

Pollokshields Church of Scotland Glasgow

VISION

April 2010

Minister: The Rev. David Black 423 4000



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Forthcoming Services

On Wednesday 31st March all are welcome to share the final “Hear I AM” Lent Study, when we have a Holy Week theme.

Holy Week Services shared with all of Pollokshields Churches Together:

*1st April 7pm Maundy Thursday Communion
in Sherbrooke St Gilbert’s
8pm Service in St Ninian’s*

*2nd April 11am Good Friday Service in St Albert’s Church
7pm Good Friday service here in Pollokshields Church.*

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- 4th April 11am Easter Morning Service, including Sacrament of Holy Communion, Junior Church and Crêche
- 11th April 11am Morning Service, Junior Church and Crêche
- 18th April 11am Morning Service, Junior Church and Crêche
- 25th April 11am Morning Service, Junior Church and Crêche

Minister's Message

As if to make a point for us about our need to upgrade our facilities, the church and hall heating were deemed unsafe to use at the beginning of March.

Thanks to the valiant efforts of Mrs Izzard the Property Convener and others we were able to celebrate Holy Communion together in the hall on 14th March, and have decided to continue worshipping there until the problem is fixed.

This focuses our minds wonderfully for the Annual Stated Meeting, about which every member was sent a letter, along with a chance to participate in this coming month's "Hear I AM" series of reflections.

We have major issues to face up to and change is necessary, no matter how much we'd rather it wasn't, and as the accounts you have all received show we simply cannot afford the upkeep on the present amount of property we own.

But it is not all negative, and we must focus our minds on what matters in our faith:

Easter is coming!

For some that means nothing more than a holiday to look forward to.

Easter is coming!

For some that means there is an absurd amount of chocolate to tempt them.

Easter is coming!

For us and all the church it means Christ is alive, and the hope Jesus gives of a different way of being is the Good News we have to share with all around us.

With all good wishes,

David R Black

Achievements and Performance

Throughout 2009 the church continued to deliver its core work of providing the ordinances of religion in its parish, through worship, preaching and mission. There were fewer baptisms, but a similar number of funerals and a number of wedding services held in the church. It was good to be able to welcome new members both on profession of faith and by transfer. We also saw an increase in the use of our building by other organisations.

Over the year the Kirk Session undertook a major period of reflection resulting in the setting of goals and priorities for 2010. These focus in three areas, an increase in elders' involvement

in the wider aspects of worship and teaching through a series which will run all year entitled "Hear I AM: Listening to God."; a review of what to do with Church House and church property in general; and finally a revision of how we provide pastoral care to the congregation.

None of this could happen without the involvement of all those who volunteer to do sometimes very unglamorous jobs, like cleaning toilets, to make sure the church is a safe and caring environment where

all are welcome and able to find their place in the family of God.

D.R.B.



"Hear: IAM"

Listening to God in 2010

THIS month, with its holiday and festival times, we have decided to offer the opportunity to listen to God as individuals, but then to bring what we have heard on our own, together in church.

Four elders chose the passages which you have all been sent, and we invite you to read them in the coming weeks.

But don't just read and think and listen to God. Write down what you have heard or thought and post your comments in the box provided at church week by week.

We will then look at the comments and discern together what they are telling us of where God wants us to be as a church in the coming year.

The minister writes: "This whole series has already in its first three months given a new spirit and energy amongst those who have participated so far. So I encourage everyone to become involved by sharing in the readings week by week, knowing that all other members, wherever they are, are doing the same thing."

D.R.B.

Hector Dickson

Following discussion in March, Hector Dickson has decided to move on from being Reader Attached at Pollokshields Church of Scotland.

In his six year's service with us, where he served as Pastoral Assistant, Hector gave us great support as part of the ministry team. Although he shared in leading worship, the greater part of his service was often unseen, particularly in his pastoral work among the congregation. His visiting, especially to those in homes and to the house bound members was very much appreciated.

He will also be missed for the contribution he has made to the practical side of church life with his advice and hands on help, in maintaining the property of the church.

We offer Hector all best wishes as he continues to serve the Presbytery of Glasgow in his capacity as a Reader.

Andrew Gillies

Andy has been with us these past six months as an Enquirer into Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The decision of the Local Review Panel at the end of his time with us was that Andy should go forward to the National Assessment Conference in April-May.

We wish him well for that assessment and as he returns to his home congregation of Partick Trinity Church.

Cover Comment

Easter

We do not need a VISION cover to remind us of the thrill when we first saw, last Easter, Hector's lovely daffodil cross outside our Church . Brilliant both in concept and execution!

They were surely stony hearts that were not lifted up by the splash of bright colour against the dark stonework of the church. For Christians though it was also a glad reminder of the joy of that first Easter, when the sight of Christ on the cross was replaced by His "Mary!" in the garden and His "Peace be with you!" to the disciples in the locked room.

The word 'Easter' comes from the Anglo-Saxon, Eostre-monath. The original term for the celebration of Christ's resurrection was Pascha (pronounced *paska*.)

Various Easter symbols have appeared from time to time. The Easter egg is a symbol of new beginning, though many see it as representing the stone that was rolled away from the tomb. The hare, a symbol of fertility, has given way to the rabbit. Chocolate though not exactly a symbol of Easter now seems inextricably linked with Easter!

The line of the popular song that ends "...and man shall live for evermore because of Christmas Day" should better be "... because of Easter Day." Easter rather than Christmas is and always has been the most important of all Christian festivals.

QUEENS

KINGS' wives in the Bible are counted rather than named. Solomon for example had 700 wives, but these are not regarded as queens. In the Bible the term 'queen' is usually reserved for those who reign in their own right, either in Palestine or in a foreign country.

The most notable of these was the un-named **Queen of Sheba**. She made the 1,200 mile journey from Yemen to visit Solomon. The Bible gives the reason "to test him with hard questions", but reading between the lines we may guess a hidden agenda, that of establishing diplomatic and commercial relations between the two countries. (Solomon's might was threat to the income she received from the trade routes that crossed her country.)

Jezebel did not herself reign but her influence on King Ahab was such that she had her own way with establishing idolatry and other forms of evil.

“As a powerful Queen-mother she simply took over.”

Ahaziah was the mother of King Ahaz but when the latter died as the powerful Queen-mother she simply took over. For a start she consolidated her position by destroying the whole royal family.

Two more queens are named:

Vashti deserves praise. At a drunken party her husband King Xerxes ordered the lovely Queen Vashti to come and show off her charms to the no doubt equally drunken guests. She refused to degrade herself in this way and her very proper modesty resulted in her being exiled for ever from the royal court.

Esther, her replacement, was equally beautiful but played her cards better. She heard of a plot to kill all the Jews. Little by little, and at real risk to herself, and without revealing too soon that she herself was Jewish, she persuaded the King, not to annul the order for the Jewish genocide, for no law of the Medes and Persians written in the King's name and signed with his seal, could be revoked, but instead to get round the problem by issuing another edict permitting the Jews to defend themselves, and indeed to retaliate.

Thus the beautiful and courageous Esther saved the whole of her race and secured for herself a place in the Jewish calendar of feasts.

Biblical Connections

What connects the following words?

HO ly

JO e

AM iable

OB stinate

JO ining

MI chael

Hint: "It's a mnemonic - 6 out of 12 (OT)"

The answer is on page 9

From Alan Clark

New Job

I am pleased to say I have now found a new job.

I have started working for 'Go Outdoors' new store in Clydebank on March 4th. It is a much bigger store than I have worked in in the past, but I am looking forward to the new challenges it will bring.

I would like to thank everyone in the congregation who have supported me over the past three months of my unemployment. I would especially like to thank my friends who have been very supportive throughout to me and offered help and advice.

For All Thy Saints...

SCOTLAND has a fair number of Saints; those chaps who suffered incredible hardships to spread the Good News throughout this land when it was ruled by Pagans. They suffered great dangers, they travelled many miles on foot, and experienced great hostility.

Many of them are now more or less unknown. Usually we know them only by place names and dedications to small rural churches. To be a front line saint you have to have a good biographer. Most of us know Saint Ninian and Saint Columba and Saint Kentigern. However not many of us know, for example, Saint Kessog.

There appears to be a conspiracy of silence concerning our other saints. This made me feel I wanted to know more about this obscure man. I found that most of the information that there is comes from book called the Aberdeen Breviary, written by Bishop Elphinstone in around 1500. This book is more a record of traditions, and is not too reliable when it comes to details.. St. Kessog is said to have come from Ireland, but I can find no record of him in the Annals of Ireland. It is claimed that he converted the Picts to Christianity, and there are a number of places dedicated to his name. This would back up the claim that that he should have been Scotland's Patron Saint. However, this would mean that his life and death would have to be substantially later than that recorded in the Breviary. I wonder if he might have been a follower of St. Columba, who sent him into the land of the Picts to convert them. But this is speculation. For reasons unknown, he captured the imagination of the Scottish people in pre-reformation times and was held in reverence by our ancestors.

I visited Luss on Loch Lomondside recently. The church there is dedicated to Saint Kessog, and the Minister and congregation there are trying to make Luss a place of pilgrimage. →

I think this is a great idea. Luss is a lovely place to visit, The little church is beautiful. There is an effigy of Bishop Robert Colquhoun, a 10th century hogback tomb and a very interesting visitor centre. The Minister is a real character who knows all about St. Kessog.

Can I suggest that a trip to Luss would make a lovely day trip for sometime in the summer.

K.G.R.

Biblical Connections

Answer to the question on page 7

The first two letters of each word are the first two letters of the first six of the twelve Minor Prophets

The complete mnemonic is:

H Oly	H Osea
J Oe,	J Oel
A Miable but	A Mos
O Bstinate	O Badiah
J Oins	J Onah
M ichael's	M icah
N Asty	N Ahum
H Abit of	H Abakkuk
Z Ero	Z Ephaniah
H Aggling with	H Aggai
Z Eke's	Z Echariah
M Ama	M Alachi

Ephesus

Ephesus, now in ruins, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. For many years it was the second largest city in the Roman Empire, with a population of around 250,000. Just across the Aegean Sea, it was a top Mediterranean centre. It was prosperous, with mosaic pavements and streets paved with marble.

It had many notable attractions. The one best known to Bible readers was the Temple of Artemis (Diana). This was built in 550 BC and stood for almost 1,000 years before being destroyed by a mob led by St. John Chrisostum.

In St. Paul's time the silversmiths made lucrative livings by selling shrines of Artemis. Led by Demetrius they rioted and cried out that the preaching of Paul and his colleagues was damaging their business and threatening their livelihood. Shouting "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!" they seized Gaius and Aristarchus. Eventually the Town Clerk, with both wisdom and courage, calmed the mob assembly and dispersed the crowd.

Ephesus was one of the Seven Churches in Asia named by St. John in the book of Revelation. Its Angel commended their hard work and patience and their hatred of the heretical Nicolaitans. However he warned them "How far you have fallen! You do not love me as you used to. Turn from your sins!"



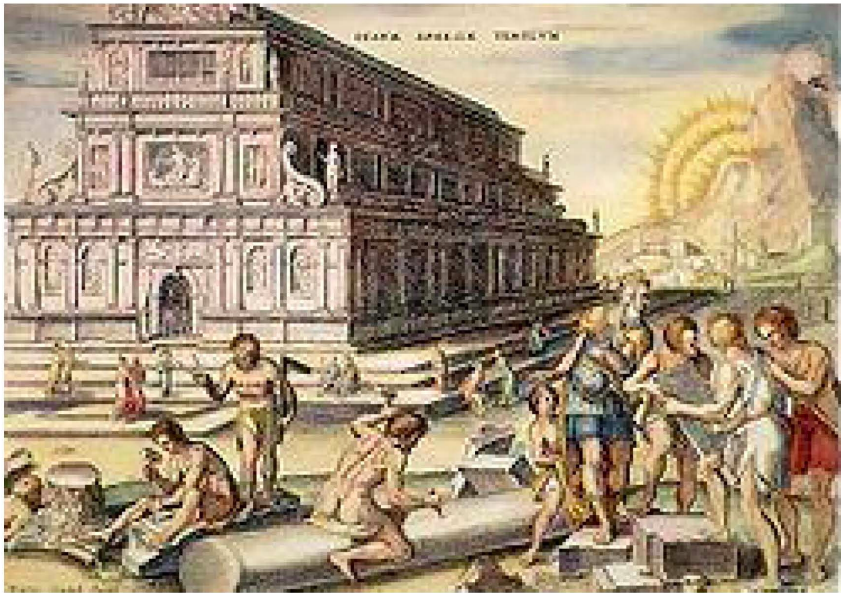
1st century AD statue of Artemis, at the Archaeological Museum in Selcuk, near Ephesus.



Site of Temple of Artemis



Model of Temple of Artemis, Istanbul



16th Century fantasy painting of the construction of the temple

Points for Prayer

For the World

Pray for an end to poverty - where children forage in rubbish tips for any items that they can sell to buy food, and where reading and writing are skills available to a very few.

For Our Country

Pray that truth and honesty with compassion may become the norms, instead of greed and sleaze.

For Our Church

Pray that your Holy Spirit may counsel and over-rule in matters affecting the future of our church..

For Ourselves

Pray that we may learn to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly.

For Colin Johnston our missionary partner

In circumstances where violence and hatred can explode at any time, that you will keep him safe and mindful of your leading.

Give thanks

for God's providence in this life and for the certain hope for the life to come.

“God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the Church!

Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations!

Glory through all the millennia! Oh yes!”

Ephesians 3.20-21 (The Message)

“What we can do...”

Shona Morrison, one of the co-leaders of the first session of “Hear: I AM”, writes:-

FEBRUARY saw a series of “Hear I Am” sessions on Poverty, Charity and Justice. We discussed a variety of issues surrounding people living with poverty, both internationally and at home. Our final session centred around **what we as individuals and as a congregation can actually do** about these issues and a number of positive ideas came out of this. But we need your help! Although still in the discussion stages we are hoping to get anybody who is interested involved in the planning, running or implementation of these activities.

If you did not attend the sessions, or have not run events within the church before, we would still love to hear from you. You can do as little or as much as you like but the main thing is to get involved! Please email shonahmorrison@hotmail.com to get in touch.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK is also coming up from the 9th-15th May and anybody who is interested in helping with activities on the lead up to and during this week is encouraged to get in touch with Shona Morrison. More information on this to follow.

Congratulations to Stephen and Silvia Pacitti on the arrival of their first grandson Connor.

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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Printed and published by
Pollokshields Church of Scotland Glasgow
<www.pollokshieldschurch.org.uk>