of a 30 year old man who felt a deep personal connection with Amazing Grace, which he believes reflects his own life story. His father left him when he was 7 and two weeks before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday his mother died in his arms of a stroke. To block out the pain, he began to drink excessively, took drugs and became suicidal and wanted to die. But hope came to him through Ann, a Christian charity worker, who engaged with him and in his own words said, "She just loved me ! and didn't give up on me'. She helped him get a place in a Christian Rehabilitation Centre and in one counselling session he asked God for forgiveness for all the bad things he had done in his life. During this moment he had a vision where he was in a courtroom and a figure was seated in the judges seat. He heard the words 'You're forgiven' and the figure pointed to a door where a white light was shining from it and above the door a sign appeared saying Freedom. He walked towards it, where his mum appeared and they walked through the door together and in that second felt the love of God just permeating everything around him. At that moment he gave his life to Jesus and asked 'Please let me live my life for you' Such Amazing Grace !!!

#### Has it inspired other songs based on Amazing Grace?

The BBC program featured a song 'He Looked Beyond my Fault' to the tune of 'Danny Boy', which was written by the Gospel Singer Dottie Rambo. This tune is based loosely on Amazing Grace. My own favourite, 'Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)' was written by worship leader Chris Tomlin along with Louie Giglio where they use the verses of Amazing Grace along with the addition of a chorus. Australian worship leaders Joel Houston and Jonas Myrin of Hillsong Worship wrote the song 'Broken Vessels' which incorporates the first verse of Amazing Grace as a chorus in this song. With its distinctive South African style of music, Ladysmith Black Mambazo have produced a medley of songs which teams 'Amazing Grace' with 'Nearer my God to Thee'. Another interesting medley of songs sees worship leaders Robin Mark and Stuart Townend match 'Amazing Grace' with 'No Not By Might' and 'Are You Washed' and to this day, can still visualize the late John Cameron enthusiastically playing this tune on the keyboard.

As we are approaching Easter, I feel that this is an appropriate time to write this article. Our Lord Jesus died on the cross to redeem all our sins and as I finish let me leave the final words to the 'Songs of Praise' program – ' We can often overlook just how radical the Christian Faith is, in that no one is beyond the love of God – that is Grace. Perhaps few have experienced or expressed it quite as powerfully as John Newton'.

David Meikleham



Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)  
That sav'd a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears reliev'd;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promis'd good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease;  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who call'd me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

John Newton, *Olney Hymns*, 1779

## MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE, THE CHOSEN ONE

Have you ever been in the position where someone is desperately needed – and you fit the bill perfectly ? It is almost as if all your miscellaneous qualifications that never made much sense before now make PERFECT sense. And you sense that you have been chosen by God for the task....

If so, then you are very like Matthias ! (See Acts 1 : 12 – 26)

Matthias came into the picture shortly after the suicide of Judas. The early Church was missing an apostle, and so the remaining 11 apostles prayed for guidance on who to choose as a replacement for this key role.

The qualifications for the job were specialised: the person had to have been a follower of Christ from His Baptism to His Ascension, and a witness of the Resurrection. There were two possibilities: Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. How to choose?

Again, Matthias' experience may mirror yours: the decision was out of his hands, and up to others. In this case, the apostles drew straws – and the 'lot' fell to Matthias. He had been chosen to replace Judas ! The tragedy of Judas' betrayal had led to an opportunity for service by Matthias – and he was well prepared for the task. Are you prepared for any task that God might suddenly open before you?

Like the other apostles, Matthias had been in Jerusalem and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he went on to spread the word about Jesus. It is said he preached the Good News first in Judea, and then maybe in Cappadocia and by the Caspian Sea. It is thought he was martyred, and his relics eventually ended up being taken to Rome by the empress Helen.

Matthias is an encouragement to us to be faithful in small things - because you never know what the future might hold!

### An Easter Prayer

Thank you, Father, that you raised Jesus from the dead on that first Easter Day and that He is alive now and forever. Thank you that whoever believes in Him and turns away from selfish living and towards you can be forgiven through His name. Thank you that Jesus is the same today as He was then and will always be.

Thank you for the Bible - your inspired, unchanging, and living Word to guide us. Help us to hold fast to Your teaching and not to be led astray. Your Word is truth. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, Lord, that we might be Your faithful, fruitful Resurrection People.

In the name of our living Lord, Jesus.

Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## **REFUGEES**

They have no need of our help

So do not tell me

These haggard faces could belong to you or me

Should life have dealt a different hand

We need to see them for who they really are

Chancers and scroungers

Layabouts and loungers

With bombs up their sleeves

Cut-throats and thieves

They are not

Welcome here

We should make them

Go back where they came from

They cannot

Share our food

Share our homes

Share our countries

Instead let us

Build a wall to keep them out

It is not okay to say

These people are just like us

A place should only belong to those who are born there

Do not be so stupid to think that

The world can be looked at another way



**(NOW READ THIS FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP)**

Brian Bilston

The Bible tells us to look out for the needy and strangers in our midst

“Do not ill-treat a foreigner: you know how it feels to be a foreigner, because you were foreigners in Egypt.” (Exodus 23:9)



“God’s curse on anyone who deprives foreigners, orphans and widows of their rights’. And the people all said ‘Amen!’” (Deuteronomy 27:19)

“Foreign residents will receive their share with the people of the tribe among whom they are living. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken” (Ezekiel 47:23)

Donna McEwan

## CHOCOLATE

If there was nothing like chocolate  
How dull would this world of ours be!  
A world without wonderful chocolate  
Would not be a good world for me!

For chocolate’s a way to say ‘thank you’;  
Or ‘please’ if you want something done.  
It’s better than mere words or phrases  
Cos eating it’s terribly fun!

If somebody went and banned chocolate  
The consequence of his dread fault  
Would be dire beyond contemplation  
The world – it would grind to a halt!

For nothing gets done without chocolate  
Whether milky or silky or sweet,  
Some folk will do wonders for chocolate  
For a taste of a chocolaty treat!

So go out and purchase some chocolate  
There’s lots on your local shop’s shelf!  
Give someone a gift of some chocolate -  
But also - keep some for yourself!



*By Nigel Beeton*

# HYMNS IN CHURCH



We are sure that over the last few weeks you will have noticed that the choice of hymns for services has come from a variety of sources including Church Hymnary No 4 (CH4), Junior Praise (JP) and Songs of God's People (SoGP), as well as Church Hymnary 3 (CH) and Mission Praise (MP). Pre-Covid, Church Hymnary 3 and Mission Praise accounted for almost 99 % of the hymns chosen for Sunday worship and the appropriate hymn books were issued to you as you came into church.

Now, on some Sundays we would have to issue two or three books to each person and that could be problematic for some. In addition, we have found, and we hope you would agree, that the quality of singing has improved so much since we are all looking **upwards** to the lyric projections on the wall, rather than **downwards** to our hymnbooks.

When choosing the hymns, we always take certain factors into consideration :-

- When Sunday School is operating, the first hymn will be a **children's hymn**. These are chosen by the Sunday School leaders and have been practised by the young people beforehand. You will agree that some of the newer ones are quite different to what we normally hear, but we want the children to be singing hymns that they find interesting and more modern.
- We will always maintain traditions in the choice of the remaining hymns, and at morning worship include a Psalm or Paraphrase wherever relevant.
- The remaining hymns are chosen, where possible, to complement the Bible texts for the service.
- For the final choice we tend to select a more rousing hymn as we feel that sets the mood for us all as we leave church - happy and joyful.

The use of Church Hymnary 4, which is obviously a more modern version of Church Hymnary 3 contains many new hymns to different tunes. As a church we recognise that we are, in the main, a more elderly congregation and if we want to attract younger people to the church we need to have praise which uses 21st Century language rather than that contained in some of the more "traditional" hymns.

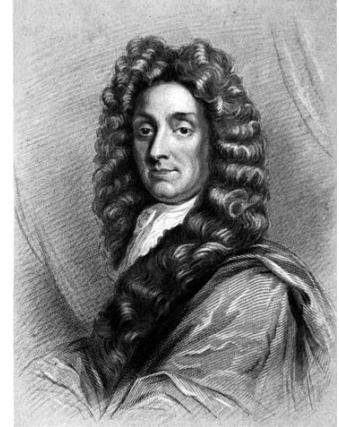
We hope that our choices are acceptable to you and that you will come to love these newer hymns as much as you do the old favourites.

Bill & Fiona

## REMEMBERING SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

It was 300 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1723, that English architect Sir Christopher Wren died at the age of 90. Best known for designing St Paul's Cathedral, he was also a ground-breaking anatomist, astronomer and physicist.

A founder of the Royal Society, Wren served as its president from 1680 to 1682 and was highly regarded by such eminent scientists as Isaac Newton and Blaise Pascal. But it is as an architect that he is best known: beside St Paul's, regarded as his masterpiece and completed in 1710, he directed the rebuilding of 52 churches after the Great Fire of London in 1666 – though he did not work alone, heading a team of creative minds that included Nicholas Hawksmoor.



Born at East Knoyle in Wiltshire, Wren was the only surviving son of Christopher Wren the Elder, who became Dean of Windsor. He was a sickly child but lived a long life, despite his family being affected by the Civil Wars that broke out in 1642. He married twice, but both his wives died very early – one of smallpox and the other of tuberculosis. Although Wren lived 90 years, he was married for only nine of them, but had four children.

Two factors may have contributed to Wren's success as an architect: one was basic – his decision to move into that field because of the dearth of architects in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century; the other was more dramatic – the Great Fire of London, which necessitated so much rebuilding in the city and gave him the opportunity to shine.



Robert Hooke, the scientist and architect who was a friend of Wren, said: "Since the time of Archimedes there scarce ever met in one man in so great perfection such a mechanical hand and so philosophical a mind."

## All Fools' Day

In years gone by, the rules surrounding April Fool were this: between midnight and noon on 1<sup>st</sup> April, everyone is 'fair game' to be made a fool of. It is the morning of the practical joke. But the aim is not just to discomfort the victim: he must be tricked into taking action himself, sent on a 'fool's errand'.

And so children would be sent to the dairy for a pint of dove's milk, or to the bookseller for *The Life of Eve's Mother*. Practical jokes on a bigger scale were played: in 1860 a vast number of people received an official looking invitation to the Tower of London that read: 'Admit the Bearer and Friends to view the Annual Ceremony of Washing the White Lions.' Precisely the same trick had been played in 1698.

Then, on the stroke of noon, tradition decrees, April Fools is finished. If anyone attempts mischief thereafter, even while the clock is still striking, it recoils on his own head. A child would then race through the sing-song formula: 'April-Fool-Day's-past-and-gone-you're-the-fool-and-I-am-none!'

## ONLY JESUS

(John 19:17, 1:4)

Carrying the cross by Himself

He went out.

Sent out,

Yet choosing to go.

Word of life,

Choosing death,

Knowing the end from the beginning,

Carrying the cross by Himself

He went out.

The only one who could,

The only way He could,

He went out

To the Skull Place,

For me.

*By Daphne Kitching*



## GOD IN THE SCIENCES

*This article is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

### A BUCKET OF TADPOLES: SPRINGTIME, CURIOSITY, AND THE THEOLOGY OF SCIENCE

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must have been collected to educate my brother and I on where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate and are swallowed up by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' - which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal?



Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old self. They refuse to stop asking questions, even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was very good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, we are made in Gods image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a Theology of Science which serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs – that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.

## GOOD FRIDAY - JESUS AND THE THIEVES ON THE CROSS

Luke's account of the crucifixion (Luke 23:32-43) emphasises the mocking of the crowd, *'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself'* (35,37,39). In their view a Messiah does not hang on a cross and suffer. In considering the two men who were crucified with Jesus, we are also confronted with the issue of how Jesus secures salvation for us.

The words of one of those crucified with Jesus reflected the crowd's taunts: *'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us.'* He highlights the question of Jesus' identity: how can He save others, when He cannot save Himself from death? He failed to see that the cross itself was the means of salvation.

So - what kind of Messiah was Jesus?

The other criminal's response in his last moments is a moving expression of faith. When challenging the other man, he spoke of the utter injustice of the crucifixion: *'this man has done nothing wrong.'* He perceived the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. In a wonderful picture of grace, *'remember me when You come into Your kingdom'*, the second thief confessed his guilt and secured Jesus' forgiveness and mercy.

In reply, Jesus promised the man life from the moment of death; *'Today you will be with Me in paradise.'* Jesus used the picture of a *walled garden* to help the man understand His promise of protection and security in God's love and acceptance eternally.

Each one of us has to choose how we react to Jesus on the cross. Do we want Him to 'remember' us when He comes into His kingdom, or not? If you were to die tonight, how confident would you be of going to be with Jesus? *'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God'* (1 Peter 3:18).



### With Holy Week and Easter in mind...

The death of Christ was the most dreadful blow ever given to the empire of darkness. - *William Plumer*

The world cannot bury Christ. The earth is not deep enough for His tomb, the clouds are not wide enough for His winding-sheet. - *E Thomson*

The best news the world has ever had came from a graveyard. - *Anon*

The Christian Church has the resurrection written all over it. - *E G Robinson*

Christianity is the revelation of God, not the research of man. - *JA Stewart*

Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not. - *Anon*

## EASTER MORNING - THE “OTHER MARY”

As the traditional Easter story is rehearsed again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the ‘other’ Mary – not the mother of Jesus, but Mary of Magdalene, who stood by her at the cross and became the first person actually to meet the risen Christ.

That’s quite a record for a woman who, the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from ‘seven devils’ – New Testament language for some dark and horrible affliction of body, mind or spirit. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the ‘fallen woman’ a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus but there is no evidence to prove she was a ‘fallen woman’ but the contrast is sublime, Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity. Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

The dark cloud from which she was delivered may have been sexual, we are not told. What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

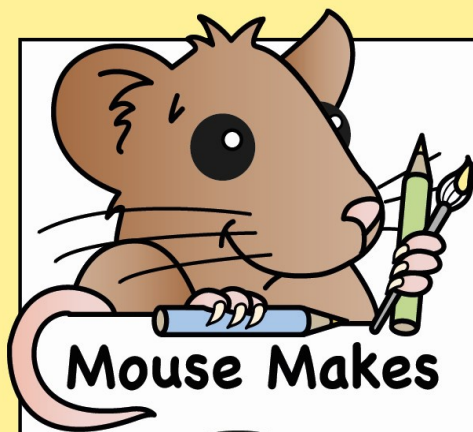
The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen – and the others drifted off. But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to him that the body of ‘her Lord’ had been taken away and she didn’t know where to find Him.



The man simply said her name ‘Mary’ and she instantly realised it was Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did – but they wouldn’t believe her.

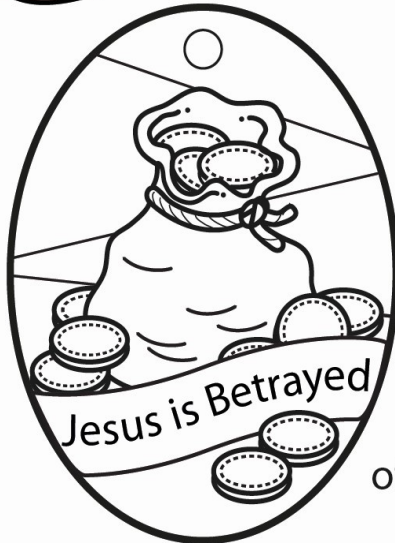
Her words – ‘I have seen the Lord’ – echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.





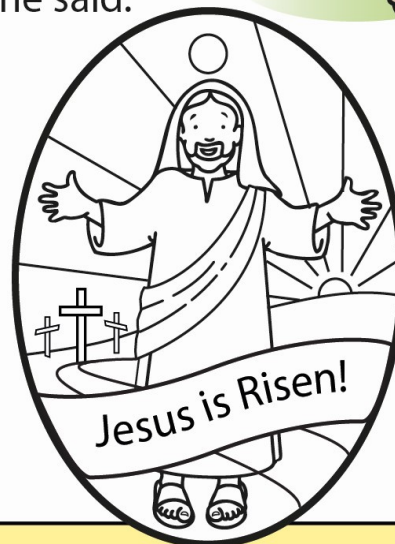
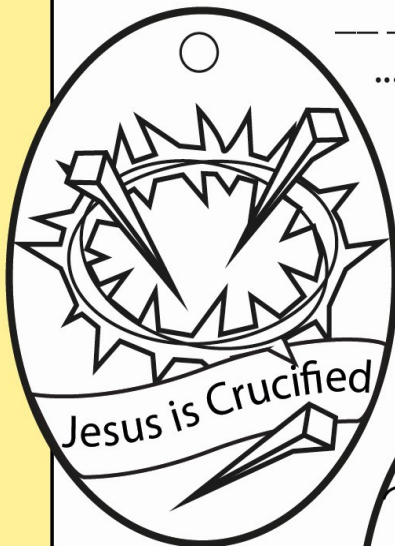
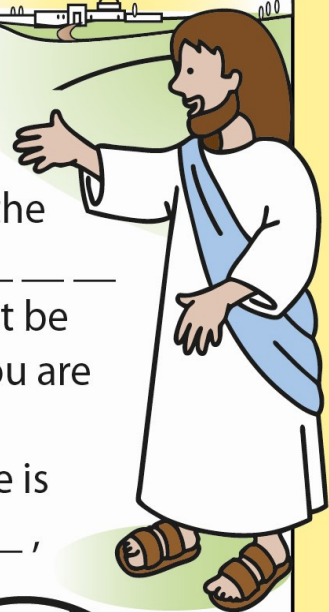
## HE IS RISEN!

Read the story of  
The Resurrection in  
*Matthew 28:1-20*



An \_\_\_\_\_  
of the Lord came down from  
\_\_\_\_\_ and going to the  
\_\_\_\_\_ rolled back the \_\_\_\_\_

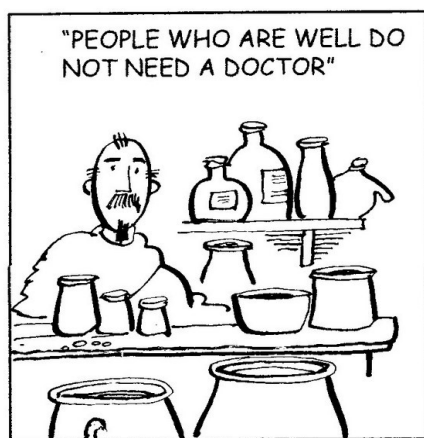
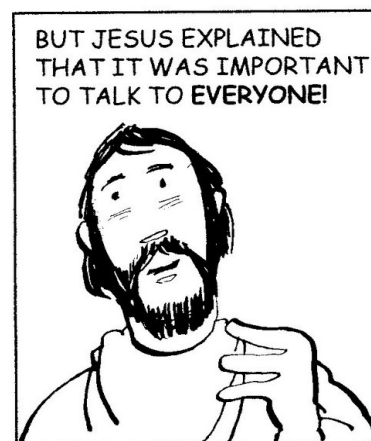
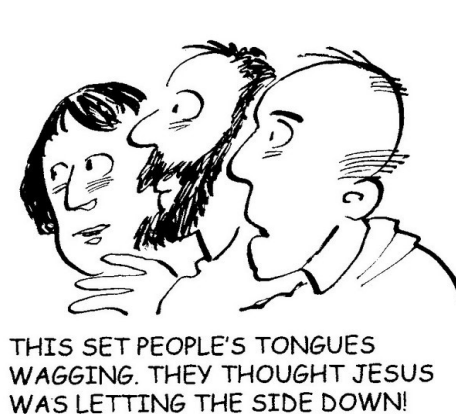
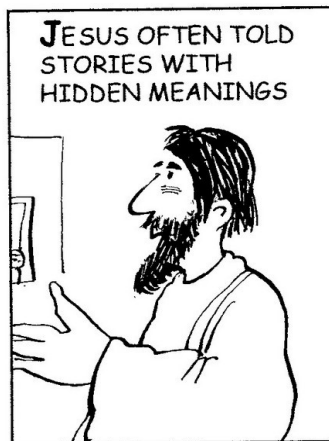
... the \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Do not be  
\_\_\_\_\_, for I know you are  
looking for Jesus who was  
\_\_\_\_\_, He is  
not here; he has \_\_\_\_\_,  
just as he said."



Glue this page onto  
card. Cut out the  
ovals then colour in.  
Punch a hole at the  
top and hang up  
for Easter



# The doctor and the ill person



Once you have read the story, why not colour it in.

*Nigel Beeton who composed this poem writes: "One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is found in John 20 and verses 14 – 16. A distraught Mary Magdalene is standing outside a tomb, and she is convinced that some ne'er do wells have stolen the body of her beloved Master, Jesus, for reasons which she can't begin to fathom. There's a gardener nearby, and he has the audacity to ask her why she's so upset..."*

## **OUTSIDE AN EMPTY TOMB**

"Oh woman, why this weeping?  
Oh woman, dry your tears!  
Oh woman, cease your weeping  
And lay aside your fears!"

"They've borne away my Master!  
And laid Him who knows where;  
His tomb is standing empty,  
And He's no longer there."

"Oh Sir, please will you tell me  
Where you have laid Him now?  
For you can surely tell me  
What they have done, and how;  
Yes how may I now find Him  
And for His body care?  
For I will truly care for Him  
If you'll but show me where?"

He said to her, "My Mary!"  
She turned and met His eye  
She cried with joy, "My Master!"  
For she at last knew why  
The tomb behind was empty  
And why no body lay –  
Her Master Christ is Risen  
Upon this Easter Day!



*In this article Canon Paul Hardingham considers what happened on Good Friday and Easter.*

## **A CROSS ATTITUDE**

In this Easter season, how does Philippians 2 help us to understand more about the cross?

Paul explains what Jesus did in this way: *'He did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage... And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!'*

*Jesus' example (v6-8)*

Paul reminds us that Jesus, although He was fully God from eternity, entered our world as a man to take on a life of service. *'He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.'* He completely surrendered Himself, by identifying with all the weakness, problems, and frailties of human life. This took Him to the cross, where He rescued us from the power of sin and death, so that we might know God's eternal life.

*Our Response (v3-5)*

Paul says that our relationships should reflect the same attitude as Jesus: *'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.'* We should look out for the needs of others before our own. This will transform our relationships at home and church. How practically can we develop a *cross attitude*?

*God's Purpose (v9-11)*

The Resurrection demonstrates how God has exalted Jesus in triumph: *'Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name'* (v9). Our willingness to serve, like Jesus, will be rewarded by God, especially when we feel used or exploited.

*'This is our God, The Servant King, He calls us now to follow Him, To bring our lives as a daily offering, Of worship to The Servant King'* (Graham Kendrick)

### **Observations on our Christian pilgrimage**

What the nations of the world need is a peace conference with the Prince of Peace. - *Anon*

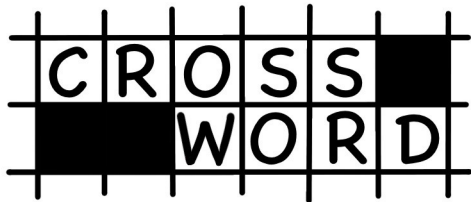
Keep the faith – but not from others! - *Anon*

Give God what's right - not what's left. - *Anon*

Man's way leads to a hopeless end - God's way leads to an endless hope. - *Anon*

A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing. - *Anon*

When praying, don't give God instructions - just report for duty. - *Anon*



## Across

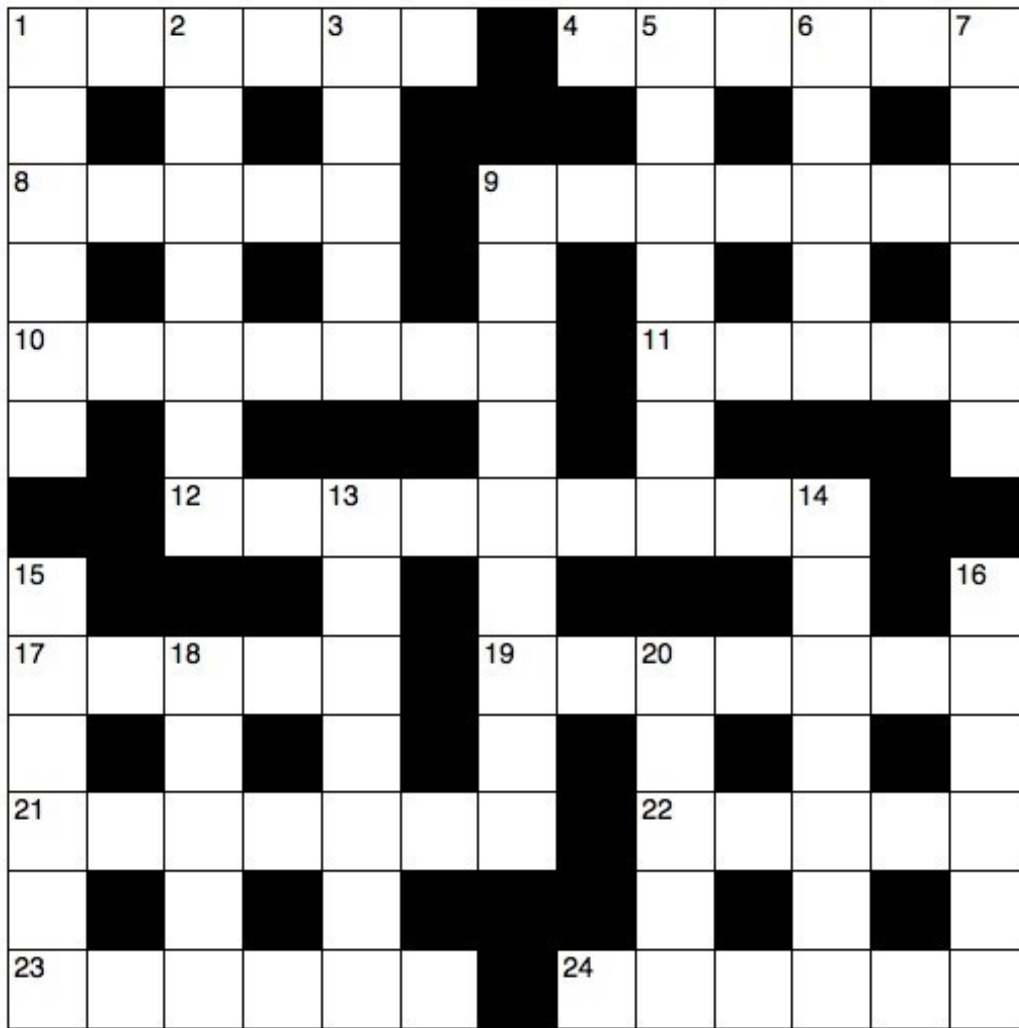
- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3–4) (5)
- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

## Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury ( Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' ( Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)

***The solutions to all the puzzles on Pages 24—26 can be found on Page 30***





# SUDOKU

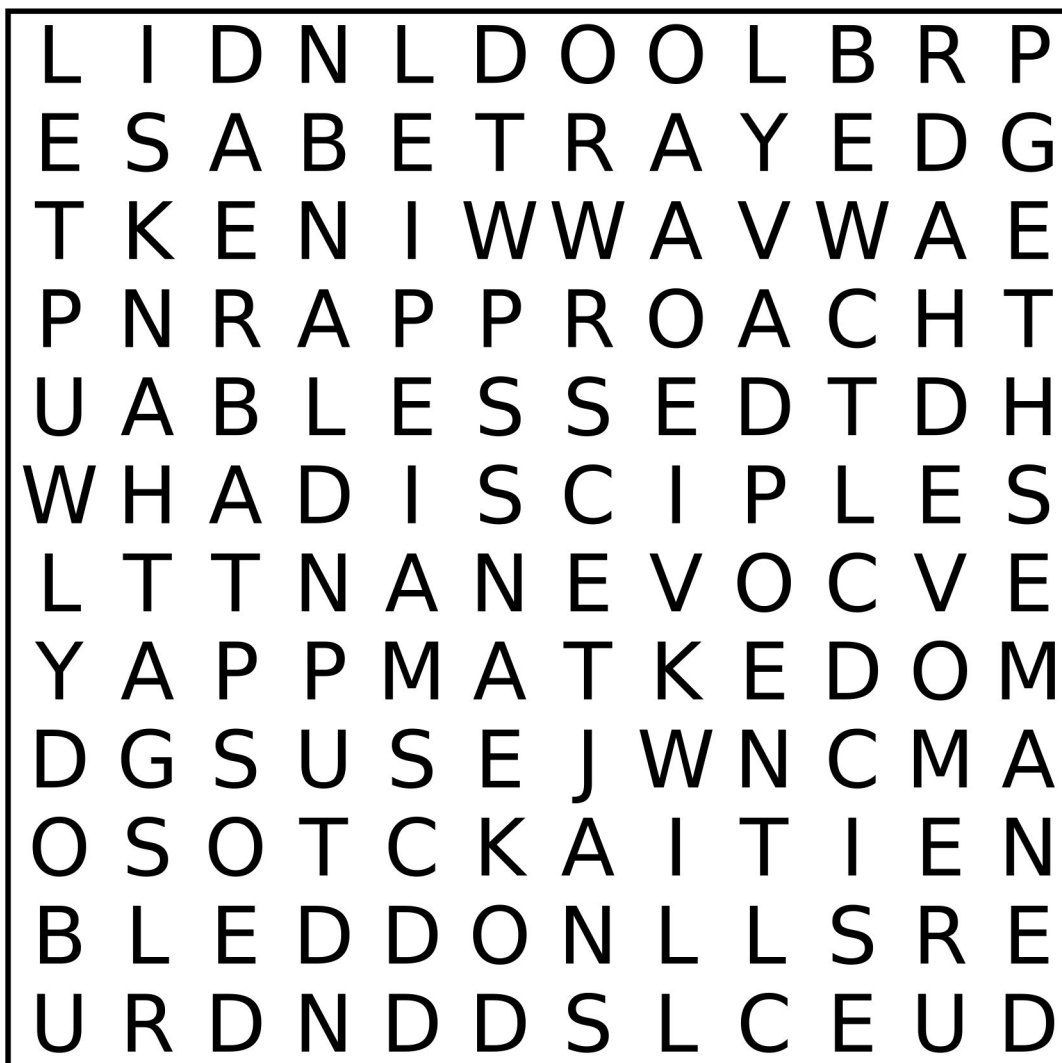
			1		4			
7								
		9			3	1	2	
8				9	1			3
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			5		6			

## EASTER WORDSEARCH

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with His disciples, He warned them He was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink. The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and His blood, was about to be ushered in. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that this fearful cup of suffering might be removed from Him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. Because of Easter we can approach God through his Son, Jesus Christ. He has opened the gates to heaven for us !

*Find the words shown below in the Wordsearch Grid*

Jesus   Ate   Last   Passover   Meal   Disciples   Warned   Betrayed  
Bread   Blessed   Wine   Thanks   Drink   Covenant   Law   Old  
New   Body   Blood   Gethsemane   Cup   Removed   Will   Easter  
Approach   God



## ALL IN THE MONTH OF APRIL

It was:

100 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1923 that insulin became generally available for the treatment of diabetes.

Also 100 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1923 that Prince Albert, Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (later Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) at Westminster Abbey in London.

90 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1933 that the first flight over Mount Everest took place. British pilots the Marquis of Clydesdale and Donald McIntyre flew two biplanes over the summit.

80 years ago, from 20<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> May 1943 that the final phase of World War 2's Tunisia campaign took place. An Allied victory, and the Axis forces were ejected from North Africa.

75 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1948 that the World Health Organization (WHO) was founded in Geneva, Switzerland as a specialist agency of the United Nations.

Also 75 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1948 that the Land Rover, a British all-terrain vehicle, was officially launched at the Amsterdam Motor Show. According to Yougov.co.uk, nowadays 95% of us have heard of them, and 58% of us admire them.

70 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1953 that Queen Elizabeth II launched the Royal Yacht Britannia. It was decommissioned in 1997.

60 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1963 that American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jnr. wrote his famous 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' while imprisoned in Alabama. He stated that the Black community was forced to protest when the white power structure left them no choice.

40 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1983 that tens of thousands of anti-nuclear weapons protestors formed a 14-mile human chain in Berkshire. They linked the US airbase at Greenham Common, the nuclear research centre in Aldermaston, and an ordnance factory in Burghfield.

30 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1993 that CERN, the creators of the World Wide Web, announced that it could be used for free by anyone. That decision has shaped the modern world as we know it.

25 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1998 that the Good Friday Agreement was signed in Northern Ireland.

## ***One Solitary Life***

He was born in a stable,  
In an obscure village,  
The child of a peasant woman.  
He worked in a carpenter's shop  
Until he was thirty.  
From there he travelled  
less than 200 miles.

He never wrote a book.  
He never held office.  
He never had a family or owned a home.  
He did none of the things one  
usually associates with greatness.

He became a nomadic preacher.  
He was only thirty-three when the tide of  
popular opinion turned against him.  
He was betrayed by a close friend,  
and his other friends ran away.  
He was turned over to his enemies  
and went through the mockery of a trial.  
He was unjustly condemned to death,  
crucified on a cross between two thieves,  
on a hill overlooking the town dump,  
and, when dead, was laid in a borrowed grave,  
through the pity of a friend.



Twenty centuries have come and gone,  
All the armies that ever marched,  
all the navies that ever sailed,  
all the parliaments that ever sat,  
all the kings that ever reigned

have not affected the life of man on this earth  
as that One Solitary Life.

He is the central figure of the human race,  
He is the Messiah, the Son of God,  
JESUS CHRIST

*Taken from "Words of Comfort" compiled by Daniel P Cronin*

*Submitted by Jean McGhie*

## SPRINGTIME

Today whilst singing "All things bright and beautiful" I reflected on what the spring season means to Christians.

God gives us the ability to blossom when we accept him into our lives like the trees, grass flowers which will blossom in Spring.

How do we welcome Spring :-

Fresh coat of paint

Fresh flowers

Spring clean

Season of renewal



Spring is the season of hope and renewal when, encouraged by the increase of light and warmth, we find the energy to take the necessary action that can push the tentative new beginning into full awakening,

We can look to the Bible where there are lots of verses about Spring which help to refresh and renew your mind and heart for the Spring season. No matter how much of a mess is your life, God can make it new again and turn "your mess" into a beautiful thing.

One of my favourite Spring signs is birds chirping and flying tree to tree in the early morning.

Spring is a powerful display of Gods creations.

Kay MacKinnon



## SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES ON PAGES 24—26

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

C	R	O	S	S	
			W	O	R

# SUDOKU

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

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

# WORDSEARCH

## WHY EASTER WILL NEVER GO AWAY

How do you make sense of the Resurrection? Dead men don't rise, so why believe that this particular dead man *did* rise?

At the end of St Luke's gospel we read that: "they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement" (Luke 24.4). This is highly significant. The Gospels do not show us a group of disciples who were in a receptive frame of mind. After the crucifixion, they were in hiding, frightened and scattered. Then suddenly, they came out of hiding and were totally different; excited, joyful. By Pentecost they were confident, with one firm message: 'You crucified Jesus, but God raised Him up!'

How did they know this? Because of direct personal experience. Some of them had visited the tomb of Jesus: it was empty. Others claimed to have seen and touched the risen Lord. Were they hallucinating? People can hallucinate in groups – when taking drugs, for example. But of course, each one will see a different hallucination. But the disciples all saw the same thing. Or rather, the same person. Jesus.

Were they lying? Jesus had died a humiliating death as a criminal. Perhaps they wanted to rescue His good name. So, did they pretend they had seen Him?

This theory has a big problem. Their preaching led them into trouble with the authorities. They were beaten and imprisoned and some of them killed. People will die for ideas and causes which they believe in passionately. But not for things they have made up. We might suffer for our convictions, but we will not suffer for our inventions.

What about the 'swoon' theory? That Jesus didn't die on the cross, despite terrible wounds? That He recovered in the tomb, and then escaped? That the disciples nursed Him back to health? But Roman soldiers knew when a man was dead; and there was the guard on the tomb. Also, the events which followed simply don't fit. If the disciples had been hiding Jesus all along, they would have kept very low-key, and out of the way, so that the authorities did not come after Him again.

Besides, to preach that God had raised Jesus from the dead – which is exactly what they did preach – would have been a lie. Beatings and threat of death would soon have loosened their tongues. Inventions crumble under pressure; convictions hold fast.

Another reason for believing in the Resurrection is this: Jesus' continuing impact. Thousands and soon millions of people in every generation since have shared an inescapable sense of being 'accompanied' through life. Though unseen, they identify this presence as the Risen Lord.

Sometimes this experience of meeting Jesus is gentle and fitful. Sometimes it is dramatic and life changing. This reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus is not just an interesting historical puzzle. It is a vital, present day reality. It brings wonderful comfort, assuring us of the central Christian truths: death is dead; Jesus is alive; God is love.

This central notion was captured, most movingly, by the great Albert Schweitzer: 'He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me," and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is.'

Have a joyful – and a challenging – Easter.

AN EASTER  
*beginning*



Portree Parish Church of Scotland is a Charity Registered in Scotland. SC 000416