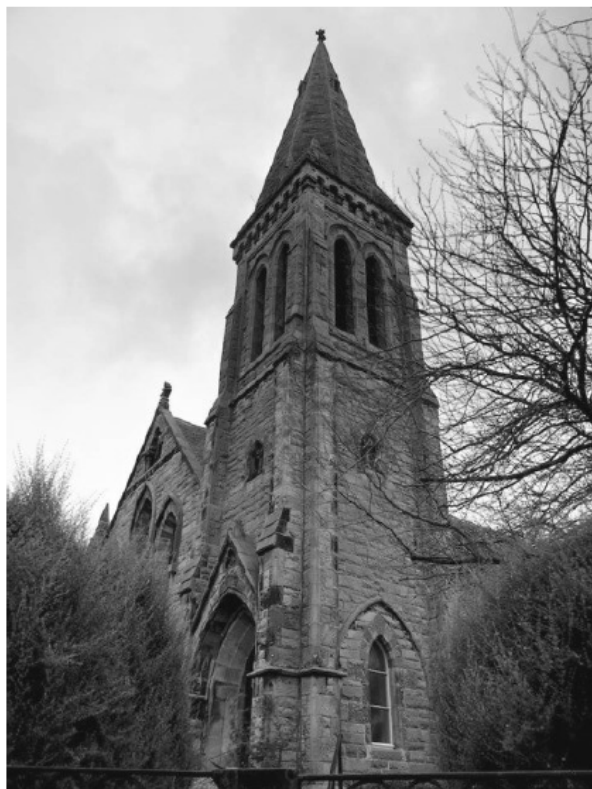


Liberton Northfield Church

February 2016

Monthly Newsletter



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Dear Friends,

Tuesday the 9th of February 2016 is Shrove Tuesday, also known as Mardi Gras or Pancake Tuesday. Traditionally Christians around the world will use the last of their fat and flour to make pancakes for dinner. Shrove Tuesday is the last day of carnival, a short season to finish all the meat in the house in preparation for the Lent fast.

In Spain, Shrove Tuesday is called “Omelette Tuesday” and omelettes filled with sausages replace pancakes.

The following day is Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent. Lent is the season on the Christian calendar when Christians all over the world fast and pray in preparation for Easter. Many Christians will attend Ash Wednesday services where they confess “from ash we come and from ash we shall return”. Ash from burned leaves is mixed with oil to form a paste. During Ash Wednesday services it is used to anoint worshippers’ foreheads with a cross. I am always moved when I see people shopping after this service, with their shiny grey oil and ash cross still on their foreheads. It is not something beautiful; it is an unattractive symbol of mortality and sinfulness yet it glistens with hope.

Ash Wednesday is a reality check. It reminds us that this life is limited. In the face of our undeniable mortality, we are called to use the time God gives us for good and not for evil, to bless and not to curse, to love and not to hate. Life does not have enough time for anger and vengeance, or unforgiveness. Life is too short to waste it. And so with our mortality in mind, we enter into Lent asking God to strip away that which is harmful. We repent of sin and pray that God will give us the strength to overcome temptation. But Lent is also a time to ask God how we can grow and mature. As we shed habits that steal our joy, we replace them with spiritual disciplines that bring us closer to Jesus. During Lent we are invited to draw near to God through prayer, and God promises to draw near to us.

The irony of Lent is that as we seek to strip away that which is destructive and practise love, we realise how easy it is to sin and how difficult it is to do good. While trying to be peaceful, I realise how often I struggle with anger. While trying to love, I realise how often I am selfish. As I draw closer to God’s light, I see more and more shadows in myself where God’s light still needs to shine.

My spiritual turmoil is matched by my physical struggle with temptation. During Lent, I often fast from chocolate. It seems shopkeepers delight in tormenting me (and you), as they flood their shelves with Easter eggs.

As I wrestle with this temptation, I think of Jesus who too was tempted in the wilderness. And then I think towards Maundy Thursday (day before Good Friday) when Jesus sweated blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing what awaited him the following day. My mind moves on to Good Friday, and I think of Jesus being mocked, flogged and crucified. And then my craving for chocolate seems pathetic. And again I am reminded that we come from dust, and to dust we shall return. But because of Jesus, we will also experience his resurrection power and life eternal.

God bless you as we journey towards Easter together.

Mike

Trailblazers

During January, the Trailblazers have been learning about the life of the apostle Paul, from Acts chapters 18 to 28. This included his work with Priscilla and Aquila, his rescue when the Jews plotted to kill him, his testimony before King Agrippa and his safe arrival in Rome following a shipwreck.

During February, the Trailblazers will be finding out about events in the life of the prophet Jeremiah, from Jeremiah chapters 18 to 38.

Advance notice of dates for the diary:

1. The next meeting of Trailblazer leaders and helpers has been scheduled for Tuesday 9th February at 7:30pm, in the home of Jan and Billy Grubb.
2. The Easter Family Service will be on Sunday 20th March (Palm Sunday).

We would welcome any new additions to the team of leaders and helpers working with the Trailblazers. If this is something that you could get involved in, then please contact Margaret Padfield for an informal chat about what this involves.

Date	7/2/2016	14/2/2016	21/2/2016	28/2/2016
Gilmerton Door	Rachael Whyte	Irene Hoy	Nansai Whyte	Rebecca Akhigbe
Edinburgh Door	Margo Ferguson	Lenny Feng Li	Rachael Whyte	Irene Hoy
Ramp Door	Jean McIntyre	Rachael Whyte	Kate Jackson	Rachael Whyte
Counting 1	Jean McIntyre	Rachael Whyte	Kate Jackson	Rachael Whyte
Counting 2	Billy Grubb	Irene Hoy	Jean McIntyre	Linda Brown
Counting 3	Norma Packham	Norma Packham	Norma Packham	Norma Packham
Sparklers	Jan Grubb Linda Brown	Kate Ann Shirran Parents	Rona Lawson Sandra Lynch	Rona Lawson Linda Brown
All stars	Helen Palmer Debbie Walker	Helen Palmer Billy Grubb	Margaret Padfield Billy Grubb	Margaret Padfield Debbie Walker
Explorers	Jean MacIntyre Lenny Feng Li		Jean MacIntyre Lenny Feng Li	
SEAG Bus	Ian Messer			
Tea & Coffee 1	Kirsty	Jan	Emma	Liz
Tea & Coffee 2	Sheila	Margaret	Jeanette	Emma
Music Lead	Judith away			
Morning Sermon			Kate Jackson	
Evening Sermon			Fiona Devoy	
Tres Sermon	Fiona Devoy	With Communion		

My Early Life in Church (Part-2)

Church in China: Home/ House Church, place for fellowship

A few years later, when Jenny left us and moved on to a new university in a different city, we were introduced to a Home/ House Church for our Bible studies, fellowship and Sunday worship. In there, Iris and I came to know a dear Chinese couple, Brother Liu and Sister Yao. Together with them, Iris and I spent almost two years every week in semester time for Bible studies, until we finished our medical school. When I look back, it was such a precious time we had together! The fellowship helped Iris to know God, and in this very home church, Iris was baptised together with at least another ten new believers, including Theo, the best-man for my wedding ceremony with Iris in a popular Public Church in Guangzhou.

In that home church, there was a very active teacher, Ms JIANG, who was a professor in English Studies, I believe. She had introduced me and Iris to many theology books, such as Pure Christianity. She also organized meetings for us with local Bible teachers and missionary workers from overseas. It was such an active Christian world that I was introduced to by believers just like Ms Jiang in the home church.

In home church, we had chances to get to know each other and to develop closer relationships through organized social activities. We even started cooking in church after the morning service and having lunch together. It was a great time for many students like me who rarely cook, to learn how to cook and share a meal together. We also had picnics and even a weekend-retreat together as a group of nearly 50 people.

We had opportunities to serve each other as well. Besides being helpers in many ways; we were encouraged to learn to play guitar and to lead the worship. Before we graduated, Iris and I had a chance to lead the worship together, and it was great! So, based on my experience in home church, it is not a place to sit and enjoy the service but to serve each other and eventually be prepared and equipped to serve the Lord.

Church in China: Home Church & Public Church, some differences

You may be interested in the teachings we had in Home Church as well, to be honest, I could not remember the details of the sermons now, but I guess we

were well fed as we were all happy with the service. The leaders in the Home Church were a couple, Brother Wen and Sister Lin and both of them came to mainland China for missionary work. The church had a team and some of them were trained to be preachers and occasionally we had visiting preachers as well, most of the time from other home churches and sometimes from other cities or even overseas.

In some home churches, they do collect offerings, others like the one we went, because of many students were in the congregation, the leaders chose not to collect offerings, but I believe they accept offerings from other people in the congregation and from other resources as well to maintain the work of their ministry.

Normally, the home churches are registered with the local Bureau of Religious Affairs under a local Public Church to practice Bible studies and Sunday services. The property, homes of someone, can be owned by the church or it can be a private property. Normally, the leaders who lead the study or service were sent from the public church. On the other hand, there are home churches that are established by missionaries and some may have their own understanding of the Bible and the growing of church. Some churches even have their own ideas towards the religious administration systems by the government which is the registration system of home churches, and some leaders in home churches refuse to do so and this could get the attention of the local police.

Church in China: Sharing the gospel and Christmas Celebration

The other main mission of church, besides ministering the congregation, is sharing the gospel to the public. This is an on-going work through Sunday services and Bible study groups, like alpha-course we have in Northfield, and the study will be continued by a series of courses which will lead to the Essential Lessons for Baptism. And once the believer is baptised, they will join Bible study groups which meet weekly throughout the year to study the word of God together. This is a regular practice in both Public and Home churches that I had been to in different cities.

Churches, in China, love Christmas as well! Whether Home church or Public Church, we often have special services to celebrate the birth of Christ, on both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. In some churches, they even have 2-3 services each night on these two days until mid-night, simply by singing carols and hymns and telling the story of the birth of Jesus. On these two days, the churches are always packed with people, even though some people walk in by following others or the fashion, but it is the busiest time of year for churches to

share the gospel of God's salvation and I do believe many are blessed through these Christmas services as the number of people is growing rapidly in many churches.

Edinburgh: experiencing the love of our living God in a foreign land

I was brought to Scotland in September 2011 and I joined Northfield just before the Christmas that year.

In Northfield, I was welcomed by the congregation, which is every one of you, and many who are no longer with us due to various reasons. I had been to the Men's group, and then an alpha-course, and then carried on with regular Bible studies on Wednesday evenings. It is the Bible study at Northfield that has made me aware of the greatness of our God and the truth and wisdom within His nature of love, power and justice.

You welcomed me and encouraged me to get involved in many things in Northfield: attending the door service, collecting the offerings, being part of the Trailblazers, and reading God's word to the congregation even on very special occasions. Furthermore, with Iris, my wife, I had sung in the church, even once in Chinese; and we joined the Christmas choir last year; we had worked along with the Northfield team for the Bethany shelter too. Officially, I was even registered as an Adherent to Northfield!

Liberton Northfield is the home for me in Edinburgh for now and you are my local family. Thanks to all of you, and especially to many of you who have helped me and encouraged me in many ways. It is such a blessing that I could be part of the body of Christ in Northfield and together with you, we are experiencing God's love and grace by our fellowship in studying His word and worshipping Him!

Thanks be to God,

Lenny/ 李锋 (LI Feng)

* Please be noted that some of the names in the article have been changed for reason of anonymity.

Know Where You're Going.... Have the Right Connection

During the recent Christmas holidays I had the occasion to visit a dear old friend of mine who lives not far from Croy Station. We had had a reasonably long-standing arrangement (at least for a month!) and I said that I would call him once I knew which train I was on, out of Edinburgh. Excitedly I made preparations for the day – Tuesday the 29th – and on the morning I got all my things together, checked my mobile to be sure I had Walter's number in it – I did – so off I set.

I arrived at Edinburgh Waverley Station, bought my ticket for my journey to Croy Station, where Walter was to meet me – I'd given him an anticipated arrival time of 11am – and off I went to find my train. There were five minutes to spare before we were due to pull out – on an express train bound for Glasgow Queen Street.

I love train travel, so I was delighted to be able to find a seat by the window. I pulled out my mobile, selected 'Contacts', and Walter's number, pressed the button and held the phone to my ear. Within seconds the voice at the other end told me that I had dialled an "unrecognised number" and that I should try again.

"That's funny?....," I thought, but I did try again. The same thing happened. I didn't understand. I took the phone away from my ear and looked at the details of the phone number I had dialled. To my dismay, I realised that the number I had was Walter's old landline number! He had moved several months ago and now only had a mobile phone. I hadn't recorded this new number in my phone.

How on earth would I make contact with him, now?

"Ah well," I thought, "...I'll just go anyway. He knows that I plan to be at Croy around 11am...." But when I reached my destination, there was no Walter waiting for me on the platform. And at 12.30pm – an hour and a half later – there was still no Walter. He was waiting on my call to him at home.....but I didn't call, because I didn't have the 'right connection'.

As I waited hopefully for him in the bus shelter at Croy Station, I noticed a taxi cab parked with its "for hire" light on. Should I go up and ask how far it was to the address I had for Walter?

I didn't. I let that 'golden' moment pass by. I thought that, as Walter hadn't come looking for me, possibly he had forgotten our arrangement. I felt exceedingly stupid, unprepared, un-switched on, and very, very sad.

I called my sister, who said I should take the taxi to his house.

KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING..... HAVE THE RIGHT CONNECTION....

“Say he’s not there?” I questioned her, “then I will have wasted the taxi fare.”
“Say he **is**?” she replied.
Stubbornly, I let the moment of opportunity go by.

At 12.42pm I took the train back to Edinburgh. Again, sitting on one of the comfy train seats and gazing out of the window, the sun appeared to have ‘gone in’. The grey clouds had gathered, and were knitting themselves together in a cold, wintry half-light. The bright expectancy that had washed over me earlier that morning seemed to have departed from me completely. The excitement that I had felt that morning as I had set out was now replaced with deep, personal disappointment. I *knew* where Walter lived, but through my own neglect, I was missing the ‘vital connection’ which would have enabled me to meet with him.

I was actually – sadly – surprised at myself, because on the professional front, I had always ensured that I was well-prepared for all events. Yet here I was. Personally, I had allowed my usual careful approach and standards to slide. I had failed in achieving my happy goal for that day though my own carelessness and neglect.

Then the words came to me: “*Know where you are going; Have the right connection.*”

Do **we** know for certain where we’re going? Do we know how to get there?

We know *where* God is, of that there is no doubt, and we know how to find Him. Fortunately, we don’t need a mobile number to make contact with Him, nor a taxi fare to meet with Him right where he is.

Prayer is absolutely free.

Faithfulness is the key.

But too often we **allow** ourselves to lose that vital connection between ourselves and God through our own personal neglect of Him – too busy to navigate our own everyday lives – the hustle and the bustle of it all; too lazy to make a point of regular communion with Him through prayer, to ensure that we **don’t** “get the number wrong” and lose Him along the way.....

That experience taught me a very great lesson. It refreshed me, you could say. We’re **never** too old to recognise the **importance** of keeping our house in order. Knowing where we are going, how to get there.....and ensuring that the ‘vital connection’ is always with us.

Kathleen Munroe

A Poem Inspired by Hymn 959

Unto us a babe was born
The Son of God made man
He left His majestic omnipotence
Came to be our providence
To fulfil His Fathers' plan.
There was no other pure enough
No other blood sufficing to break
Satan's' sway on Earth
To wash away our sin and vice
He took on fleshly life
To give it up again in sacrifice
The epitome of our Fathers' grace and mercy,
Our Fathers' love for us.

What else can I do
But praise and worship you
When I think of Bethlehem's' Babe,
Of Good Friday's bloodstained cross,
The empty tomb, the folded clothes
From womb to tomb and all between.
Then rose, resurrected to His Fathers' side
At Gods' right hand now sitting
Still for us interceding
What else can I do
Not just at Easter or Christmas
But my whole life through
What else can I do but by Your Spirit
Glorify, praise, love and worship You, Father
And Your precious Son, Lord Jesus
Our Saviour and our King.

Shelia Corrigan

Fellowship February Programme

3rd February: Rev. Mike Taylor
10th February: Noel Cochrane, Storyteller
24th February: Rev. Andy Prime

Getting to know the Elders

Shelia Connor



I was ordained in 2003/4 along with Jane Harrison and Alistair Lawson. I have enjoyed numerous duties and currently I'm our church Roll Keeper, Secretary of the Church Fellowship (formerly the Guild), a member of the Visitation Team and assist with the Mothers and Toddlers group on Monday afternoons.

Church Bus is to be Discontinued

After over twenty years continuous service, the church bus, hired from South Edinburgh Amenities Group (SEAG), is being discontinued with the last date for use being Sunday 7th February. We don't want the existing users to stop coming to church and are encouraging the use of shared taxis for transport to church. It is hoped that transport back home after the church service will be provided by car users from the congregation. From Sunday 14th February onwards, if you can help with transport after the service, please contact Ian Messer.

Recurring Diary

Sunday Service starts 11am every Sunday with Children's groups commencing after a short period in the main service. Tea and coffee is served in the Falconer Hall after the service.

Bible Study on Monday mornings take place at Rebecca Akhigbe house from 10.30-12.30pm.

Mums and Tots runs during term time in the Falconer Hall from 2.00 - 3:30pm every Monday

Wednesday sees **Bible Study** start at 7:30pm.

New Life Tots is held every Friday in the Falconer Hall, 9.30 - 11.30am and is organised by Jan.

'Prayers in the Church' is held:

Wednesdays: 10.30 - 11.30am; Saturdays: 10.00 - 11.00am; Sundays: start at 10.30am

Non Church of Scotland Events:

Zumba Fitness: is held on Mondays, 6.30 – 7.30pm

The contents of the Liberton Northfield Church newsletter do not necessarily ex-press the opinions of the editor, minister or congregation however all submitted items are subject to editorial scrutiny.