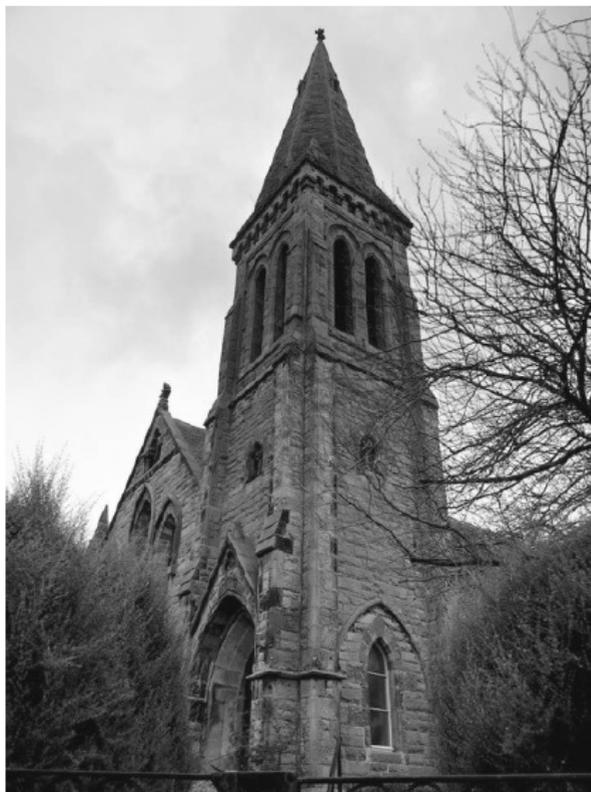


# Liberton Northfield Church

January 2016

Monthly Newsletter



Visit [libertonnorthfield.co.uk](http://libertonnorthfield.co.uk) for the latest news during the month  
Manse phone number: 0131 664 5490  
Church address: 280 Gilmerton Rd, Edinburgh EH16 5TT  
Contact email: [ian@imesser.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:ian@imesser.wanadoo.co.uk)

**SC008891**

# Dear Family of God,

May God bless you with fullness of life in this new year.

A highlight to the end of 2015 for me was serving at the Bethany Night Shelter. For a few years Samantha managed a feeding project that fed about 70 children a day. Teachers in the congregation where I served used money from their salaries to buy ingredients for sandwiches for the children in their classes. With that in mind, I was struck by how privileged we are. How quickly we become complacent in recognising God's abundant blessings to us.

For many of us, January is a time to reflect and evaluate how things are going. As Christians we don't do this selfishly, but rather we are mindful that we belong to God, that Jesus is our Lord and not just our saviour.

As good stewards of what God has entrusted to us, we can exercise faith as we dream, plan and strategise how to make the most of every opportunity to bring the reign of God (heaven) to earth. But we know that we only see God's plans through a glass dimly. And so, even as we plan, we humbly invite God to interrupt our plans and to change our strategies.

We are from a Reformed Christian tradition, and so we continuously re-evaluate our lives to transform even areas that are good to make them better. In our marriages, families, friendships, careers and places where we serve, we strive to be better than we were before.

Just as it is good for us as individuals to evaluate the year gone by and to dream for the year ahead, so Session dreams and seeks God's vision for the congregation and parish. We ask how we can make improvements, even to areas that are already good. The Elders do not initiate change for the sake of change, but rather so that we can be more effective in bringing heaven to earth. We are conscious that change is disruptive, and apologise for any inconvenience caused.

One area we have been working on is the sound system within the church. This is an ongoing work in progress and we are grateful for the hard work of those involved with worship, and your grace when things don't go as well as we hope.

Session and the Finance Committee are also very focused on our income and expenditure. Unless there are some significant increases to our income, we seem headed for a large shortfall for 2016 which will eat into our reserves. The Elders have critically analysed the budget and as far as possible, have stripped out almost all non-essential expenditure. We now ask that as the members of

this congregation, that you prayerfully spend time with God considering your investment in the life and work of the church. You are under no compulsion or obligation, but we hope that you will give joyfully as you are able. Our dream is that we will go beyond just paying the bills, and have surplus for significant mission in our parish.

We thank God for you.

Mike

## Trailblazers

During December, the Trailblazers have been focussing on the Nativity story, including rehearsing for the nativity service.

During January, the Trailblazers will be learning about the early Church, from Acts chapters 18 to 28.

Advance notice of dates for the diary:

1. Trailblazers will resume (after the Christmas / New Year break) on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January.
2. The Explorers group will be having a "film and pizza night" on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan at 6.30pm in the home of Jan and Billy Grubb.
3. The next meeting of Trailblazer leaders and helpers has been scheduled for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm, in the home of Jan and Billy Grubb.

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.

## Bible Study

Please note that our Bible Study restarts on Wednesday 13th January.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

There is a prayer service in our church on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January starting at 7pm. Information about the whole week is available on the table in the Hall of Friendship.

Date	3/1/2016	10/1/2016	17/1/2016	24/1/2016	31/1/2016
Gilmerton Door	Rachael Whyte	Lenny Feng Li	Sandra Lynch	Rachael Whyte	Sandra Lynch
Edinburgh Door	Margo Ferguson	Sheila Corrigan	Irene Hoy	Lenny Feng Li	Rebecca Akhigbe
Ramp Door	Irene Hoy	Rachael Whyte	Kate Jackson	Irene Hoy	Rachael Whyte
Counting 1	Irene Hoy	Rachael Whyte	Kate Jackson	Irene Hoy	Rachael Whyte
Counting 2	Billy Grubb	Kate Jackson	Jean McIntyre	Jean McIntyre	Linda Brown
Counting 3	Marion Messer	Marion Messer	Marion Messer	Marion Messer	Marion Messer
Sparklers	Jan Grubb Parents	Rona Lawson Kate Ann Shirran	Rona Lawson Linda Gordon	Margaret Padfield Sandra Lynch	Rona Lawson Linda Brown
All stars		Helen Palmer Billy Grubb	Helen Palmer Billy Grubb	Margaret Padfield Sandra Lynch	Margaret Padfield tbc
Explorers		-	Jean MacIntyre Lenny Feng Li	Jean MacIntyre Lenny Feng Li	-
SEAG Bus		Ian Messer	John Whitchelo	Ian Messer	John Whitchelo

# Visitation Team

If you notice the person who usually sits near you, in front or behind you and has not been to church for a week or two, please let us know. Hopefully we would be able to contact them and arrange a visit. If you would like a visit from one of the visitation team please, see Irene or Rachael.

Irene Hoy 664 8413; Rachael Whyte 664 5974

## My Early Life in Church (Part-I)

It is my great privilege to be asked to write a few words about my "early life in church" for Northfield. Actually this, right now in Northfield, is my early life in church. As a young man from a small city 250 miles south of Beijing, the capital, I feel blessed for being part of the Northfield family.

### First impression of Christianity

My first impression of Christianity was from my mum, 王萍珍 (WANG Ping-zhen), her name means a beautiful pearl from water. Back then, I was in high school and the family was experiencing a difficult time and a friend of her shared the gospel and mum believed. Mum had such zeal with a firing heart for God and the family, that she used to get up very early in the morning, around 05.30am, giving thanks and praying to God. In those days, I could not understand this but now I give thanks to God for being such a comforter to mum and encouraging her with her faith. Mum used to practise other religions, asking for peace and blessings for the family. Upon knowing Jesus, she dumped all of those idol images in the bin and put up a big cross in the centre of the sitting room.

### Bible study and the personal prayer: how I became a Christian

One year after mum became a Christian, I was admitted to the Medical School in Lanzhou University, northwest China, more than 800 miles from home. As a freshman in university, I enjoyed a lot of socializing rather than focusing on my studies. One activity I joined weekly was the English Corner, and there I came to know one of the organisers, Jenny, a young Australian lady who came to

China on her own by the calling of God, and she was employed as an English teacher by the university. Few weeks later, I was invited to her Bible study. I was there to make friends, but sadly not with God, however, I came to realise there are people, like Jenny, who are very serious about God, the living God.

Time flies, when the exams came, reminding me how sloppy I was with my studies, I couldn't do anything but rush through all the exams. My last night in Lanzhou before I travelled back home for spring festival, I was lying in my bed in an empty dormitory, as all peer students had left, midnight, super quiet. A lot of flashbacks rushed through in my mind about my first semester at university, it was totally a failure! It seemed that all the years of my hard work and endless studies to book myself a place in medical school were meaningless! What was I doing with my life? I was so disappointed with myself and so upset and frustrated that I found my pillow was wet with my tears... I felt so sad but I could not find a way to make myself feel better. All of a sudden, a person came into my mind, not anybody who loved me in the family, but God, there was this God whom Jenny believes. I asked myself, can I pray to Jenny's God, and I did. I earnestly asked Him to give me a second chance, to do a better job for my medical school, and in response I would take Him more seriously than I was. My prayer was to take Him seriously if He answered it, as I didn't know Him. Then I fell asleep soon, peacefully...

When I came back from my winter holidays, as a happy boy who hadn't got any memory of what happened on that lonely night, until I found myself awarded a scholarship based on the results of the exams. I was astonished by God's way of answering my wee cry and His amazing grace. In my heart, I know that my prayer was answered by Him and the scholarship was the evidence. I said to myself, there MIGHT be a God, and I shall be serious about Him and serious about the Bible study.

This started a new journey of my life, leading to my confession when I realized how great our God is and the eternal love He had planned for us long before we know His name. And by knowing Him, it changed my life in all aspects: He gave me vision and ideas that I never thought of. Even though sometimes, I failed to live the daily life He commanded and put my own desires in the first place, when I walked back to Him, He always gave me assurance of forgiveness and acceptance. He is a living God, full of love and compassion, and nothing can separate us from Him.

## Church in China: Public Church opens to everyone

Besides the Bible studies on Sundays, Jenny went to a home church where many foreigners in the city gathered to worship, and the rest of us, we went to a Three-self Church (Public Church). The church was called Shan-zi-shi Christ Church and it was built in 1921. It is located just near the Provincial Municipal Offices, the headquarters of the provincial government, a very central area. It has two floors and could have more than 800 people for one service. Back then, the chief minister was a female and she was in her late 40s. There were two services on Sunday, one in the morning and one in the evening, just like Northfield, but no tea or coffee afterwards, probably because we were so many attending.

Actually, it was in this church that I found the importance of baptism, by attending one of its Communion services. In that service, I was deeply moved by hearing that it is “a new covenant” we make with God through the sharing of the bread and wine, that I burst into tears, but then I heard that unless one was baptised, he/she could not take the bread or wine and share the communion. During the service, I was hurt deeply and I was so troubled that I went back to study the teachings of baptism from the Bible with Jenny and others for weeks. Later, Jenny and I together with another Brother Tony and Sister Helen were baptized the same night in the bath at Jenny’s flat, by a retired English minister named Norman, who was visiting Lanzhou at that time. I can still see the big smile on my face on the photo taken that night! When we sat down for a conversation, I said to Norman: could you tell me more about the Holy Spirit...

### **Part 2 in February magazine.**

Thanks be to God,

Lenny/ 李 锋 (LI Feng)

# 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.*