

REID ON...

REID MEMORIAL CHURCH MAGAZINE

APRIL 2024

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DEAR FRIENDS...

Everlasting Life!

"Life. Don't talk to me about life." So says the character of Marvin, a fictional and comedic creation of the late English author and playwright Douglas Adams. Yet 'life' is precisely what the Gospel is all about. Indeed, what are known as the Easter Acclamations proclaim that Jesus rose from the dead as they declare: ***Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!***

The Gospel of John, and other New Testament writings, go on to state that the risen Jesus came to give us everlasting life. Elsewhere, he writes that Jesus came to give us abundant life (10:10).

Many books and sermons, however, appear to suggest that the Gospel is about other things. Some suggest that the Gospel is about ideology or theology, that having got that right we are Christian. Right belief does have an important role to play but, importantly, it is not what the Gospel is about. Others would suggest that the Christian faith is all about right and wrong; that is, it is all about ethics and right living. It is true that right living, matters of obedience and disobedience to God, all have a significant role to play. More important, though, is that these are also not what the Gospel is truly about. As John keeps reminding us in his telling of the story of Jesus, the Gospel is all about life, and that more abundantly.

Over the course of the last century or more the church seems to have been keen to take the request, or demand, of the >

> fictional Marvin and act on it as if it was sage advice. The church seemed to stop talking about life. Rather, it allowed itself to get distracted by other, usually worthy, ideas and causes. At the same time the church began to noticeably decline both in numbers attending and in influence. We can wonder if these things are connected. The church, though, came into being as the fellowship of the people of God with the singular calling of preaching life in all its fullness.

For the church to be reborn to what it once was, and should be still, it needs to remember the words of Jesus as recorded in John's Gospel, chapter three. It needs to recover its message of life in all its wonder and fullness:

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.' (John 3: 16-17 KJV)

As we go out into the joys of the Easter season let us take the words of Jesus to heart and begin to live that abundant life today.

YOURS IN CHRIST, **ALEX**



WALKING THE WALK...

There will be a Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' starting at Craigmillar Park Church 9:15am and proceeding through Newington, ending at City of Edinburgh Methodist Church at Nicolson Square. (Though unlikely to look exactly as illustrated)



HOLY WEEK BREAKFAST SERVICES

Monday 25th through Friday 29th - Newington Churches Together are hosting their annual series of Breakfast Services, led by a range of Christian leaders from across our part of the city, taking place at Craigmillar Park church at 07:45 each day, and lasting 15-20 minutes. There is a light breakfast available after each time of worship and reflection. Following breakfast on Good Friday we will be meeting outside Craigmillar Park Church at 9:15am where a short reading will be given before we commence our Walk of Witness, walking on to three neighbouring churches: St Columba's Upper Gray Street, St Peter's Lutton Place and @ Nicolson Square Gardens for a final reading/short service. Some of us will be handing out Easter eggs along the way. Why not come and join us?



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Our popular service of a simple supper and Holy Communion: 7pm on Thursday 28th March. Look out for a sheet nearer the time, so we know numbers for catering.

EASTER SUNDAY

10:30 at Craigmillar Park Church.

PALM SUNDAY

Marking the beginning of Holy Week, the Sunday before Easter will be 24th March. 11:15

INTO OUR FUTURE - NEXT STEPS...



After a seemingly long period where not a great deal appeared to be happening, we have been given permission, with our neighbours at Marchmont St. Giles (MSG), to begin conversations about the potential of uniting.

After reaching the conclusion that becoming a part of SEECoS was not the right one for us, Presbytery advised that once their part of the plan had been settled, they would then consider how we could move forward. Earlier this month the Deployment Committee of Presbytery (DC), meeting for routine business, discussed our situation, and agreed to give the formal go-ahead for us to enter discussions with MSG.

Unlike earlier propositions, this one sees us being paired with a congregation with whom we have connections. We were both in the same initial planning cluster group and so have already >

> discussed some of the challenges ahead of us as the Kirk. We are alike in our belief, our understanding of 'church', and our shared sense of justice and inclusion. We use the same bus services, shops, and other amenities, and our members are often near neighbours.

By the time this edition of *ReidOn...* goes to press a small group of elders from both congregations will have met for initial discussions. At the meeting will be a representative of the DC, this being Donald Scott of Priestfield Parish. Assuming the conversation goes well future ones will be broadened out to include other representatives of the two congregations. If a Union does seem to be the best, and appropriate, outcome then various other steps will have to be followed, some of which will include Presbytery permissions.

We will be keeping you, the congregation, informed of progress, especially when you have the opportunity of formal input to the processes. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this, please speak with the minister in the first instance.

ALEX McASPURREN

A Kirk Session met to discuss their minister's salary package for the coming year. After the meeting the Clerk told the minister, 'We're very sorry, but we've decided we can't give you a raise this year.'

'But you have to give me a raise,' said the minister. 'I am but a poor preacher!'

'I know,' the Clerk said. 'We hear you every Sunday.'

God said to one of his angels, 'Do you know what I've just done? I've just created a 24-hour period of alternating light and darkness on Earth. Isn't that good?'

The angel said, 'Yes, but what will you do now?'

God replied, 'I think I'll call it a day.'

DOOR DUTIES APRIL-MAY...

SUNDAY 31st MARCH

Joyce Rosie, Sheila Capewell
In charge: Stephen Thomson

SUNDAY 7th APRIL

Geeta Mackay, Gillian Brown
In charge: Susan Mackay

SUNDAY 14th APRIL

Siobhan Gilliland, Richard Black
In charge: Linda Farrer

SUNDAY 21st APRIL

Elizabeth Clark, Sheena Richardson
In charge: Stephen Thomson

SUNDAY 28th APRIL

Douglas Mathieson,
Siobhan Gilliland
In charge: Lindsay Wood

SUNDAY 5th MAY

Lesley Beckett,
Alison MacLeod
In charge: Ian Beckett

SUNDAY 12th MAY

Geeta Mackay
Elizabeth Clark
In charge: Susan Mackay

IMPORTANT

Remember to arrange a swap if you can't attend!

☞ *The Knit and Natter group now have three single-bed size blankets, and four cot/knee throw-size ones, and we would like to give them to the Salvation Army. (That may not sound much, but it's a lot of knitting!)*

ELIZABETH CLARK





GLIMPING THE CHURCH'S PAST AND FUTURE IN ROME...

In March, New College, together with Trinity College, Glasgow, packed me and other Church of Scotland ministry candidates (plus one Episcopalian) off to Rome to see the sights and to think about the Church's past, present and future.

We had a whistle-stop ecclesiastical tour (averaging three churches per day), with barely enough time to take in the incredible Renaissance and Baroque architecture and paintings as we hurried by, pointing at things that we'd never get a Fabric Convener to agree to (we were a group of Protestants, after all).

But the most affecting sites were the pockets of very early Christian history, a sliver of time nestling between the ancient Roman grandeur and later medieval splendour. The tombs of Peter and Paul - each now with an imposing basilica atop them - were surprisingly moving connections with the apostles. Certainly, we can never really know if these were the actual tombs: but they >

> had to have been buried somewhere in the vicinity of the city they died in, so why not these traditional locations? The Catacombs of Priscilla, too, were a glimpse into a very early, Third Century Christian underground, with more colour and more women (pictured) than one might imagine.

We got to see some of the present-day church talking both with people from Italy's largest Protestant denomination (a union of Methodists and Waldensians, medieval religious dissidents in the Alpine valleys who became Calvinists at the Reformation), and with the Scots training as Catholic priests at the Scots College in Rome. It was encouraging to see the similarities: similar programmes of training, similar work to support the marginalised, such as migrants, and similar responses to social trends like secularisation. If the Holy Spirit is guiding our different churches in similar directions, then hopefully we are doing something right! And the ability to make these connections across denominations and across countries gives one hope for the church's future as well.

ANDREW CARTER

Trustees from several Edinburgh and West Lothian churches attending Blackhall St Columba's church on Saturday 16th March for safeguarding training: now compulsory for all Kirk trustees [see ReidOn... Feb]



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THURSDAYS: starting on 11 January 2024

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DROP-IN

- 1.30pm to 3pm
(one to one)



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Church of Scotland

General Assembly

Saturday, 18 May to Thursday, 23 May, 2024

(Excluding Sunday)



Can you help with stewarding at the General Assembly?

Stewards have a vital role at the General Assembly to ensure the safety and comfort of those attending. Stewards provide a friendly welcome to the Assembly Halls, ensure the security of proceedings by checking passes, are alert to security threats and disturbances and have a responsibility to ensure the safe evacuation of the Assembly Hall if this is required.

Individual shifts last for three hours and volunteers can select the day or days upon which they would seek to help.

For more details please contact Sandy Gemmill, Chief Steward

assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk

HYMN NUMBERS...



At the beginning of 2008, I decided to keep a note of the hymns that we sing week by week. A few weeks ago, I decided it would be interesting to count them and here are the results.

Of the 805 hymns in CH4, we have sung 373 of them. Of these, 205 have been sung five or fewer times, and of the 205 we have sung, 77 only once! Hymn 189 - *Be still for the presence of the Lord...* has been sung most often with 48 entries, and no. 153 - *Great is thy Faithfulness* comes a close second with 45 entries.

Another interesting number fact - apart from the four years when we had Alex Douglas as our locum, we have had 20 different visiting ministers. Hard to believe. My regret now is that I didn't start this exercise when I joined the Reid Memorial in 1970!

MARJORIE HOUSTON

The next issue of **REIDON...** will be May 2024. Please send David any articles or notices by **19th April** please.

See page 2 for contact details.



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