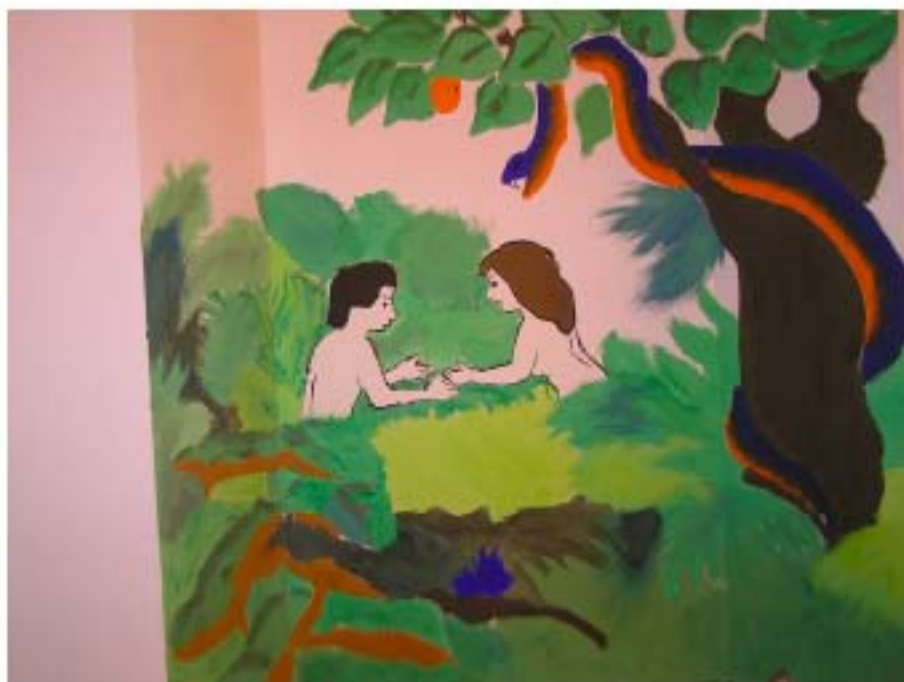


Pollokshields Church of Scotland Glasgow

VISION

October
2009

Minister: The Rev. David Black 423 4000
Session Clerk: Mrs. Mary Morrison 632 1659



Paradise Lost

Cover Comment is on page 2

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Forthcoming Services

- 4th October Harvest Thanksgiving Service
(Donation to Lodging House Mission in its Centenary Year)
3.30pm Scottish Asian Christian Fellowship
- 11th October Sacrament of Baptism
2pm African Church
- 18th October Morning Service
2 pm African Church
- 25th October 11am Morning Service
2pm African Church
- 1st November Morning Service
3.30pm Scottish Asian Christian Fellowship
- 8th November Remembrance Sunday (10.50am start)
2pm African Church

Wednesday services take place each week at 9.45am in the Session Room (enter at glass door at hall) and last about 15minutes. On 4th November it is followed by the dedication of the Remembrance wreath in church.

Copy date for the November issue of VISION
is Sunday 18th October

The Minister's Message

Three new notice boards greeted the visitors we had to church last month. Paid for largely from a grant from the City Council's Pollokshields Area Fund, the main boards on Albert Drive are now matching in style and can both offer space for updating information.

The third board on the Shields Road side is now readable from the pavement and replaces one which had no lettering on it at all!

So the community at large have a better chance of knowing who we are, what we are doing and when they can share in our activities.

But what are we doing?

Well, the Kirk Session last month agreed to focus its attention on a three part plan for the coming year. This will run alongside (indeed in and through) our "normal" activities.

Part one is to focus more on the Spiritual side of who we are and to that end the elders are leading a year of reflecting on what God is saying to us as a congregation through a series called "Hear IAM" (details of which are in a separate article on p.4).

Part two is to engage in a revision of how we provide pastoral care to both the congregation and community – a focus of work for Hector Dickson and myself.

Finally the third part will be the development of our community involvement through two projects; the first, already underway, is looking at the future use of Church House; and the second we hope will involve us and our two neighbouring churches in a community audit facilitated by The Transformation Team of *faithincommunitiesscotland*.

So there is much going on to enable us to fulfil our aim of being a visible and welcoming community of Christ's church but we will only achieve our goals if you offer the Kirk Session the support they need in making a reality the plans we have set for ourselves.

With all good wishes,

David R. Black

Cover Comment

Darwin or...?

“How seriously do we examine what is taught in Sunday Schools about ‘the creation’, then and now, amongst other things? The biblical literalists may have a lot to answer for when our children grow up, as they ditch it all along with Santa Claus.”

Muriel Armstrong, Editor of Life and Work, March 2009



The question of how we should teach creation has a special relevance now, as some of our younger members have been painting illustrations of biblical stories on the walls of our hall.

When children learn what scientists have to say about the age of the earth and the origin of the solar system and the evolution of living creatures, including ourselves, they may well discount as irrelevant the Bible stories they read in Genesis. The danger of course is that they may throw out the baby with the bath water.

So, when the Bible and science seem contradictory, what should we teach? Indeed what should we ourselves believe?

There are at least three possibilities. One is that the Bible, the inspired word of God, is literally true, and that scientists are chasing after the wind. Another is that the scientific explanation is the only true one, and that the Bible is superstitious nonsense.



There is a third way of looking at the problem. When God revealed himself and his workings to man, he knew that the ancient Hebrews were simple folk, some would even say primitive. Any talk of quarks, photons or black holes would have meant nothing to them. God therefore clad the creation story in imagery that they could understand. The wonderfully poetic stories of the Garden of Eden, the temptation by the serpent and the fall proclaimed great truths that man could perhaps only begin to understand centuries later. Nevertheless the Hebrews may well have understood 'creation' as a 'story'.

The story of Jonah presents a similar problem. Few teenagers nowadays will accept the possibilities of a man being swallowed by a big fish, surviving inside it for three days and then being regurgitated on to dry land apparently unharmed.

Jonah's great prayer of worship, penitence, trust and entreaty is full of wonderful imagery - "The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me, seaweed wrapped around my head, to the roots of the mountains I sank down..." Perhaps these were just the prayerful imagination of a tormented soul, images which, presented within the framework of an adventure story, would be to his listeners of the day as completely comprehensible, and which would make his message as striking to them then, as it should be to us today.

The question remains - Whether, how and when should we teach our children Bible stories, and whether, how and when should we modify their earlier mis-understandings?

Perhaps Marion McAllister and her staff have as great a responsibility for the development of our young folk as any other group in our church? Pray for them!

D.D.M

“Hear: I AM”

Listening to God in 2010

Following a time of reflection in January, the Kirk Session identified as one of our needs spending more time together just *listening* to each other and to what God is saying to us as Christians in the 21st century.

With help from Sarah Brown, our former student attached, a programme of listening to God has been devised for the coming year.

Groups of elders will each lead a four week block of “listening” or study on a topic of their choice –
So far themes proposed are : *music*; *justice*; *listening to each other*; and concern for the world’s poor.

Each topic will be highlighted in advance in a dedicated page here in Vision giving the time and venue of that group’s meetings.

It is hoped in this way to provide a variety of events suitable for a variety of ages. Some will spark your imagination and involvement but we don’t expect everyone to every event.

We do challenge you, however, to attend at least one meeting of one of the groups in the coming year so we can hear what you have to say as well as you listen with us to God’s word.

The minister Rev David Black writes;

“ I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the Kirk Session in its willingness to offer this series of listening opportunities to the congregation. Whilst Hector Dickson and I will play a supportive role in enabling the preparation of meetings, the concept and delivery of them will be entirely the work of the elders themselves. They deserve all our support.”

THE GUILD

The new session of the Guild got underway on 7th September. We are happy to report that 3 new members enrolled, 1 female and 2 males, bringing our total number of male members to 5.
(There is still room for more.)

The Guild theme for 2009/2010 is "**What Does The Lord Require Of You?**"

The challenging tide of our new 3-year strategy taken from the prophet Micah in which we are told that we are required "to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6.8).

In the first year of this strategy we will concentrate on the part of the passage in which we are **Called to act justly**. As members of the Church of Scotland Guild we will continue to do our part in improving the life of those who need our help.

Unfortunately, before our meetings got underway 2 changes had to be made to our syllabus. Due to the Eid on the Drive celebrations our planned evening of music with our organist, Liam, had to be cancelled,. This has now been rearranged as an evening of music for St Andrew's Day on Monday 30th November (More detail, in next month's, VISION.)

Meetings for October

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday 5 th at 7.30 pm - | Subject Mental Health
Mrs. Pru Davies, - "My Story" |
| Monday 12 th at 2.00 pm - | 100 years of Lodging House Mission
Miss Ann Lyall |
| Monday 19 th at 7.30 pm | "Resurreclive History" - Mr. Colin Mackie |
| Monday 26 th at 2.00 pm | "Cruising the Norwegian Fiords"
David and Sheila Hart |

New members and visitors are always welcome at all our meetings.

News from Shona Morrison (Part 2)

In the last issue of VISION Shona described her impressions of Thailand, and her first thoughts about doing voluntary work there with children. From Thailand she moved on.

“My travels took me forwards through Laos and Cambodia. I loved both and my time was filled with insane journeys, 4,000 remote and wet islands, new friends, world famous sights and a new knowledge and understanding of these countries’ histories.

“Whilst certain areas were touristy, like travellers’ hangout Vang Vieng in Laos and ‘temple central’ Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the rest of the country was largely undeveloped. There is so much beauty in both these countries, both natural and manmade, but it is often juxtaposed with the poverty of the people living amongst it. It’s difficult enough to see but it’s when you get speaking to the people that you gain a deeper understanding of the issues.

Onwards then to Malaysia and Singapore, in my limited opinion two different countries. In Malaysia I felt an obvious difference in the way I was viewed as a single female travelling alone. I spent a lot of my time trekking through jungles, staying on islands, walking along treetops, eating in floating restaurants, snorkelling with turtles, sharks, ‘nemo’ fish, sharks, jellyfish, and did I mention sharks?! Singapore was incredibly different; I got off the bus to a big, bustling, modern and rather expensive city. There were skyscrapers, shopping malls, posh bars and hotels, and an ultra sleek subway system. Much as I liked Singapore and enjoyed exploring the city for a few days, visiting all the sights and stumbling across some gorgeous churches and mosques, I found myself missing the noises, smells and organised chaos of the other parts of SE Asia that I had come to love. Still it was a good preparation for the next part.



“Australia, the only country that is also a continent. Having already decided to extend my original 3-month stay into 8 months, which was the original planned duration of my entire trip, I had a great time working, living and travelling there. It was fantastic to be able to really get to know the people there and spend time with them for more than just 2 or 3 days along the way and gain a better understanding of this different way of life. I picked tomatoes and planted trees in Queensland, tried and failed to search for a job in New South Wales and made salads, washed dishes and stuffed/cooked ‘chooks’ for three months in Western Australia. I was also lucky enough to climb Sydney Harbour Bridge, visit Uluru (Ayres Rock), drive up the west coast in a dodgy caravan, spend 4 days on a train across the centre of the country, sightsee in Melbourne, sunbathe in a place called ‘Surfers Paradise’, avoid crocodiles at Steve Irwin’s zoo, and watch sunsets all over this enormous country.”

Shona ended up in a small village called Vellatur, working at the Mission there.

“All of the children are very happy here, some are here because their families simple could not afford to keep them, some have lost parents to AIDS, others have parents who are alcoholics and cannot look after them. Despite this they always seem positive, they are living in a loving, caring and safe environment where they get food, shelter and an education. It is a Christian mission; the pastor here is an evangelical preacher and the children are also taught about God and attend church, singing songs, saying prayers and so on. They all believe that God has given them many blessings and answered many of their prayers. In the past few years alone they have been able to construct a new building so that fewer of the children have to sleep outside. However they still have lots of needs and the main priority is securing more consistent support; only 36 of the 80 children have a sponsor. I’d like to tell you more about the people and the work there. My space has run out but you can find out more at www.missionfortheruralpeople.org. My blog is on www.getjealous.com/shonahmorrison.”

Rebuilding the Walls

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
‘This is my own, my native land’?”

This gem of Scottish chauvinism is but a distant echo of what the Jews must have felt as they sat down by the waters of Babylon, and wept as they remembered Zion. Though few if any had ever been to Jerusalem they all felt this intense loyalty to what had been their political and religious capital, the centre of Jewish power and God’s earthly throne.

When Cyrus of Persia ordered the repatriation of the Jewish exiles what joy must they have felt, as they returned ‘home’. But when Nehemiah returned there 13 years later he wept as he saw the ruins. Zerubbabel had rebuilt the Temple but the walls were still just heaps of rubble. Not only was Jerusalem defenceless against the nations that surrounded it like snarling and snapping wolves but it was also an object of scorn and mockery to her neighbours.

Nehemiah (what a man!) got the walls rebuilt. He allocated to every group of Jews a section of the wall to work on. Priests, the men of Tekoah, the makers of perfume, the goldsmiths and the merchants all had their allotted tasks. Their progress so alarmed their enemies that the wall builders had to be armed. “Even those who carried building materials worked with one hand and kept a weapon in the other.”



The situation today is similar. Our Christian heritage is under attack and much of it is in ruins. Our church seems defenceless and an object of scorn to its enemies. Our walls have been broken down. Our traditions of freedom to worship, of reverence for God’s word, of the freedom to proclaim it and of the acceptance of the Ten Commandments as the basis of our legal system and our moral values have all

been eroded.

The sanctity of human life, the standards of marriage, the observance of the Lord's Day, and the heterosexual norms are all disputed in Parliament, in schools, in the media and in society's mores.

A nurse has been forbidden to pray with her patient, a girl has been told not to wear a cross on her necklace, one no longer finds Gideon Bibles in hotel rooms or hospital lockers, and some government departments use the words 'Winterfest' and 'Springfest' instead of Christmas and Easter "as these words might give offence to non Christians."(!).

We must take seriously the need for us to rebuild the walls that no longer safeguard our Christian heritage from such assaults by humanists and secularists. We must spot the attacks and respond, for example by lobbying MPs, and local Councillors whenever we get the smell of hostile legislation, we must attend protest group rallies, sign petitions, write to papers and indeed take every opportunity to proclaim God's values. We must support campaigning organisations like Christian Aid, CARE, EA etc.

More positively, we can by our own life styles show that the church is not dead, that the church matters. We can through Junior Churches and Sunday Schools, youth organisations and youth fellowships make our young folk aware of their growing responsibilities. Who knows but that some of these may attain positions of influence in government, industry, education and commerce and work positively for change?

Nehemiah armed his workers with swords, spears and bows. Our weapons are cited by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians as the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Helmet of Salvation, the Shield of Faith and the Sword of the Spirit. "Do all these in prayer," wrote Paul, "keep alert - never give up"

With these and with constant vigilance we *can* rebuild the walls to protect our Christian heritage and clear out the rubble inside them. **But** walls can keep people out. Would building such walls round our heritage be keeping people out of the church? Not a bit! *Nehemiah also rebuilt the gates in the walls round Jerusalem.* How attractive and welcoming is today's church?

D.D.M.

Mental Health Network

1 in 4 people experience mental health problems during their lifetime. Bipolar disorder is only one of many mental health problems. Others range from memory loss and learning difficulties to psychoses.

The Mental Health Network exists to provide a voice for mental health service users and their carers. Its work is driven by its commitment to improving the provision of care and services.

Mental Health Network's mission statement:

*We work on a local, city wide and national level.
We work with those who have an active interest in
mental health to achieve better services by involving
service users, carers and organisations by exerting
influence on what may need to change. We exist to
promote better mental health and wellbeing.
We build on Recovery Focused ways of working,
including:*

PEER SUPPORT
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN
RECOVERY FOCUSSED VOLUNTEERING

Pru Davies, a choir member, is closely involved with MHN. Anyone interested in supporting or improving mental health services should speak to Pru.

THANK YOU FOR bringing in your used stamps!

Recently a bag of trimmed stamps, weighing $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs, was delivered to the Presbytery Offices.

So, a BIG thank you for your contributions - in bags and envelopes - which together added up to this huge total.



We hope that you have received letters and Picture Post Cards from family and friends when they were on holiday. Please collect the stamps from these and bring them in.

Remember to leave a margin around the stamp(s) when you take them off a card or envelope. If a stamp is damaged in any way it is valueless.

Please keep bringing them in.
Thank You in anticipation.

H.D.

“Meeting the Spirit”

and what the Bible says about it

On Tuesday 13th October the Bible Study House Group embark on a new series of Scripture Union studies called “Meeting the Spirit”.

Each study poses a number of questions devised to lead in to thought provoking discussions. There are no “correct answers” given, but each person present can, if they want, contribute their own ideas.

The next meeting is the first for the new series - an ideal chance for newcomers to “taste and see”.

Meetings are normally at 7.30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 7 Newark Drive.

For further information speak to Douglas or Betty Miller (423 9134).

L.H.M.

A Century of Caring

It is a hundred years since the Lodging House Mission began caring for those who were homeless or living in lodging houses and a lot has changed in that time. The lodging houses are now called hostels and their tenants have much more help from the State but there is still a need for the love of Christ to be shown to those whose lives are chaotic because of drugs, alcohol, unemployment, loss of home or sheer inability to cope with life.

In the beginning there was a Sunday evening Gospel meeting in a rented room followed by a cup of tea. This work gradually increased, especially after the redundant church building in East Campbell Street was acquired, and a soup kitchen assisted by the Guilds of Glasgow, a clothes store and weekly services were begun.

Nowadays the Lodging House Mission offers breakfast and a three course lunch, a social centre where people can meet and get advice on housing, on help with breaking addictions, on benefits and on courses leading to possible employment. Activities like art classes, outings and cycling help improve physical and mental health, while educational opportunities such as literacy and computer classes have helped some back into employment. Staff and volunteers make all this possible.

There is still a Sunday evening service but instead of weekday services the chaplain offers daily prayers, Bible study groups, Lent and Advent study groups, which are voluntary, and of course is always there to listen. Small groups have gone on retreats and some have come to faith. →

And so the work goes on. You can help in this if you wish. Envelopes for donations for Harvest Sunday are available and I have meal vouchers costing £1. Christmas cards will be on sale on several Sundays, or see me.

To celebrate the centenary a thanksgiving service was held in June, when the Moderator of the General Assembly, some of the staff and some of those who have found faith took part. A very well attended and popular concert for those who come to the Lodging House Mission was held in August, and in September the Lord Provost gave a civic reception attended by so many people with connections to the Lodging House Mission, including some of those it had helped.

This has been a time of rejoicing but it is sad to think that such a work is needed more than ever nowadays. But as long as it is needed the Lodging House Mission will continue to serve as Jesus commanded in Matthew chapter 25.

Elva Carlisle.

Biblical Connections

In each of the following groups all the items have a common connection. What is it?

1. Ur, Haran, Babylon, Charchemish (Hint - where they ?)
2. Nisan, Elul, Sebat, Adar

Answers on page 18

Joash and Jehoiada

An infant prince and an ageing priest - what is the link?

The answer is Jehosheba, a strong willed, resourceful and pious woman, wife of the priest Jehoiada.

It was not unheard of in Biblical days for any one coming to power to kill all who might be a challenge. Athaliah, daughter of the dead King Ahab, wanted to retain her power and prestige as queen mother and so killed "all the royal seed". All but one, that is, for Jehosheba stole the baby prince Joash and hid him in the Temple. Together she and Jehoiada brought him up there till at the age of seven he was crowned king in a coup d'état.

Full marks to Jehoiada who with Jehosheba nurtured the child in the Law and the ways of The Lord.

Between them the young king Joash and the old priest Jehoiada started a root and branch reform. They tore down the temple of Baal and smashed the altars and idols, and killed the priest of Baal. Then they put a box with a hole in the lid at the gate to the Temple. The people were to bring their taxes (as required by Moses) and deposit them in the box. When there was enough money masons, carpenters and metal workers began to rebuild the Temple to its original design. With the money that was left over they made all the articles needed for the service and the sacrifices. They reinstated the true religion. Would that such a revival had continued, but Jehoiada was an old man, and at the age of 130 he died. With him died the restraining influence that kept Joash on the right road. Baal worship began again, and when Jehoiada's son spoke out Joash had him killed. Things got worse. The army of Aram (Syria) invaded Judah, and plundered the Temple. Joash was severely wounded, and when he lay on his bed his officials killed him. What a tragic end to a story that had started so well.

A Friendly Congregation?

We in Pollokshields Church make a big effort to make people feel welcome, but are our efforts successful? Perhaps the following extract from an eight year old's R.E. jotter will answer the question:-

“ I go to church with my gran and only with my gran. My gran's church is in Glasgow and it is very nice to go there. As soon as you get in my gran's church you feel very welcome. I like my gran's church.”

M.F.

Doors Open Day

On Saturday 19th September we once again had a very successful *Doors Open* day. We had 118 people visiting and all were enthralled by the beauty of our church building and stained glass windows. Many said they would like to come back to visit us again.

We had an excellent organ recital, with operatic solos from soprano Viviana Sichi and baritone Michael Diamond. Our thanks go to Liam Devlin for this, and for his own accomplished performance of works by Handel and other composers..

Thanks too to all the stewards, and to the Guild who stayed on to make tea and coffee, enjoyed by many of the visitors. The Guild coffee morning realised £314.

Thanks also to Elizabeth McKissock for the souvenir bags she made. They were very popular. Thanks also for all her help in arranging the day. Thanks too to all the organisations for the display boards, to Kenneth Ross for the church history plans, and last but not least to Hector, who worked tirelessly to make our day such a success.

Irene Macleod

The River Euphrates

If you were to sail up to the head of the Persian Gulf you would come to the mouth of the Euphrates, a river so important that in several places in the Bible it is simply referred to as 'The River'.

If you continued your journey up the river, you would soon come to Ur, Abram's birthplace. Ur was originally on the river and so became an important trading post, a centre of civilisation and a focus of religious beliefs. The Euphrates however passes through an alluvial plain and so from time to time it has shifted its course. Ur found itself a few miles 'inland', and so decreased in importance.

Abram decided to leave Ur, and made his way upstream some 600 miles to Haran. He would have passed Babylon, some 50 miles south of present-day Baghdad in Iraq.

Abram now heads west and south to Canaan but the Euphrates continues northwards upstream till it reaches Turkey. Its source is identified by some as the Garden of Eden. From this Garden flowed a river which divided into four; one of these four was the Euphrates.

Biblically the significance of the Euphrates was that it marked the eastern boundary of the land promised to Abram, and later to Moses. "Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your boundary will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the western sea." (Deut. 11.24).

In the book of Revelation we read, "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" i.e. in readiness for the battle of Armageddon.

This 1,700 mile long river meanders from the highlands of Turkey down the eastern 'leg' of the 'Fertile Crescent' to the Persian Gulf. With the Tigris it encloses Mesopotamia, where Eliezer was sent to find a wife for Isaac, and where there are other references in both the New and the Old Testaments, including the story of Balaam and his ass.

Points for Prayer

For the World Pray that President Obama's promise of international co-operation may be a reality and not just political rhetoric.

For our Country Pray that the expected autumnal increase in the incidence of swine flu may be less than feared.

For our Church Pray that we may accept and support proposals for our church's material and spiritual development.

For ourselves Pray that we may become less self-centred.

For our Minister Pray that he may not be over-stressed by the number of outside commitments he is required to shoulder.

For our Missionary Partner Pray that the Rev. Colin Johnston may quickly settle down in his new job.

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.”

Isaiah 55 .6

CrossReach

The Social Care Arm of the Church of Scotland

CrossReach has just opened a 64-bed carehome in Rubislaw Park, Aberdeen. Already 36 residents from Ashley Lodge have been transferred to Rubislaw Park. Their comments on the new building include “lovely”, “happy” and “peaceful”. The home has 24 rooms for residential care and 40 for dementia. All rooms are *en suite*.

The heating system is high tech and includes the recovery of heat from 100m deep bore holes. There are other ‘green’ features.

CrossReach areas of service are;

Children’s Services

Counselling and Support

Criminal Justice

Homeless People

Learning Disabilities

Mental Health

Older People

Substance Misuse (Addiction)

In June 2008 CrossReach launched the Bluebell Telephone Helpline (0800 3457 457) to reach among others, hundreds of families suffering from post-natal depression and despair. Our Guild contributed to the magnificent sum of £135,000 for this invaluable project.

Janice Teasdale is handling orders for the CrossReach Circle of Care calendars, which feature beautiful Scottish scenes. At £4 they are great value for money.

Biblical Connections

Answers to the quiz on page 13

1. All are on the River Euphrates
2. All are names of months in the Jewish Calendar

The Stamp of Originality

Last month we invited readers to submit ideas for subjects for designs for a set of commemorative stamps, such as the Post Office might use.

These were to be of iconic people or events in the Bible.

The winner was 'The Henderson Clan' - we understand from this that the submission was the result of a joint effort by all the Hendersons - Murray, Val, Ailsa and Rory.

Adam and Eve

in the Garden of Eden



Noah's ark and the flood



Moses parting the Red Sea



Joseph and his coat



Christ's birth in the stable



Christ on

the cross



Remember!



Remember to put your clocks back one hour on Sunday 25th October...

...and enjoy your extra hour's sleep!



**We regret to record the death last
month of
Laura Lucy Stephen
aged 100.
We hope to print an appreciation of
her life in our next issue.**

Views expressed by contributors are their own
and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors
nor of The Church of Scotland

The purpose of VISION is to record the life and work of the congregation. No editors on their own can know all that people do and feel and want, so it is up to you, whether you are an office bearer, the leader of an organisation or an ordinary member, to keep us informed.

Be in touch!

*Send us original articles, views, snippets of news –
anything you would like to share with other people*

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