

Liberton Northfield Church

April 2018

Monthly Newsletter



Visit libertonnorthfield.co.uk for the latest news during the month
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Dear Friends,

This year Easter Day falls on April Fools' Day. The last time Easter fell on April Fools' Day was in 1956. Due to the quirks involved in dating Easter against the Gregorian calendar, the two coincide only intermittently. After 2018, the next one is 2029, and then again in 2040—but after that, not again in this century. April Fools' Day is not significant in Christianity, but it is the perfect excuse to talk about God's great April Fool, which is the Easter story.

After all there were plenty of witnesses to Jesus's death. His burial had taken place with government approval. An armed guard and a seal on the stone ensured that the story of Jesus was over, finished, full stop.

Except it wasn't! The great saying on April Fools' Day is "Fooled you!" but such tricks can only be done in the morning. This greatest of April Fools' jokes happened before the sun had properly risen. With heavy heart, weary feet, and eyes cried-out, a group of women, who had loved Jesus, went to pay their last office of love. They went to ensure that what mere men (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) had done hurriedly was done properly. Yet this could only be done if they could sweet talk the guard into breaking the seal, moving the heavy stone and giving them temporary access. It was unlikely but who knew, and surely they had to do something.

We do not know what arguments they had prepared, what charm they were willing to turn on to serve their ends. For none of it was necessary. The guard had gone, the seal was broken, the stone was rolled aside. In they went and found... nothing! The garments lay undisturbed as if the body had simply passed through them, the head-cloth folded neatly by itself. It was too much- a bad April Fools' joke played on them by the soldiers or grave robbers or worse.

While the others hurried off to tell the disciples, one woman, Mary, remained. Seeing a figure in the corner of her eye, a gardener, she presumed, she enquired if he knew where the body had gone. "Fooled you" came the familiar voice (though, in fact, he only said "Mary") It was the perfect joke- not at Mary but at sin, and death and human wickedness. Christ had risen! Life had conquered death; love had conquered hate; truth had conquered lies; hope had conquered despair and laughter and joy could fill the earth.

Happy Easter to you all. He is risen, He is risen indeed. .

Warmest Easter Greetings,
Rev Colin Sinclair, Interim Moderator

Interim Moderator

While our minister is on three months sick leave, the Presbytery have appointed the Rev Colin Sinclair, Minister at Palmerston Place to act as Interim Moderator. As well as chairing our SAM, he will act as Moderator for our Kirk Session meetings and help with pastoral care. If any member is in hospital, please let him know at csinclair@churchofscotland.org.uk. Please remember our minister, Mike Taylor, and his family at this time in your prayers.

Margaret MacLeod, Session Clerk

Formal Communion and Retiral Offering

There is a formal communion on Easter Sunday, 1st April and the retiral offering will be donated to the charity Fresh Start.

What Easter means to me ... by Kate Jackson

In February 2013 I had the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with a small group of fellow Christians from Edinburgh and East Lothian. I love travelling and I was really excited about setting foot on the land that Jesus himself had walked. It was a well organised itinerary taking in all the main sites of significant events. These include; the Mount of Olives, the Church of the Ascension, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Temple Mount, the Via Dolorosa, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Tomb of Christ. As you can imagine these were all popular tourist attractions and were all usually very crowded with people from all over the world. Many of the sites are encased in a grand building, which in most cases took the form of a church. I really enjoyed the experience but at times felt I was in a 'religious theme park'. However, there was one place I really felt the presence of God and that was the Garden Tomb. This is a special place where you felt humbled and uplifted at the same time as I stood in the tomb, which is considered by some to be the site of the burial and resurrection of the Jesus Christ.



The garden, in which the tomb is situated, is very peaceful, with secluded areas for visitors to just sit and reflect on the events that took

place there two thousand years ago. People lined up quietly to take their turn to enter the tomb which has been carved out of the rock. To the right as you enter is there is a sectioned off area where Jesus was laid. I can still remember how I felt as I entered the tomb, excited, overjoyed to be standing where Jesus once stood after he had risen from the dead. As you turned to go out there is a sign reminding all who passed through 'He is not here for He is Risen'.



Standing there in that tomb really brought home to me the price that was paid for my sins. The fact that God loves me so much he sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to suffered and die on the Cross. But

more importantly that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and we have His glorious promises of eternal life for all who believe in Him.

The words of the chorus of the hymn Because He Lives sums up what Easter means to me;

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

Jesus is Alive!

Newsletter cut-off dates for articles

During Mike's absence we are using a local print company and as a consequence of this an earlier cut-off date for articles is required as follows:

May newsletter cut-off date: Monday 30th April

June newsletter cut-off date: Monday 28th May

Life and Work now in Hall of Friendship

Back issues are now kept on the table in the Hall of Friendship for members to read and return when finished.

The April issue has many interesting articles, two of which are:

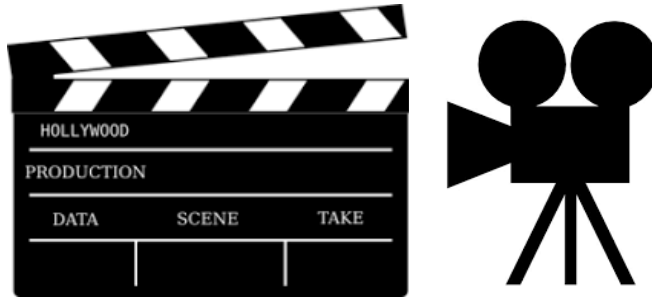
Finally, Easter. By the Rt Rev Dr Derek Browning (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland from 2017 -18) in which he offers an Easter reflection.

The greatest story ever told. Ron Ferguson encourages churches to find a new way of telling the Easter story.

Our Flower Ministry

Every week flowers brighten up our church because we have a flower ministry. Some people new to our church and not so new may not know how it operates. Briefly here is how it works, there's a Flower List in the Hall of Friendship (that's the name for the area between the sanctuary and the church hall), simply write your name beside the date on which you want to donate the church flowers. Most people donate church flowers to commemorate dates special to them, such as a birthday, anniversary or the passing of a loved one. Donations of any amount should be given to Evelyn Eadie. Evelyn purchases and expertly arranges the flowers in the church. After the service, the flowers are arranged into bundles. These flowers are then distributed to people, mainly within our parish but this is not a prerequisite, who are ill, house-bound or just in need of encouragement. There's also a 'flower box' for donations, located in the middle of the rear pew. Thanks for continuing to support this very important ministry.

Film Club



These nights are held on the second Tuesday of the month in the Falconer Hall. We begin at 7.00pm with tea/coffee to get settled for the film which commences at 7.15pm; there is no charge for the evening event and you can bring a friend, or as many friends as you like.

If you have any suggestions for a film, talk to Sandy or Marie Sneddon.

The April film is:

Tuesday 10th April, The Shack (12).

The Shack is a 2017 American Christian drama film directed by Stuart Hazeldine and written by John Fusco, Andrew Lanham and Destin Cretton, based on the 2007 novel of the same name by William P. Young.

The Plot:

After suffering a family tragedy, Mack Phillips spirals into a deep depression that causes him to question his innermost beliefs. Facing a crisis of faith, he receives a mysterious letter urging him to an abandoned shack in the Oregon wilderness. Despite his doubts, Mack journeys to the shack and encounters an enigmatic trio of strangers led by a woman named Papa. Through this meeting, Mack finds important truths that will transform his understanding of his tragedy and change his life forever.

COMING SOON

Tuesday 8 May, Life of Pi.

A young man who survives a disaster at sea is hurtled into an epic journey of adventure and discovery. While cast away, he forms an unexpected connection with another survivor: a fearsome Bengal tiger. Directed by Ang Lee who won the Oscar, one of four this film won in 2013. Based Yann Martel's book of the same name which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2002.

Prayer Ministry

Prayer ministry is held directly after the Sunday morning service in the south (Mount Vernon Road) transept. Contact Eddie Munro for information on this ministry.

Fellowship Syllabus 2018	
4 th April 2018	Social Afternoon
18 th April 2018	AGM – Bring and Buy
9 th May 2018	Maytime Tea at 7pm
The Fellowship Committee	
Convenor	Shelia Corrigan
Syllabus Secretaries	Shelia Connor and Anne Aitken
Treasurer	Norma Packham
	Kate Anne Shirran
	Liz Stewart
Fabric	Billy Gordon
Publicity	Billy Grubb

Church Clean-Up Day

A date for your diary - **Church Clean Up Day is Saturday 21st April, 9 a.m. - 12 noon.** Listen out for announcements at the church service on the preceding Sundays.



Famous Hymns "Break Thou the bread of life"

Mary Lathbury (1841 - 1913)

Editor's Note: This article, by Eddie Munro, first appeared in the January 2004 newsletter and is very appropriate for Communion on Easter Sunday.

Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O living Word!

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
As Thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

There is no dramatic story attached to this hymn, its value rests in the meaning of its words. Mary Lathbury was a successful artist and magazine illustrator in New York who also wrote books of poetry embellished with her own drawings. She became involved with the Chautauqua Movement, a summer school run by a Methodist clergyman, Dr John Vincent, for the development of Sunday School teachers. Sessions involved music and Vincent often asked Mary to write suitable hymns. She's sit by the peaceful Lake Chautauqua and seek inspiration. And hat's where she wrote these lines.

I don't remember ever seeing or singing this hymn before I came to Liberton Northfield. When I did, it was a week before Communion. And the words spoke powerfully into the thoughts I was having about the sacrament and what it meant to me. Six years ago, in real need of spiritual nourishment, I had taken a friend's advice and gone to Holyrood Abbey Church, specifically to hear the preaching of Dr Frank Gibson. I'd been told "If he can't nourish you, nobody can". For three months I went every Sunday, morning and evening, and the treatment worked wonders. One thing he did was completely new to me. The

Sunday before Communion he held a service of preparation. The thrust of this was that no one has a 'right' to be at the Lord's Table. We are all guests of His grace, and we must come as 'clean' as possible.

Communion is our most sacred act of worship. The words we hear at the beginning of the sacrament are the earliest record of anything Jesus said, written by Paul before even the earliest of the gospels: 'Jesus, on the night of His betrayal, took bread. Having given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, broken for you. Do this to remember Me" ...' And so, in the sacrament, we have remembrance. What Frank Gibson said next showed me that me that is also something deeper, more profound, something I'd never known or realised. He said the taking of bread was 'the way into the very presence of Christ.' William Barclay says the same, the taking of bread upon our lips with faith and love brings us into living contact with Jesus. And Jesus promises, 'For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.' Where do we come together more devoutly than at Communion?

And that means we must approach the Lord's Table with the utmost reverence and sincerity. Never casually, never without thought, never without preparation. Frank emphasised what we should do in the days leading up to Communion. 'We should examine ourselves,' he said. 'We should pray for removal of iniquity. We should be penitent, repentant about things we've done and know to be wrong. We should seek His help in ridding ourselves of grudges, bitterness against others. We should ask His forgiveness. We should give thanks that "You are a God from whom we don't have to drag blessings." He added, "What a precious assurance we have that, no matter the past, if we are penitent, we will grow *upright as the lily.*"

At Communion, as we take the elements, sacred symbols of what Christ endured for us, we should remember that He took our sins upon Himself, that He paid the price for each one of us. And we should remember that all He did issued from the infinite, totally undeserved love of God.

As we take the bread, if we are sincerely seeking to love and honour Him, we are entering His presence. He is with us. Surely, we should thank Him for what He did for us. Surely, we should ask His forgiveness for the pain we personally have caused Him. As we take the wine, its very colour depicting His blood, surely, we should thank Him for the relationship we can have with God, the 'new covenant' He bought for us with the blood, the life He shed for us. And surely, we should, in turn, give Him a fresh commitment. Pledging ourselves anew to Him, asking Him to help us to do better, for His sake.

What struck me most about this hymn was that it would form a good prayer during that time of preparation. It's a prayer from the heart, a declaration of longing for Christ, of seeking Him, His truth; of asking His Holy Spirit to enable us to see that truth, and in seeing it, seeing Him, our Risen and Eternal Lord.

How are we to take the first line? Jesus said He was the Bread of Life. The writer asks Him to break the bread of life. There is a hunger deep within us for something more than the physical or material, for something spiritual, something ultimately satisfying. When Jesus says, 'I am the Bread of Life,' He is saying, 'I can satisfy that hunger. I am the answer. In Me you can find the sustenance you need. I can give you that fuller, greater life, real life that is eternal.' That is His offer, an offer we can accept as we come to Him, the living, present Christ, at His Table.

Of course, it doesn't have to be this hymn you use as an aid to prayer, or any other for that matter. 'Break Thou the bread of life' moves me, says better than I can the things I want to say. But equally, the words we pray can be our own. Simple, sincere, honest, from the heart. And surely, it is better to pray in preparation before coming to the mystery and wonder of His presence amongst us, as we seek and accept the bread of life in His house and at His table, as He Himself breaks it to us. Outwardly, visually, at Communion, the bread is a symbol, an 'earthly sign with a heavenly meaning.' In reality it is more, much more. Taken with faith in Him, with love for Him, it affords us the

wonderful privilege of coming preciously close to Him, and in that closeness to receive the sustenance and life He yearns to give.

Eddie Munro

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

From our Easter 1999 Newsletter

Editor's note: The following is a short article by Bette Genever. Mature members will remember with fondness Bette as she was a stalwart member of the choir and Woman's Guild.

When I was President of the Woman's Guild, all of 32 years ago, I used to start off each meeting with a "Thought for Today". Two poems I came across on looking through my minutes for 19th February 1967our 'Bulb Competition,' were as follows:

Translation of an old Persian saying:

"If thou hast two pennies, spend one for bread, with the other buy hyacinths for thy soul."

By Wm Makepeace Thackeray:

"When I walk with you
I feel as if I had a flower
in my buttonhole."

Christianity Explored and Discipleship Explored

Starting late April in our church, we are offering courses on both Christianity Explored and Discipleship Explored.

What is Christianity Explored?

It's a course that gives people time and space to discover the best news they've ever heard. Over seven interactive sessions, as they explore Mark's Gospel, people find out who Jesus is, why He came, and what it means to follow Him.

Session 1: Good News: What are we doing here?	Session 2: Identity: Who is Jesus?
Session 3: Sin: Why did Jesus come?	Session 4: The Cross: Why did Jesus die?
Session 5: Resurrection: Why did Jesus rise?	Session 6: Grace: How can God accept us?
Session 7: Come and Die: What does it mean to follow Jesus?	

What is Discipleship Explored?

Discipleship Explored looks at Paul's letter to the Philippians, helping you to discover what it really means to live the Christian life.

Discipleship Explored is an informal 8-week course for anyone who wants to make the most of their Christian lives. It is perfect for those who have been through Christianity Explored (or an Alpha course) and have recently decided to follow Jesus.

If you are interested in attending either of the above courses, please see me or any Elder anytime, or contact me on 07854 664414 or email ianmessenger36@gmail.com

A Devine Gift

Editor's Note: 'A Devine Gift' was the title of an article in the March edition of Life and Work by the Very Reverend Dr James Simpson, a reflection on the benefits of humour. I thought it was appropriate as the Rev Stan Brook mentioned Rev Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness in the sermon, 25th March and I inwardly laughed as I recalled them being affectionately known as 'The Chuckle Brothers' in a recent television documentary. Here's an extract from the article:



Many years ago, I was asked to give the annual lecture in honour of Professor William Barclay. Recalling his lively sense of humour, I decided to entitle the lecture, "The Laugh Shall be First". As I prepared, I could almost feel John Calvin breathing down my neck saying: "You ought to use this special occasion to speak about more weighty matters than laughter and humour." But I have no regrets. Life for me is a blend of seriousness and humour, sense and nonsense, sacred moments and comic interludes.

During the seventh grinding week of the Peace negotiations that finally led up to the signing of the fragile Good Friday agreement, Senator George Mitchell, the American mediator, who was commuting weekly between Ireland and America, one Monday surprised those present, by saying, "This morning I want us to talk to each other about things other than politics. Over a cup of coffee, let us see if we can just have a good

time together.” The conversation turned to fishing, family, sports and the weather. When someone mentioned opera, Senator Mitchell interjected. “I love listening to opera. When I return to America and put on *La Boheme*, I know Rodolfo is going to sing the same words every time. That prepares me for my return to Belfast, because the one thing I know is that I’m going to sit here and listen to you guys saying the same thing over and over again.” The representatives on both sides actually laughed. That light-hearted remark helped break the deadlock between long time antagonists.

To help commissioners distinguish between ministers and elders present at the General Assembly, an elder once proposed that the ministers present should wear clerical collars. The motion resulted in a very heated debate. A humorous remark by another commissioner finally eased the tension “Can I suggest that a good way to distinguish the elders from ministers, is to note who pays for the coffees at the coffee breaks. It is almost always the elders!”

In church life as well as in political life, a light-hearted remark often achieves far more than criticism. We rightly speak of a saving sense of humour.

Recurring Diary

Sunday:

Morning Service starts 11am 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. **Evening Service** is held at 6.30pm in the Falconer Hall.

Monday:

Mums and Tots runs during term time in the Falconer Hall from 2.00 - 3:30pm. Note the Mums and Tots don't meet during school holidays.

Tuesday:

Toastie Tuesday takes place from 12.15 till 13.30, during school terms, for Liberton High School pupils.

Film Club is on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Falconer Hall.

Wednesday:

The 38th Rainbows & 38th Brownies meet in the Falconer Hall from 5.15pm till 8pm.

Bible Study starts at 7:30pm and runs until 9pm. All welcome.

Thursday:

Ladies' Bible Study meets at Norma Packham's home from 10.00 until 12.30.

Friday:

New Life Tots is during term time in the Falconer Hall, 9.30 - 11.30am and is organised by Jan Grubb. Note the New Life Tots don't meet during the school holidays.

'Prayers in the Church' are held:

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.