

# CHURCH NEWS

First Hollywood Presbyterian Church

Easter 2020



# Records and Notices



## Deaths:

14<sup>th</sup> January  
Molly Martin

18<sup>th</sup> January  
David Adams

5<sup>th</sup> March  
Margaret Stewart

## EASTER MEANS VICTORY

We trust that you will all know the peace of God during these stressful and uncertain days and that, as you read this Easter edition, you will be especially conscious of our deeper spiritual connection with one another while we may not be able to meet together physically. Our prayer is that in God's providence we will be able to gather together for worship again soon and that, until such times, we will be strengthened and kept safe by God's grace and power.

Many of the contributions in this issue of the magazine contain stories and affirmations of personal faith and vision and we hope that, as such, they will help to keep our hearts and

minds positive and also keep the wider church family in our thoughts and prayers during the months ahead as Spring takes hold and the brighter days arrive.

*'Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?.....No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow - not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Romans 8 v 35, 37 - 39

**UPDATES ON HOW THE CORONA VIRUS WILL AFFECT CHURCH SERVICES ETC ARE AVAILABLE ON THE CHURCH WEBSITE**  
See Page 5 for more details

*Any contributions to the Church News are welcome at any time.*

*Please forward to  
office@firsthollywood.co.uk or  
Tel 90425035*

## BECAUSE HE LIVES I CAN FACE TOMORROW

# Walking in late to a meeting

Punctuality doesn't come naturally to me. It is a habit that I have had to develop over the years. Someone suggested that the last letter in my name stood for 'late'. On occasions a late arrival cannot be helped. Years ago I was invited to preach in a church, just south of the border. Antonia and I had made the journey before. We had a good idea of our ETA - or so we thought! As we headed south, in our dinky Rover Metro, we were surprised that the traffic began to build around Newry. In fact, we ended up stuck in an immovable traffic jam in Dundalk. Don't forget, this was a Sunday morning! What was going on? It so happened that the All Ireland Gaelic Football final was taking place in Croke Park that Sunday, and Tyrone was hoping to raise the Sam



Maguire.

Alas, we arrived at the Presbyterian Church half an hour late. The dear Clerk had made a valiant attempt to fill the time with announcements, and a reading from 1 Corinthians 13, whilst the congregation sang a selection of hymns. Deeply embarrassed I climbed the steps of the



pulpit and announced the hymn, just before my sermon. Utterly flustered, I unwittingly turned the microphone on for the singing, and off for my sermon. All the poor congregation received that day was a solo from a tardy student for the ministry.

On reflection, walking in late to a meeting ought to be the normative experience for the Christian. What do I mean?

The late Eugene Peterson, reflecting on ministry, observed: *'God has already taken the initiative. Like one who walks in late to a meeting, I am entering a complex situation in which God has already said decisive words and acted in decisive ways. My work is not necessarily to announce that but to discover what he is doing and live appropriately with it'*. (The Contemplative Pastor, 1993, p.61)

Perhaps you were born and raised in First Holywood; maybe you joined as an adult. At whatever stage we came to the congregation, we have walked in late, as it were, to a meeting. God has already been active in the congregation long before our appearance. This is both humbling and liberating. God invites us, by his Word and Spirit, to become involved in the work that He is doing.

In fact, even the desire to discern his activity, and a willingness to follow, are signs that God is at work in our lives by his Spirit, after all: *'it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure'* (Phil. 2:13, ESV). The reason why he is at work, and chooses to work through you, is so that you might *'shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life'* (Phil. 2:15-16, NIV). This word of life is none other than Jesus Christ.



What is one of the qualifications, then, that we are looking for in a new minister? An awareness of his lateness; an acceptance that he will be walking in late to a meeting, where God has said decisive words and acted in decisive ways; and a willingness to be a partner with God and his people in the Gospel.

## Vacancy Update

By this stage you will be aware that the Kirk Session, at the February meeting, received several nominations, and a couple of applications, for the post of minister. I contacted each of these people personally to ascertain their interest. At the March meeting of Kirk Session it was agreed that we invite five individuals for interview on 21<sup>st</sup> March. It is hoped that arising from those interviews we will have a couple of candidates willing to preach on a list to the congregation, post-Easter. The congregation will then be invited to vote at a subsequent meeting.

Thank you all for your interest in, and prayers for, this process. I am especially grateful to Craig Russell, our Clerk, and the members of Kirk Session and Committee, who have been extra-busy at this time. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Rev. Alan Johnston for his preaching and pastoral ministry during this past year, and for the additional responsibilities he has carried during the Vacancy. We pray that Alan and Tracey, and the congregation of Killinchy, would experience abundant growth in their faith, and an increase in their love (2 Thess. 1:3), to the glory of God.

## Church Closures

Following government and Presbyterian church advice, ALL church services, organisations and activities are now cancelled until further notice. However, the Church continues, and we encourage you to seek the LORD in these days, to encourage others, to look out for each other and your neighbours, to pray, read God's word, share encouragements with other, and practically help so far as you are able.

**Information will be available on the church website:  
[www.firsthollywood.co.uk](http://www.firsthollywood.co.uk), on the FaceBook page  
and through the church office, which will remain open.**

As you are unable to attend church, you may still want to continue with your Free Will Offering contributions, you can set up a Standing Order for a regular or one off amount with your bank. The details that you need are:

Danske Bank, Donegall Square West, Belfast

Sort code: 95-03-32      Account No: 01005391

First Holywood Presbyterian Church General Account (FWO)

Payment Ref: Your name and FWO Number

Please use your FWO number (printed on your envelopes or available from the church office) on the payment reference so we know whose contribution it is and can easily allocate it to your envelope number.

If you have any concerns or queries or require more information please contact the office.



### **Summer Holiday Bible Club**

Will take place Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July.

### **Summer Arrangements**

Shared services will take place in High Street on 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> July and in First Holywood on 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> July. Normal services will resume in August.

# AT THE CROSSROADS



Facing the thought of having to make this, the last article I write for First Holywood's church magazine, has made me think how many read each article. But if you find yourself reading this, I want to thank you for these few moments of your attention.

My time in First Holywood started on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2019, not that long ago. When I leave the congregation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March it will have been almost fifteen months. On reflection, it seems much longer because we have been so happy with you.

Many of you I have had the privilege and enjoyment of getting to know - others, I am sad to say, I never got the opportunity to know as well as I would have liked, if I had had more time. As a congregation, you have no idea how much of a blessing you have been to both Tracey and myself.

On returning from Italy in June 2018, we knew we had a period of deputation to do before we could effectively start somewhere new. Travelling around the Province, speaking about the much needed work in Italy, the role of the Global Mission committee in Assembly buildings and encouraging congregations to seriously consider how they give to the United Appeal became our weekly challenge. When we had completed our required six month deputation, it was great to know that there was a ministry waiting for us in Holywood.

Strange as it was to return to a town where my working life started many years earlier, it was also challenge. I kept bumping into people who knew me but who had grown up into mums or dads whom I didn't recognise until they told me who they were.

I had worked as part of a team in Italy and I loved the idea of team ministry, so when the opportunity came for me to be part of a team in Bangor Road, I couldn't have been happier. I have to confess, however, that one of the



disappointments I had was the day that Noble told me that he would be retiring at the end of August 2019. I really enjoyed working with him and had hoped that our time together would have been longer. Also, when I arrived I was working with Joe as Clerk of Session and he too retired and Craig stepped into the role with impressive ease. The last seven

months of the vacancy have been so relatively smooth, simply because of the amount of unseen work that Craig has been able to do behind the scenes. I can honestly say that of all the years I have been in ministry in Northern Ireland, the fifteen months in First Holywood have been far and away my happiest. You have been a joy to work with and to serve. You have a certain something that I feel exists in only a handful of churches and you made it so easy for Tracey and myself to genuinely love you. I would encourage you to not think about this too much, in case you overthink it, but simply keep being the people you are, showing love and grace to everyone and you won't go far wrong.

As I have been called to Killinchy to serve as minister to that congregation, I find myself standing at an odd cross-roads. In one direction there is the call away from Holywood, while on the other hand, there is the self/human part of me that wants to continue with you for longer. I am excited about what lies ahead in Killinchy and I am curious to see what the Lord has in store for you in your new minister. While I will be out of sight, I will continue to keep you all in my thoughts and prayers for a long, long time to come.



Thank you for accepting us and making it so easy for us to minister to you and you will all be made very welcome when you turn up at the front door of the manse in Killinchy.

God bless you, one and all.

Your friends, Alan and Tracey.

## *Grateful Thanks*

*We extend our heartfelt thanks to God, and to Alan and Tracey, for His work through them in our congregation. We appreciate Alan's faithful and dedicated ministry and preaching, his gracious approach, wise counsel, pastoral care, prayerfulness and leadership, along with Tracey's pastoral heart, friendship, and creativity. They will bring much blessing to Killinchy. We will miss them, and they will remain in our hearts and our prayers.*

## *Update on the Manse*

As the vacancy develops, so the work on the manse refurbishment approaches completion in advance of a new minister being called to First Holywood. The works have been progressing well and are due to be completed in Spring 2020. The refurbishment is progressing on budget and on time.

Many areas of the house have been updated. A new kitchen has been installed, new bathrooms completed and internal decoration in progress with new flooring, new blinds and painting. There have been some repairs and servicing including several windows repaired and the heating system serviced. In addition, the garden has needed upkeep, particularly in relation to large trees in the grounds of the manse.



It has been important to the sub-committee to give significant attention during the vacancy to updating the manse and seeking to provide a strong welcome to the new minister. This work has also been important to ensure the manse is kept to standards outlined in the Linkage Commission Guidelines. We are particularly thankful to Stephen Woodrow for his expertise and dedication regarding the Manse work. Appreciation is to be expressed to all those who have financially supported the manse refurbishment through contributions to the Building Fund, and any future contributions will be gratefully appreciated.

## YOUR VIEWS FROM THE FRONTLINE

We are grateful to Alan Johnston for leading the Small Groups/Fruitfulness on the Frontline initiative and to his planning team and group leaders for its implementation. The congregational response was good and in general the project was a positive experience. Here are some responses from participants.



### *Most meaningful Aspects*

The video, it opened up the setting for the discussion and people's interpretation within the group of the study, it stayed with you and meant a lot to group members.

### *How useful was the material?*

- It helped us give great thought to our witness and better self awareness.
- It made you stop to think and change your attitude to others around you.

### *How did it affect how we see and respond on our Frontline?*

- Keep praying for others
- Change of attitude to those different from ourselves
- Listen to other peoples views
- Challenges you to speak out about your faith while understanding the other person's point of view
- Try to live by example - family and friends

### *Was there an increase of Fruitfulness on the Frontline?*

- More aware of what you could and should change.
- Also awareness of challenges of all generations as we all have a different Frontline.
- Act in a helpful manner and support others in need of support

### *Are there aspects you could approach differently?*

- To be guided by the Holy Spirit, if it's of ourselves we are misguided.
- Try to think before speaking and be aware of others feelings

*THE LADIES BIBLE STUDY GROUP*



## Meeting with a shared Christian purpose was very enriching ...

Being together helped me to concentrate on the videos and stimulated me to read the book. Joint reflection helped to emphasise the key points and deepened understanding. The course brought the importance of witness into focus and encouraged me to keep trying even though I make mistakes. Our group was very varied and I think we all benefitted hugely from the experience, knowledge and variety of outlooks within it. It was great to get to know each other better also. Meeting with a shared Christian purpose was very enriching and stimulating at a time of year that can be so challenging. On completing the course we all seemed eager to study scripture in more detail and saw 'Fruitfulness' as a stepping stone.

I felt the course encouraged me to keep the glory of creation at the forefront of my mind and to aim to contribute positively in all situations. I enjoyed the fact that our whole church was focusing on the same material and this made it easier to talk to family and friends about our shared development. I enjoyed exploring the Bible in more detail when group discussions reminded me of something I wanted to revisit or directed me to something new and I also enjoyed learning from others' much deeper knowledge of the scriptures than mine. Our shared prayer time helped us to aim to be more fruitful, to focus on the needs of others and to thank and praise God for all that He has done for us in His infinite mercy.

The course led me to an increased desire for fruitfulness in my own life and, needless to say, there is much room for improvement... I doubt if I will ever know if I achieve this, even in a tiny way, but I pray that God will give me the strength to try. I am forever grateful to those Christians who were and are powerful witnesses for me and this course continually reminded me of them. I am very grateful to our church for organising this communal work and especially to my groups' hosts, Cheryl and Jeremy Harbinson, who facilitated with great kindness and skill.

I think it would be useful to send a questionnaire to the congregation asking what worked best and what they would like to do in future. Personally I would be keen to attend Bible studies with other members of our church family and to have guest expert speakers at times if possible.

*Kathy Cunningham*



## Fellowship and mutual support was most encouraging ...

Do I have a frontline? Am I supposed to be fruitful? Why am I going to a home group?

These questions were on our minds as we began the Fruitfulness on the Frontline series. By the end, we knew that we each have a frontline, that we can all be fruitful for God and that we are not alone.

We gathered on Friday nights with an increasing sense of expectancy and enthusiasm. The workbook was well structured and the videos provided a good prompt for discussion. The material was immediately relevant to our daily lives and to our witness for God. The fellowship and mutual support we enjoyed was most encouraging. The theme meant we were thinking about living for God on our frontlines every day and sharing how things were going at the next meeting.

The overwhelming view of our home group was that the programme was very beneficial, not only the content of the sessions but the fellowship and sense of mutual support and encouragement. We were blessed to pray together and shared a number of prayer requests between meetings on our WhatsApp group.

The coordinated approach with sermons, home groups and Gleem worked extremely well. People were energised by sharing in a common endeavour which also built relationships and provided prompts for conversation. The Gleem leaders also felt more joined in to the Sunday service as they were covering the same topic that people were hearing about in the sermon.

The weekly cycle of meetings worked for a short-term initiative but would not be sustainable on an ongoing basis. However, it would be useful to repeat a church wide initiative perhaps once a year. Our group is continuing to meet on a fortnightly basis, albeit it is difficult to find a night of the week that suits everyone. Continuing to have home groups meeting on different days of the week and at different times will enable more people to get involved in a way that suits them best.

Would we want to do something like this again? The answer is a resounding YES!

*The Reaney Group*



## Challenged our attitudes ...

We felt that the course challenged our attitudes to witnessing and what constitutes our Frontline and found the Biblical focus helpful. Already existing relationships were deepened and we were made more aware of our responsibilities to others. It also helped us to reflect on our use of time and gifts and our attitudes to family, friends and others. Focussing on the same themes on Sundays was beneficial and gave a sense of common purpose with the wider congregation. We were grateful for the opportunity to study the theme and, on the whole, found it helpful.

*The Blue Study Group*

## Friendships were made that didn't exist before ...

The course video worked well because it was a UK based video and the group responded well to it, although perhaps not as well as some of the in-house PCI ones, eg. Essentials. It was a joy hearing people speak who perhaps didn't contribute much at times but found the courage to add their thoughts to the mix.

The encouragement to Christian witness seemed to be understood quickly, although it perhaps took a while to get past the idea of 'doing good things to simply be nice'.

Our group were surprisingly honest in self-scrutiny and shared some deep challenges. Some felt that they needed to be seen more as people who are actively involved in their church, i.e. as an elder, rather than just someone who was known to go to church. Friendships were made that didn't exist before. Many commented on how they now realised that the people around them matter, not just as friends, but more so as people who need to know that Jesus loves them. One person commented that the Small group was '*gently nudging them towards faith in Christ*'. The sense that we need to continue to show love and grace was a challenge which we accepted. The preaching of the study passage on Sundays helped give a greater sense of unity and common purpose and, yes, the group would support a pan-congregation event like this every year or every eighteen months.

*Johnston Group*



## Even small interactions can be important ...

Ours was a new group and I really enjoyed getting to know the people in a much deeper way than is possible by casual acquaintance at church. As the weeks went by, each person shared really profound and helpful stories and insights, and that was great.

The biggest thing I got from the material was that it made me realise that I am on a 'frontline' in nearly every interaction I have, whether it be with family and friends, clients, fellow football supporters or just people I happen to bump into. It has given me much more boldness in and simply being who I am in Christ and seeing that even small interactions can be important in advancing God's Kingdom on earth.



I enjoyed the lively videos and the stories in the book although as the weeks went by I found the material getting repetitive. We owe a big debt of gratitude to Reverend Alan Johnson for leading us into this very useful initiative.

*Jeremy Harbinson*



# EVERY GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT

*'For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable.'* Romans 11:29

During this current period of vacancy our eyes are focussed more than usual on the idea of God's calling, and it is easy to get into our heads that a 'calling' is something that applies only to exceptional or uniquely spiritual or holy people. The Bible reminds us that God's call is to all of us, the greatest and the least. In the following section, we look at how we can respond to God's call on our lives in the use of our gifts. Kathy Cunningham looks at the themes of calling and gifting in the light of Ephesians 1. Liz Reaney, Jenny Russell and Tracey Johnston share how their gifts of music and art have been a means of honouring God and bringing personal fulfilment. Bob McCartney writes on how God's ultimate gift at Easter-time inspires our call to be a giving people.

## Calling and Gifts

How privileged we are to feel that call which Paul refers to in the first chapter of Ephesians - v 5 *'He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will'*. How comforting that is and yet how hugely challenging.

I feel hopelessly inadequate when I focus on how I should act to fulfil God's purpose for me, and then I remember that I am not expected to rely upon myself. Paul reminds us in verse 19 of God's *'incomparably great power for us who believe.'*

Through what can be viewed as 'gifts', God blesses us with differing abilities to reach out, touch and help others and to renew our own strength, v 12 *'In order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.'*



I often think of Eric Liddell in 'Chariots of Fire' proclaiming 'when I run, I feel God's pleasure'. This echoes with me as I love sport and it plays a huge role in my life. It is reassuring to know that we can worship God through activities

that enervate and liberate us. Through our individual passions, God gives us the opportunity to witness to like-minded people and I feel they are more receptive when engaged in something they enjoy and gain a sense of satisfaction from. Often, words do not even need to be exchanged for one individual to derive spiritual strength from another in this context.

The daily rigours and demands of life often wear us down and it is when we are low that we need to remember how blessed we actually are and how each one of us has gifts that we should be employing for the benefit of others and ourselves. If we pray, Jesus will help us with this. We will see, as in verses 22 and 23, that God *'appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.'* As we know, prayers are answered if we are sincere. *'Knock and the door will be opened unto you'* - Matthew 7:7.

Which of our inclinations and perceived talents should we pursue? We all face continual choices and must take responsibility for how we opt to use our time. As Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, *'there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.'* Whatever we decide we must be careful not to push others out of the way in pursuit of our own selfish ambitions.

Gifts offer a wonderful opportunity to share enriching experiences and should be used to spread feelings of blessedness and joy. This is not always easy, especially when we are tired, but if we forget the way we should be going, it will quickly become very obvious and then we need to pray for guidance to reset our compass.

*'He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,'* 2 Timothy 1:9.

*Kathy Cunningham*

## **Music is my Alabaster Jar**

God gives different gifts to every one of us, to glorify Him and to benefit the church and wider world. This is my experience of the gift of music.

Music is in my blood. My grandmother was an accomplished pianist, organist and choir mistress. My mother was also a talented pianist and began teaching me to play the piano when I was six years old. Unfortunately, I was a very unenthusiastic and difficult pupil, so I was soon sent to a local piano teacher! Music played an important part in my life growing up. At Ballymena Academy I played for school concerts, accompanied choirs and at Assembly. I grew up in West Church (Ballymena) with a strong tradition of music and choirs. Playing the piano is a great stress reliever - before exams, struggling with difficult situations or making major decisions. I even played on the morning of our wedding! Hymns and worship songs are an important way to approach God in praise, especially if I am too tired to focus on reading.

I am so thankful to contribute to praise and worship on a Sunday morning, but this very nearly didn't happen. Before moving to First Holywood, I began to



struggle with increasing nervousness before playing in church and thought I was going to have to give up. One Sunday the sermon was about the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with the ointment in her alabaster jar. I realised that the gift of music is my alabaster jar and I should bring it to God in worship.

When we joined First Holywood in 2019, I soon found myself longing to

be part of the wonderful praise and worship team. Christine McClenahan is so gifted in leading and coordinating praise and worship and playing along with Charles, the orchestra and singers helped me feel less vulnerable than being a lone pianist. Accompanying the Youth Choir and United Choir has been an added pleasure and there is such great camaraderie and fellowship with the singers and musicians. This illustrates how we use our gifts along with others and not just on our own.

There are so many different types of gifts – not just musical or artistic gifts. Just take what you love to do, work at it to the best of your ability and use it as your alabaster jar to worship God and bring glory to Him.

*Liz Reaney*

## **Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**



I auditioned for and joined Belfast Community Gospel Choir (BCGC) back in 2013. Over the last seven years I have become more involved with the choir, moving from only doing concerts with anywhere between 40 - 150 singers to now also being involved in a number of the

small vocal group events which may only have six or nine singers. I also design and build the set for the annual Christmas concert in the Waterfront Hall which enables me to bring some of my creativity to the choir in a different way.

To me, BCGC is family. I can't imagine not having it in my life. It is so important on both a personal level and also in that it gives the opportunity to

share joy in different settings and to different people. For example, last year I visited Indiana with a small group from the choir, all of whom were involved in some way in leading worship in their own churches. We were hosted by New Life Christian Church and World Outreach in the town of Warsaw and I was really struck by the level of engagement that the church has with



the local community, from building a huge children's jungle gym and sports hall on their site which they make available to the community and their work with local business leaders. They are also involved in delivering an addiction recovery programme in the local county jail. Along with Marie and two other girls from the choir, I visited the jail and had the opportunity to share a word from God with them. I remember so clearly having such a strong sense of God giving me Psalm 139, and in particular, the opportunity to share that they are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' and that God can know them personally. I have found that my worship of God is so intrinsically part of whatever or wherever I sing that there is no difference whether I am in a 'BCGC' or 'church' context. As a choir, the majority of our songs are gospel-based and although there are many members of BCGC who have a really firm faith, there are many who do not and I can often find myself surrounded by non-believers at gigs or in rehearsals. Even so, and I realise this may be hard to understand by some, I find worshipping God in the context of choir, whether beside believers or not, a more all-encompassing experience than when I worship in church. Over my time with choir, I have grown to worship God as physically as I do with my words and heart and I find that I can express my worship physically in choir in a way that is just not so easy in church. I would encourage others to value that which interests them - their gifts and passions - and to understand that God values those things about them too, and to see that those passions have the potential to be an integral part of their own worship of God.

Our upcoming concerts are|:

Crown Jesus Ministries on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May The Ulster Hall on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May (only single seats available) Dalriada Festival on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July

Or you can see Jenny featured in the BBC documentary Soul Singers on BBC iPlayer. (!!!!!!!)

*Jenny Russell*

## Everything I make starts with God

I have always been a person who made things. As a child I built a doll's house out of cardboard, when Alan was at Union college, I sold crafts at craft stalls. I worked with anything I could find, wood, flowers, material, leather, paint. I eventually had a number of classes at our church in Tullylish (Banbridge) and worked for the Upper Bann Institute taking classes at out-centres around the Banbridge/Portadown area. One day, someone made a comment about my crafting endeavours, they said *'Tracey, you do many things well, but you don't master anything'*. This could have been an insult but for the fact that he was



100% correct. The challenge was set, it was time for me to pick a medium to work with and to set my sights on mastering that medium. I decided to choose clay and I enrolled in a class with Adam Frew at Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart. I found myself in love with the versatility of clay. I wasn't interested in making cups, bowls and dishes but found I could sculpt and form the clay into other interesting forms. As I progressed, I realised that the techniques and uses of clay were endless, but I couldn't really grasp this level of knowledge from a night class. To my delight, I was accepted into the degree course at Ulster University which has become my opportunity to truly master the medium of clay, and gain a higher education.

I didn't get the chance to go to university when I was eighteen, as no-one in my family went to university and my parents didn't see any reason why I would need to. Alan and I agreed that when we got married he would support me then and I had intended to do a Business Degree, but Alan then received his call into ministry and went to Union and we started a family while he was an assistant and so it just never happened. I worked for ten years in retail and really loved it but couldn't apply for management positions as I didn't meet the criteria in education. Of course, God knew that my talents lay in art and this was the reason why it has taken me until now to do the correct degree. I feel now that I have the potential to combine the best of both worlds as my past experience in retail can still be pursued but at the same time I can practice art through ceramics.

I would still love to teach ceramics and that would be the ideal solution but it is very hard to make a career just by producing art without having some other form of work to subsidise this pursuit.

Art is something that is part of you. The way I approach most things is through

my creativity and because God is the most important part of my life the two have to be linked. Everything I make starts with God. All my thinking and expression is in response to scripture I have read, a worship song and most of all, God's creation. I aim to point people back to God's creation when they look at my work, a reflection of the perfection around and about us.

The first two years of my degree I have been learning new techniques and I spend a great deal of my time experimenting and pushing the clay as far as I can. Next year, I will be concentrating more on my own personal practice. At the moment, I want to make something that reflects our coastlines. How that happens has yet to be discovered. After my degree, I would like to teach, either people who just need to take a relaxing course for their well-being or someone who wants to explore the medium more seriously. I hope that this will also help to financially support me in continuing to make my own art.



A few years ago, our church did a 'forty days of purpose' course. We were encouraged to look at our gifts and talents and use them to glorify God. I remember one man in our congregation who also thought himself to be lacking. He imagined that because he couldn't preach, sing, play an instrument, lead a bible study, cook a meal or even serve tea, that this meant that he had nothing to offer the church. As he prayed, he remembered that he had a trailer, so he asked God how that would help him to serve. For a month he made himself available to anyone who might need something moved, something at home fixed or taken away and for a month his phone was busy. He was surprised at how many people couldn't fix a tap, put up a picture or take something to the dump and over many cups of tea and conversations God used him to bring hope to people on their own, pray with people and even talk to them about how much God meant to him. I would encourage everyone to prayerfully ask God to show you how you can use what you have to serve the church, our neighbours and the community, in the name of Jesus.

*Tracey Johnston*

## GIVING IS A GIFT



The very essence of the two greatest festivals in the Christian calendar, Christmas and Easter, is the giving of a gift. At Christmas, God gave to the world the gift of His only son, Jesus Christ. At Easter, Christ gave His earthly life upon the cross for the redemption of mankind's sins and the mitigation of His Father's wrath. Amidst the froth and tinsel of a secular, consumer Christmas, this essence survives in the exchange of gifts and an awareness of charity. The Easter egg is a symbol of rebirth and renewal. The act of giving, in its purest sense, is the product of love. After all, God so loved the world that He gave to it His only Son. In the words of the much loved hymn, *'Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine ..... love be yours and love be mine'*. The giving or exchange of gifts is an ancient expression of friendship and peace. Today, in an increasingly secular world, it remains, if sincere, a means of showing affection and a desire for amity.

Gifts or presents given without love, but from the ulterior motives of gain, the currying of favour, or personal advancement are soulless, *'for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul'*. In the worlds of diplomacy and politics, such giving of gifts of great value was too often a cover to disguise the true and insincere intentions of the donor. In contrast, gifts based on love need be no more than that, for the widow's mite acquired in the eyes of God a value not equaled by a ruler's riches.

The noun 'gift', as opposed to the verb 'to give', is often indicative of some talent or ability which a person possesses. Christians believe that such a capacity is a gift from God, whether the person is aware of that or not. It is ours to use or not for the benefit of others. The poet W.H. Auden once

remarked, *'We are put on this earth for the benefit of others, what the others are put here for, I do not know'*. A physician may use his gifts to heal, save lives or alleviate pain. A lawyer to seek justice and prevent injustice. An architect to design buildings that are utilitarian as well as beautiful. In this way, they are sharing their gifts, but if they do so with an awareness and love of their fellowmen it enhances the nature and value of their gift. The words of the hymn *'Teach me my God and King'* are of particular value in this regard :  
*'Teach me my God and King*

*In all things thee to see,  
And what I do in any thing  
I do it as for thee.'*

The gift of giving is a two way road in this instance and can reveal itself in the most mundane of circumstances. All of us have had the experience of being in a side road and attempting to emerge onto a major highway, but ignored by an endless stream of slow moving cars, unless one stops and gives you way. The immediate effect is to make one think that the next time, when the roles are reversed, I will give way. Gifts need not be expensive or come in fancy boxes, they need only be a thoughtful kindness or an appreciation of some other person's need. As Shakespeare put it in Portia's speech in *'The Merchant of Venice'* on the gift of mercy.

*'The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: It is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The thronèd monarch better than his crown;'*

Gifts need not take a material form. They need not be expensive or elaborately presented. The thing that makes them valuable is the intent of the giver. Does it show love or even just demonstrate thoughtfulness for the situation or needs of the recipient? It is perhaps incumbent upon all of us who aspire to be Christian and are as yet but pilgrims on the road to fulfilment, to take comfort from the fact that if *'God is love'*, we come a little closer to Him by showing and using the *'Love of Christ'* at Easter in remembrance of His great gift to us of redemption. All He asks is that we bring the gift of *'our hearts'*.



*Bob McCartney*

# My Two Bettys

Margaret Laird



About twenty-eight years ago, Arthur Clarke asked at an Annual General Meeting if he could have volunteers to form groups to count the Free Will Offering and Building Fund contributions. Betty Magill had just recently retired and was forming one group with Betty Crawford, Brian and Betty Shannon. I volunteered for the second group with Rosemary and George McKinnie and Billie McKillen. We counted for six months, once a week - Betty doing the winter months and George taking the summer months. The Session and Committee were delighted to be relieved of this duty which had been done on a Sunday evening, so much so, that Bertie Maguire, the Elder in Charge, used to bring us a tin of Quality Street at Christmas - a treat Elizabeth Laing continued when she took over responsibility. The treasurer at the time was Leslie Starritt who suggested a method of recording for him as well as showing us how to fill in the big Black Book which dates back to 1944.

My memory of those days was how brilliant Betty Shannon and Betty Crawford were at handling cash - having been on the customer service desk of the Prudential for many years. Betty Magill always said a problem wasn't a problem if it could be sorted.

We had many hiccups in the early days - and still get them today. Envelopes saying £10 with a £20 note or vice versa, and cheques payable to anyone other

than First Holywood. We also get little notes in the envelopes as well! At the end of our six month session we had a 'Pass Over' coffee when we would discuss with the incoming team any problems that had occurred; or shortcuts that we had worked out for Jill in the office. In the early days there were no computers so the only way was on paper. The teams changed from time to time but the two Bettys remained, Betty Magill and Betty Shannon. I would never have stayed for nigh on thirty years if it hadn't been for the loyalty, friendship, dedication and fun that the two Bettys brought to the counting team. Honesty and integrity were attributes of each of them.

Betty Magill was the chatterbox with all the Hollywood news and her many humorous stories about her days in the bank. We had great laughs while we worked.

Betty Shannon was the accurate one - 'a teacher's delight' - good figures and a determined sense of duty.

Nowadays the monies are recorded on computer but we still need to open and record the amounts for Nicola. We also count more than just the FWO and Building Fund. We have the United Appeal, OutReach, World Development Appeal, Bible Notes, Books, Christmas Dinner as well as the Moderator's Appeal etc.

This is a service that many people in our church carry out quietly, behind locked doors. We now have three groups so only have to count for four months at a time.

The sad thing is that over the past year the two Bettys decided to put their pens away and retire from counting. I miss them, dreadfully - their encouragement and criticism. The congregation has been well served by those two ladies not only in this duty but in many other ways. A big thank you to you both!



If anyone would like to join one of the counting teams please contact Margaret Laird or Craig Russell.

# EASTER - THE MOVIE

Director's notes

## CHRISTMAS - The Movie.

Popular: Box office hit: re-runs every year.

People flock to hear the story, cinemas packed.

Ideal characters - a baby, dramatic birth in a stable:

kings from afar - a star - angels - royal gifts - fleeing from evil King Herod ..... traditions follow - gifts, lights, parties, fun.

## EASTER - The Movie = CHRISTMAS 2

Baby boy now grown up. Thirty years later.

Leaves home - homeless - meets friends who see something different in him - follow him, giving up all they have to do so. He chooses twelve close followers.

Now becoming famous, although not climbing the social ladder as might have been expected. No flash home, no fancy clothes, wandering the countryside. But now he dispenses gifts instead of receiving them - gifts of sight, ability to walk, freedom from pain.

Those in authority begin to worry. His words, though not inciteful, are stirring up the people. Will he overthrow the government? No, he has not come to build a new kingdom on earth and even tells folk to give Caesar what is his and give 'God what is due to Him' - our love.

He gathers a following - feeds the multitude, clears out the temple, teaches about love, forgiveness, God his father and his kingdom in heaven. Now the story goes in a different direction.

Our 'hero' begins to be questioned and his answers don't please the authorities. People wonder if he's the one they thought he would be. He's arrested, abandoned by his friends, mocked, beaten, sentenced to death.

CRUCIFIXION: the worst imaginable death

This is not what we wanted to hear. We wanted him to rise to the head of the land, rid the country of the Romans. Take his rightful place as head King of the Jews on earth.

This Easter/Christmas 2 film is not so popular. Not so much of a blockbuster. Not so many people flock to hear its story year after year. It's not got the feel good factor of 1.

But wait, there is something there that this boy, man, Son of God has taught us : a glimmer of what can be..... Maybe there can be a Part 3. After all, the screenplay has been written,

(Insert Quotes - Revelation, words of Prophets, words on the cross)

Maybe Part 3 will revive the populace. There's hope, faith, talk of an afterlife, a heaven where there will be no pain, no tears and a final meeting with the 'star' of 1 and 2.

Would it, could it work?

Yes, it would, yes it will.

Although there is doubt, there is faith. Faith in the one who showed us the way, the truth and the life.. We can all have a role in Part 3, no matter who we are: black, white, tall, small, old, young, able-bodied or special needs. And it's simple - no screen test, no lines to learn, but a desire to give our lives to Him, following in Christ's footsteps, living out His words with faith and hope as our companions. It won't be easy at times, but He has promised He will be with us every step of the way until we see Him face to face in glory.

Part 3 is there. We may have to wait our turn to see it, but rest assured, fellow Christians, it will be worth the wait, (Hope to see you there.)

*Ellen Boyd*

**DRAFT**

# ALONE WITH GOD THIS EASTER

In New Testament times, the spread of illness and disease was as all-present a fear as it has become for us. The diseased became outsiders, unclean, despised and segregated. One of the scandalous aspects of Christ's ministry is that these were amongst the very people He sought out. He came to seek and to save the lost, the sick, the untouchable.

The global threat of the Corona Virus will test us all and undoubtedly bring out the best and worst of humanity. One thing that has already become apparent is our own drive for self-preservation. For decades, the poorer peoples of the world have suffered inadequate health provision. Populations are regularly decimated by diseases and viruses which we do have vaccines and medicines for, but the hundreds of thousands of deaths haven't touch our lives directly. Only when we see our own countries and way of life under threat, do we sit up and take notice. Perhaps if we in the wealthier parts of the world had been more compassionate, meeting the needs of these others rather than just looking to our own interests, we might have averted many of the refugee and climate catastrophes and physical and mental health crises we face today.

The Easter story offers us hope for change and transformation. At the morning service on 15<sup>th</sup> March, Dave Currie spoke on the theme of 'Genuine Concern'. He used the example of Timothy, whom St Paul sent to the church at Philippi, as someone who didn't look out for his own interests but had a genuine concern for the well-being of the Philippian believers. Most importantly, he also had the interests of Jesus Christ as his overarching concern (Philippians 2 v 20,21). Dave highlighted Christ's interests using the words - Go. Feed. Shepherd. Pray. Christ obeyed His Father's will and came amongst us as a servant (Phil. 2 v 7). He became our nourishment, the necessary Bread of Life (John 6 v 51). He became our Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep (John 10 v 14). He prayed for all who believed in Him, that they may be one. He continues to be our advocate in His Father's presence, at the heart of the Godhead (Heb 7 v 25).

We may have more time this Easter to sit in quietude with God than we might have expected. Let us meditate on Christ's interests so that our own interests might be redirected. Let us look inward to reach outward; going, feeding, shepherding and praying in Christ's name.

To help your contemplation, why not use this wonderful passage from Philippians 2 and the words of the hymn 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour'.

*'You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honour and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'*

May the mind of Christ my Saviour  
Live in me from day to day,  
By his love and power controlling  
All I do or say.

May the word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph  
Only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort  
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing,  
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus  
As I onward go.

*Kate Barclay Wilkinson*

# CATCHING UP WITH CARL



Since Carl McManus's responsibilities with Young Life increased towards the end of last year with his change of position, it has meant that we've seen a bit less of him on a Sunday morning and it's definitely the case that many of the congregation have been missing him. However, it doesn't mean that he isn't still closely involved with our own young people and keeping a close connection with Andrew McCaw and the work he's doing. In fact, his workload seems to be increasing exponentially as he reveals in his answers to the questions that follow. They bring into sharp focus the important work we in First Holywood are supporting amongst young people in the Holywood area and why we need to continue to bring local children, young people and their families before God in our prayers as well as praying for, encouraging and supporting Carl, Josh and the other leaders of Young Life as they negotiate building relationships in increasingly difficult, but perhaps all the more opportune, times.



## **Carl, remind us of how your job changed last year and the difference it made for your work in Holywood.**

Last year I became the Area Director for Holywood and East Belfast. That basically means that I now oversee the different Young Life ministry which goes on in this area. That includes the clubs in Bangor Road, Holywood Baptist, Belmont, Priors, and Futsal. Futsal is essentially indoor football with a few slightly different rules. We play Futsal for an hour and then have been

slowly introducing the idea of a small group to the guys. Up until this point, we have moved the conversation from football-based banter to more personal questions about things like hopes for the future and relationships. Our hope is that we will then attempt to give a gospel proclamation using questions, rather than a more formal ‘talk’.

So, while I’m still involved in the Young Life club in Bangor Road, I now have more responsibilities than just that one club.

**Could you give an outline of your typical weekly diary and extra events you may have from time to time?**

Things which are set in the diary every week are Wyldlife club (@ Baptist church for Y7-Y9), Priory lunchtime club, Futsal, YoungLife club (@ Bangor Road for Y10-14), Belmont club, discipleship groups, Priory chaplaincy responsibilities and YL staff meeting. Then most weeks I’ll also have meetings with current or prospective leaders, fundraising meetings, meetings with church leaders, time for preparation (I would usually give about 2 talks each week), and time to meet with teenagers outside scheduled programmes (like watching their sports matches etc). Other things which I would have about once a month are team meetings with each of our leadership teams, Sullivan SU, and primary schools work. Then each year all of our Young Life staff in the UK and Ireland gather twice, and European staff gather once for training, and most of us have a three week camp assignment each summer, and will also take kids to camp.

**What initiatives do you feel most excited about?**

Initiatives I’m most excited about are ones like Futsal. For some young people a traditional Young Life club is too big a step. We have found that futsal has been a great way to build relationships with boys, who wouldn’t normally go near a church building. Unfortunately there is an ever-increasing number of young people like them, and as the Church, we need to figure out different ways we can reach them. That challenge really excites me.

**What are the best opportunities? What are the greatest obstacles? What are the greatest problems the young people you work with face?**

Best opportunities: Schools work - many schools are under resourced and, as a result, are willing to accept help from organisations who care about their pupils.

Greatest obstacles: Leader recruitment, fundraising.

Problems facing young people: identity issues & mental health challenges.

## **What upcoming Young Life plans are you working on?**

New Young Life work is starting in new areas every few months now (since September we have started in the Republic of Ireland as well as work in partnership with Whitehouse PC & Ravenhill PC). Specifically in the Hollywood and East



Belfast area we are currently taking the Futsal model and trying to put plans in place for a group which will reach unchurched girls. Another significant thing on our radar right now is trying to get more Y7s involved in our Wyldlife work.

## **Remind us of your co- worker Josh Wynne’s role?**

Josh is also in the Hollywood area. He is involved in schools ministry, discipleship and club work (YL, Wyldlife, and Futsal), and heads up the Young Life club in Bangor Road. Josh had been gradually taking more of the day-to-day responsibility of direct ministry, so that the work continues to happen at a high standard, while I can focus more time on things like fundraising, leader recruitment, and exploring opportunities for new groups.

## **Can you sum up the importance of Young Life’s achievement in the Hollywood and wider area? Any specific stories?**

At Young Life, we don’t just sit back and wait for young people to come through the door. Instead, we meet them where they are, build authentic relationships with them, earn the right to be heard, and then tell them about Jesus and his love for them. In Hollywood we are slowly seeing the fruit of the years of relationship-building. You have probably met Ellen at some stage. Ellen didn’t grow up going to church but came to Young Life as a teenager. There she met leaders like Rachael Harbinson and Lois, who earned the right to be heard, and then Ellen committed her life to Christ. She is still walking with Jesus and is now a volunteer leader at our Wyldlife club, where she is now being a leader like Rachael and Lois were to her.

**What are some specific areas that we can remember in our prayers for you and the young people?**

The main things I would love for people to join us in praying about are for peace, given the situation we find ourselves in with coronavirus. For young people there is a lot of uncertainty around exams for this summer, which will be causing some of them significant stress. If schools close that will also bring significant challenges for young people. And I would also appreciate it if you could pray for our Young Life staff as we all figure out how to do relational ministry in the current circumstances.

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake  
May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between  
preserving their health or paying their rent.

May we who have flexibility to care for  
our children when schools close  
Remember those who have no such options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who settle in for quarantine at home  
Remember those who have no home.

As fear threatens to grip our country,  
Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap  
our arms around each other,  
Let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God  
to our neighbours.

Amen

# COFFEE AND ESCHATOLOGY

A Chat with Andrew McCaw.

Recently, I had the pleasure of having a coffee and spending some time chatting with our student youth worker, Andrew McCaw, about study, life and faith. The afternoon we met up, he had already sat an exam on a complex child protection scenario and then met up with Graeme Thompson for a planning session. So, even before my interrogation began, he'd had a pretty busy morning! Still, he did seem remarkably energized, so perhaps the Starbucks' coffee played a role (Flat white, Blond Roast, should you ever need to get on the right side of him). Being an inveterate avoider of large franchises with a ravenous global reach, I had never patronized the said establishment, but must admit that, paper cup aside, the coffee wasn't bad!



Andrew is currently half-way through his three year BA Hons degree in Youth and Community Work with Practical Theology. In this, his second year, he is studying Eschatology with the help of Alister McGrath's books (the theology of 'last things' or 'end times', for those of us not in the know). He's definitely enjoying this, though finds its complexity mind-melting - in a good way!

We started with an intriguing aside on purgatory and I was a little concerned that by the end of my inane questioning session, he might have a whole new perspective on what purgatory could be!

Whatever he's studying, Andrew is required to bring it to bear practically on his placement with us in First Holywood. McGrath wants Christians to offer a way of looking at the world which makes sense of how things are now, but also shows us that there is something still better to look forward to. Andrew is committed to bringing this hope to our young people.

In recent months he has had an alternative placement at Holywood Youth Centre, run by Holywood Family Trust, on the High Street, where the emphasis is on building relationships with the young people in a drop-in context. It's different from the programme-led approach he follows with us, but he's pleased that a greater awareness of relationship-forming is being placed in this context

and it's an approach that he feels very strongly is the most valuable. As our young people grow up and move through different groups in the church, they can easily find themselves unsettled by new company and leaders they



don't know. Our developing strategy is to encourage our volunteer leaders to overlap these groups, like Connect, Pitstop, YoungLife and small groups, keeping a continuity of relationship. The young people then continue to feel comfortable with their leaders.



Andrew is enthusiastic about how his course has challenged some of his beliefs and broadened his view of God. Personally, he has found his times of Bible study greatly extended and enhanced. Where he might have covered scripture texts in a more general, surface way, he now finds that he's digging deeper. Taking one or two verses, studying the context and asking more demanding questions of their application to his personal walk and his

youth work. The way he speaks about his love of Bible study makes me think of how a dog worries a bone until he's stripped the last morsel from it! He has found that, being away from his family a lot, the time he does get with them is even more special. His other 'family' are the close friends he has made while on the course. He can rely on them and they each have a sense of accountability one to the other.

As he looks back over his time at First Holywood so far, the Summer drop-in stands out for him. He lights up as he talks about the successful three days when leaders from our church had the opportunity to play sports, games, enjoy a cafe atmosphere and watch movies with up to thirty young people aged from 11-18. It was a chance to share faith and Christ's love with them, an outreach that Andrew is eager to develop this year. He's hoping to cater for forty, so anyone wanting to help with leadership would be readily welcomed.

Cafe Church has also become an established part of our evening service programme. It's a slow burn affair with Andrew optimistic for its growth. He's pleased that it is so well attended and supported by all ages. It's relaxed and informal and the young people take part in welcoming, serving tea and coffee and helping with readings and



prayers in the service. He hopes their involvement will increase over time, perhaps extending to talks, praise and worship, but without any pressure.

Andrew's own honest, faith-inspiring talks, along with those of invited guests, have focussed on the Lord's Prayer and invited all of us to consider what God's call means for each of us. He would like Cafe Church to eventually become a means of outreach to which our young people could bring their non-Christian friends.



Andrew is pleased at the gradually increasing attendance at Pitstop and Connect. One of the things he feels he has made young people aware of is the real demand the Gospel places on lives. His own openness and exposure to other difficult

stories of faith give him the opportunity to show that, by faith, there is always a way through the toughness.

All of this work, alongside the demands of his studies, brings quite a weight of responsibility upon Andrew. How does he cope? He has found his delving into scripture a great support and the more pressure he feels, the more he returns to God's word. He admits that he feels more able to deal with the pressures than at first but he also gladly recognises the importance of his previous pastor who has continued to be a spiritual mentor to him. The burdens of responsibility seem lighter as he expresses his positive attitude of mutual cooperation with the young people. *'They're here for me and I'm here for them. I want them to see me as an open book.'*

As the last drops of coffee are sipped and I realise I need to get back to my car before the traffic warden, there's just time for a final question. What of the future? Andrew is certain that youth work is his life for the present and he's excited about what he believes God is doing in First Holywood. He likes how YoungLife works and wants to keep up that link. And beyond that? *'Wherever God calls, I'll go!'*

You couldn't ask for a better response. Continue to encourage Andrew in his work and remember to keep him and our young people in your prayers.

*Mark Shields*

**'Wherever God calls, I'll go!'**

# THE EMJI EASTER STORY



EASTER IS ABOUT JESUS COMING TO PAY FOR OUR SINS BECAUSE HE LOVES US SO MUCH! JOHN 3:16



JESUS HAD TO DIE ON THE DAY WE NOW CALL GOOD FRIDAY TO PAY FOR ALL THE TIMES WE SIN AND DISOBEY GOD. MARK 15:37-38



AFTER JESUS DIED HE WAS IN THE TOMB FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE SOMETHING AMAZING HAPPENED. MARK 15:42-47



ABOUT THE TIME THE SUN WAS COMING UP ON THE THIRD DAY, SOME OF JESUS' FRIENDS WENT TO THE TOMB NOT KNOWING WHAT THEY WOULD FIND. LUKE 24:1



WHEN JESUS' FRIENDS GOT TO THE TOMB THEY FOUND AN ANGEL WHO TOLD THEM JESUS WAS ALIVE! LUKE 24:2-7



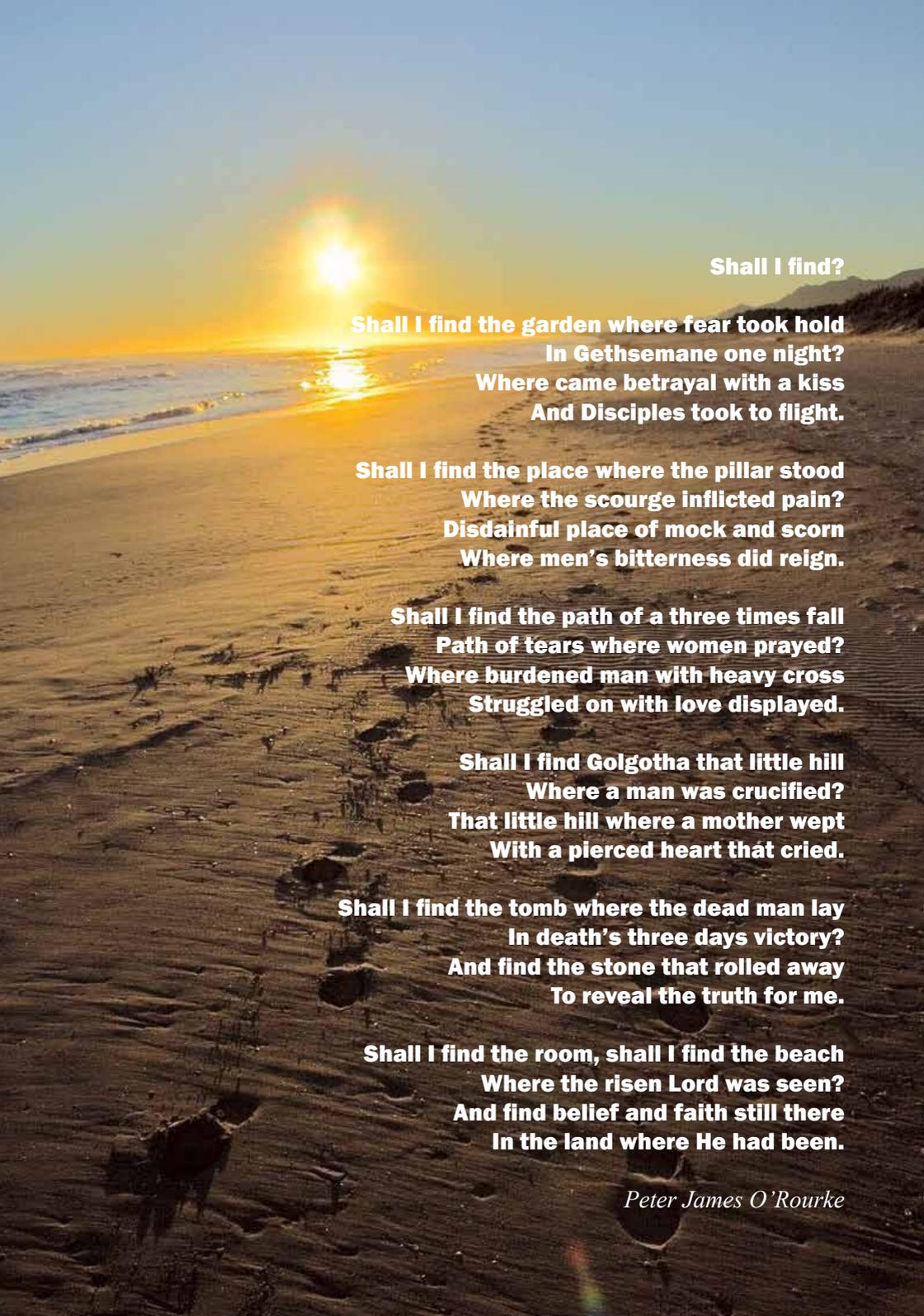
ALL OF JESUS' FRIENDS WERE SURPRISED AND HAPPY WHEN THEY FOUND OUT HE WAS ALIVE AND SAW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME! JOHN 20:14-17



SOON AFTER JESUS CAME BACK TO LIFE, HE WENT BACK TO HEAVEN AND HIS DISCIPLES WATCHED HIM GO. LUKE 24:50-53



BEFORE JESUS WENT BACK TO HEAVEN HE TOLD HIS DISCIPLES TO TELL EVERYONE THE GOOD NEWS THAT ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS AS THEIR SAVIOUR CAN LIVE WITH HIM FOREVER IN HEAVEN. MATTHEW 28:16-20

A photograph of a sunset over a beach. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The beach is sandy with many footprints leading from the foreground towards the water. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**Shall I find?**

**Shall I find the garden where fear took hold  
In Gethsemane one night?  
Where came betrayal with a kiss  
And Disciples took to flight.**

**Shall I find the place where the pillar stood  
Where the scourge inflicted pain?  
Disdainful place of mock and scorn  
Where men's bitterness did reign.**

**Shall I find the path of a three times fall  
Path of tears where women prayed?  
Where burdened man with heavy cross  
Struggled on with love displayed.**

**Shall I find Golgotha that little hill  
Where a man was crucified?  
That little hill where a mother wept  
With a pierced heart that cried.**

**Shall I find the tomb where the dead man lay  
In death's three days victory?  
And find the stone that rolled away  
To reveal the truth for me.**

**Shall I find the room, shall I find the beach  
Where the risen Lord was seen?  
And find belief and faith still there  
In the land where He had been.**

*Peter James O'Rourke*