

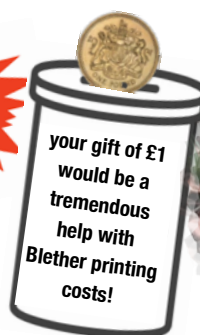
balerno



Blether

the magazine and newsletter of Balerno Parish Church; for the Church and for the Community

FREE



Issue no 39



Parish Churches and available public space



Do we own Balerno Parish Church, or if not us, then who does? The short answer is that neither the Church nor the associated campus are owned by the congregation, albeit there are some protections for our interest. No; ownership lies with the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Is that the end of the matter then? Well, yes and no. Balerno Parish Church are responsible for maintenance.

Communities depend on having access to facilities in their area for a whole host of activities from childcare to pensioners clubs with everything else in between. Overall Balerno is not well catered for in terms of community facilities.

Local authorities are not obliged to provide community centres, although they have powers to do that. However, the days of local councils ensuring that every community of the size of Balerno had an associated town or village hall are long gone. There is of course a continuing need for publicly available space; and that need increases as the village expands. So the questions arise, where and how are those facilities to be provided in Balerno,

We can all list the available premises, and Balerno Parish Church is a prominent provider. It and its associated halls sit physically at the centre of Balerno, occupying a prime position facing directly down towards Lanark Road West. Floodlit, the buildings are a beacon on approach, visible from almost a quarter of a mile. Not every church enjoys such a prominent position in its community.

The Parish Church has the largest halls in Balerno outside of the High School and it is the only location outside of the High School with capacity to accommodate up to 200. The St Joseph's Centre provides two large halls and one meeting room. It has cinema facilities, operated mainly by Balerno Village Screen. The Mill Cafe, open four days a week and on Market Days, is a meeting place for the whole community. It accommodates an after-School club as well as informal nursery-age meeting and play space. Balerno Parish Church and its halls are critical to Balerno's ability to thrive as a community.

But neither the Parish Church, nor the Village Trust, nor the Rugby Club nor the Scouts nor the Bowling Club, as other providers, whether on their own, or together, can meet foreseeable demand far less the increase likely as we continue to pull out of COVID's shadow and grow the community. There is a real under-provision especially, although not uniquely, in after school and nursery capacity, largely because there is a dearth of premises.

We might consider then whether Edinburgh Council, as the local authority, is doing all that it could to ensure that community infrastructure is sufficient to meet demand. If Balerno Parish Church's facilities were for any reason not available, then there would be a real crisis in the community.

Balerno Village Trust are currently seeking to acquire the former Police Station on Bridge Road for community use. The addition of the Police Station as a community asset would make a considerable difference to the overall stock available to the community. It would not be a complete answer to the current under-provision in what a community of Balerno's size should be entitled to expect. Balerno's population has risen by over 30% over the past twenty years, but community facilities have not kept up.

As a measure of preventative spend, the importance of community facilities, and by extension the countless voluntary groups and clubs which thrive in them, cannot be underestimated. When community facilities are closed down, the negative social impacts which can then arise are well known.

There is no suggestion that Balerno Parish Church's facilities are at all under threat but the value of their availability for the community is critical

In our view it can do no harm for the relevant authorities, whether church or lay, to be reminded of the importance of properly resourced infrastructure in all communities, including Balerno.

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After a few months inexcusable absence it's back! Here's who we think we are! is a light hearted column in which we interview folk or they can tell us something of what we probably *don't* know about them. If you'd like to tell us about yourself then please get in touch with the editor!

This month we feature **Rev Derek Munn**, our Locum Minister.



I was ordained and introduced as an OLM to Dalmeny and Queensferry Parish Church on 8th September 2022 - a day to remember as it was also the day on which Queen Elizabeth died.

It had been a 4-year journey from when I unexpectedly heard God calling me to ministry. And what a journey it's been! It's a real example of what can be achieved when, like Peter you step out of the boat and put your trust in Jesus. I've met some amazing inspirational and supportive people along the way.

I'm now in my sixties and I've been married to Fiona for 37 years and we have one grown-up son, Alexander who lives in Glasgow and a not so grown-up cocker spaniel, Fanta (named thus because he's orange, fizzy and full of E-numbers!) I grew up in Clarkston in Glasgow and attended Williamwood Parish Church. When Fiona and I married we lived in Edinburgh for over 20 years, where we attended St Ninian's in Corstorphine. We moved to Fife in 2014 and attended Dollar Parish Church, before moving back to Edinburgh in 2021, while I was finishing my studies.

I trained as a graphic designer, working for the last 20 years for Fife Council. Having a creative mind has helped shaped my preaching - thinking out of the box can sometimes help get across some tricky concepts. As well as that, all my placement churches have benefited from some new logos, posters and leaflets! My first placement was at

St Ninans in Dunfermline, followed by six months at Slateford Longstone, six months at Davidsons Mains and finally almost 2 years as part of the team at Dalmeny and Queensferry (DQPC) where I was ordained. At DQPC as well as preaching, I headed up the pastoral team, worked with children and families and led fresh expressions of church.

In my spare time I love reading, bingeing on box sets and walking (usually at the end of a stretched lead behind Fanta!) I also have ambitions to build a model railway. I love visiting model rail shows and perusing magazines - in my head I have this amazing model - I do have bits and bobs in the attic - so maybe one day!!

It also might have not gone un-noticed that I enjoy collecting shoes - I love a bargain and can't resist - the more colourful the better. I do have a big section of the wardrobe to keep them in, so maybe time to call a halt (Fiona is running out of space!) - after all, the collection 'will see me out' as they say! *(You can see some of Derek's shoe collection online in the November 2024 Blether!)*

Coming to Balerno has been a wonderful experience. Fiona and I have been so touched by the wonderful warm welcome we've received and are really impressed by the enthusiasm and 'can do' attitude of the congregation. It's been a privilege to journey with you all on the next stage of journey as you move towards union with Currie Kirk.

Although it's an uncertain time for you all, I sense that God has so much more in store for you. If you have the courage to step out who knows where he will take you -

If you'd like us to tell your story then please get in touch with the editor!

Choral column

Palm Sunday will be even more special this year! 2025 will see the church resounding to Lloyd Larson's Cantata, Wondrous Love. With rich piano lines and a new melody, Lloyd Larson completely recasts the early American hymn to give it a warmth and a sense of awe during the Lenten season.

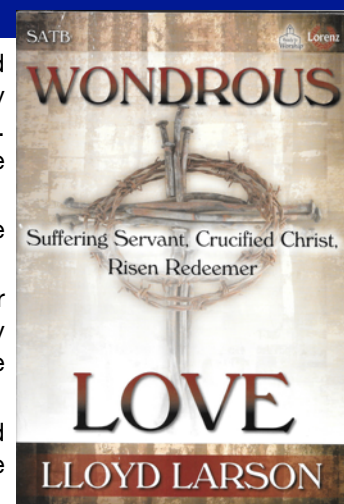
Hints of the familiar tune are woven into the score and the piano accompaniment is expressive without overshadowing the beauty of the melody.

Wondrous Love will be sung as the core of the Palm Sunday joint service in Balerno, and you are invited to be at the heart of it by joining with and being part of the choir for this event.

The Choir practices in St Joseph's Hall in Balerno each Thursday 7.30 - 9.30. In the run up to Easter the Choir will devote the first hour of each practice to the Cantata enabling those who are only singing the cantata to leave if they wish, the second part of the practice will be used for the routine preparations for Sunday worship.

If you enjoy singing please come and join us. This is a great way of telling the Easter story. Lloyd Larson's setting is not difficult, in modern parlance you would describe it as 'accessible'. If you are apprehensive, come and give it a try, it's quite painless and tea, coffee and biscuits are included.

Any questions please contact Martin Petty (mpetty712@gmail.com - 449 4175) or Irene Rogerson (irenerogerson@btinternet.com - 449 4044).





While Irene and Derek discuss a deep theological point in the Library Corner



Fiona helps to develop the overall architectural plan,

and Allan (yes, that's Allan pointing at the camera), advises, very very vehemently, against the use of AI or indeed Photoshop in the Blether (what are they then? - Ed)

Fantastic! Best thing ever! LEGO CHURCH was a not-to-be missed event on Saturday 8 February when the Main Street was buzzing with the February Market, and the Parish Church was a hive of chatter and music as 28 kids ranging in age from 2 to 14 or so, and beyond that there were countless more Big Kids, all trying to master the art of manipulating bricks. And lots of helpers, some of whom may well, of course, also have been Big Kids, 'lending a hand'. And the guy at the back with the yellow face and the big smile? Someone said maybe he was from Presbytery come to suss out Balerno's success story. He's got a huge smile anyway, and Derek seems to know something about that; and so he should because all this was his idea. And it was sensational!

And all the time, while we all know there's another brick just like this one, that I'm holding, and wee know It's somewhere in an IKEA bag like this one; we just can't find it! Grrrrrr!



Lego Church at Balerno wasn't just about bricks (or Church for that matter) and if it wasn't obvious at the time, there was one two-year-old who showed he has a glittering career in front of him in break dance, with skills honed to the background of the Lego Church video. It was all about Church being part of the community and open to everybody, and so it is. Congratulations - and thank you - to everybody who made this event happen!

And congratulations also to Georgia, aged 7, for her winning entry in the Lego Church Colouring Competition February 2025.

a note from the Minister



As I write this towards the end of February, flakes of snow are drifting down! Although perhaps the weather in Balerno may not feel like it, as we stand at the cusp of winter's end, we are reminded of the gentle beauty of snowdrops. These delicate flowers, often the first to break through the frost, symbolise hope and renewal. In their quiet persistence, they whisper to us a profound truth: even in the darkest of seasons, life finds a way to emerge. When meeting with a member recently, who'd had a prolonged stay in hospital I was struck by her delight on returning home and seeing that her snowdrops in the front garden were starting to bloom. An example of how the beauty and wonder of God's creation can mean so much to us all.

Snowdrops, with their pure white petals, remind us that spring is a promise waiting to be fulfilled. Just as they bravely push through the snow, we too are called to rise above our challenges and trials. They teach us that new beginnings are possible, even when the world seems bleak.

In our own lives, we may encounter moments of despair, yet like the snowdrops, we can hold onto hope. Each bloom is a testament to resilience, a reminder that God's promises are always at work, nurturing the seeds of potential within us.

As we witness the arrival of spring, let us embrace the transformation it brings. Let us be inspired by the snowdrops to cultivate faith, patience, and joy. May we look forward to the warmth of the sun, knowing that with every season, God's love continues to renew and restore us.

WINNER!!



WELL DONE GEORGIA!



a tribute to Paul Williams (1st February 1955 - 30th January 2025)

When the Blether published a profile of Paul Williams in June 2021 we headed it 'Chorister and Master Marine? Paul was of course both, but he was so much more than that. Paul was born on 1 February 1955, middle child to Nigel and Ruth, and grew up in Sutton. Paul was devoted to his family above all else, to Wendy, son Ross and daughter Naomi, and to the grandchildren but his great loves also included music and boats, probably actually ships because they are bigger, and he spent much of his life on them. Oh yes, and cars.

As an 11 year old boy Paul was already a boy treble with two years of paid choristering under his belt, at St Nicholas, Sutton, (choirmaster Mr Squib – yes really). And this was a

professional arrangement with a fee for every Sunday early morning communion, matins and evensong. Compline, he once told us, remained his favourite, along with chanting, And all that was while Paul was still at prep school at Homefield where he also managed to play cricket against Colin Cowdrey and John Edrich; the score card is sadly not available.

Leaving school at 16 for the safety of the sea Paul embarked (which is probably the right word) on a career in the Merchant Marine with appointment as a 'snotty' with British India Line. 'Snotty' – so called from the three brass buttons on each cuff which were sufficient to dissuade any recruit from wiping his nose on his sleeve. His abiding memory, so he said and we believed him, was that gin was then 6/- a bottle. By the 80's Paul had reached the dizzying heights of Master Mariner with responsibility for a succession of cargo ships and 'reefers' – frozen goods. At just short of three football pitches long, with a turning circle of about 2 km and a stopping distance of around 3km, Paul's job was on a different scale to most.

By this time of course Paul had met and wed Wendy and they sailed the seven seas together, he as skipper and she as resident nurse and medical orderly on a round the world type trip in lieu of a honeymoon. Then family came and Wendy went ashore, closely followed by Paul who swapped the seven seas for Oil Rig Supply Ships whilst living in Wiltshire. Paul was also meanwhile modifying his working pattern by first becoming involved in trialling 'Hong Kong specials' – high speed naval intervention vessels - off Aberdeen, before finally becoming a pilot at Aberdeen Harbour, including the odd Type 42 Destroyer - message from Royal Navy HQ Bath, 'Can we get Capt Williams for this job please; he's frigate friendly.' Frigates were certainly a welcome change for Paul from piloting livestock transports from Orkney of which Paul remarked, 'You can smell them a mile away.'

And then? Wendy and he decided that the time was right to relocate to Edinburgh as joint captains of the 'Why Knot' narrow boat (or as Ross described it a 'floating gin palace') on the Union Canal, out of Edinburgh, which only went to show, in Paul's own words that 'while you can retire progressively from the sea you can't give up on boats.'

As Paul told us back in 2021 when he did a piece for the Blether looking back to where it all started you also have to retire from being a boy treble when the course of nature takes over, but you probably never get singing out of your system. And along came One Bar Rest, in which Paul was a much prized tenor and counter tenor, and was frequently also the narrator at concerts and events; a reassuring and confident voice of authority.

It was joy to be in Paul's company. If we listen we can hear him still, eyes twinkling mischievously and always with a piratical gleam. And as Ross said we will always remember him as a friend, always with a smile and a story.



Treasury notes

from the Treasurer

Our reduced level of income was heavily affected by COVID and whilst that may be several years past, regular income has been quite slow in its recovery. Let's hope that those have been the seven lean years and that we are starting seven years (and more) of plenty.

We're certainly on the up, as the following figures extracted from our provisional annual report show.

Collection receipts	+ £4834	(to £82686)
Gift Aid on qualifying giving	+ £ 787	(to £19238)
Bank Interest	+ £ 621	(to £ 1959)
Donations from our Mill Café	+ £ 4000	(to £ 8500)
Donations from other church organisations	+ £ 1790	(to £ 5180)
Hire charges for rental of campus	+ £ 5244	(to £32048)



On the 'spending' side?

As we were without a permanent minister for most of the year, this was reflected in a reduction in Minister and Manse costs of £9214. With church upkeep costs, sadly our lighting and heating costs rose by £3374 to £16334. Our current contract is almost at an end and we hope for better terms this time.

Fabric Maintenance for the church fell by £2854 but there is further remedial spending in the pipeline. Cleaning costs rose sharply. After using volunteer staff for a period we were unable to replace two of our domestic staff and had to hire contract cleaners. The additional cost of around £9000 is not greatly different to the wages for two domestic staff. Also, as the hire of our campus reaches almost an optimum level, a clean and healthy environment is seen as essential.

Downloads of the full accounts should be available from the church web site by March 8th.

DB

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remembering Aileen Wilson (2nd May 1944 - 30th December 2024)

Aileen was born on 2 May 1944 to a Sales Lady and her naval Chief Petty Officer in the Fleet Air Arm. His ship, HMS Bulwark, was torpedoed and sank shortly thereafter. Thankfully her father was rescued but was in hospital in Ceylon for most of the next year before returning to the family home to Parkhead in Glasgow. Aileen's mother was unwell however and for much of her infant life Aileen lived with her Grandfather, a Hospital Administrator and a pillar of Parkhead Congregational Church.

Meanwhile Aileen's father was invalided out of the navy and spent many years recovering after the war. A difficult beginning therefore in a 'single-end' but the upside was that her Gramp, Aunts and Uncles and Cousins were all around and the whole street was a community that pulled together and helped one another. When Malcolm Street was re-developed Aileen's family moved to the new development at Craigbank near Barrhead where life took on a more favourable aspect.

Leaving Shawlands Academy at 15, Aileen started work as a secretary with the Glasgow City Architect's office, but four years later she successfully applied for a secretarial job with the United Nations in Geneva, working to support and later as PA to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, travelling in his entourage. Her passport from that time contains notable stamps from places which were then behind the Iron Curtain, and not open to ordinary people.

On some of these trips she witnessed both the horrendous conditions people were living in and the UN's apparent inability to make much improvement in those conditions. She therefore returned to the UK and studied for a degree in Social Work at Keele.

Aileen married Arnot and together they embarked on married life in Girvan in Ayrshire where in due course they started a family, two daughters and son; Sandi, Craig and Emma.

While she wanted to bring up the children as the best use of her time. Aileen's social work training and community skills were not neglected during her time in Girvan, and she practiced quietly gaining respect, helping, and counselling anyone in her sphere, and generally getting helpful things done.

In 1981 the Wilson family moved to Balerno where Aileen quickly integrated into the community, continuing gaining respect and making many friends., (not without some difficulty), because her children kept winning the gala prizes.

As her family reached adulthood, Aileen resumed her professional career in Social Work, initially with the Citizens Advice Bureau, then with HM Prisons, at Saughton and later in the City Hospital Drug Rehabilitation Unit. When the latter closed Aileen became the social work supporter for patients in the Scottish Brain Injuries Rehabilitation Unit at the Astley Ainsley Hospital where some of her work was later selected for inclusion in the University's Social Work Training prospectus. She worked there until she retired.

Aileen was a well known and much loved member of Balerno Parish Church. An Elder she was a mainstay of the Church's Pastoral Care effort. She was also greatly involved with the Stitchers who created the several banners which adorn the interior of the Church, and she demonstrated her practical concern for others across the wider world through her work with the Balerno Fairtrade Village Group.

In the mid nineties and following her diagnosis with auto immune disorder PBC Aileen did extensive research on the condition, joining with many others in support groups around the country, finding several therapies and management strategies, which she tested, adopting those that seemed to help. Her considered strategy and religious application of these therapies were successful, greatly extending her life from the two years expected, to some Thirty. She also secured sufficient quality of life which to allow her to continue exercising the community skills which characterised her life.

During the last year Aileen's health slowly deteriorated and Aileen decided that she would avoid a repeat of the treatment if it was advised. By December she found herself confined to the house. Despite exemplary efforts by Medical and Nursing staff further decline in her health could not be arrested.

A local Fairtrade Morning

Saturday March 15, 10.00am - 12 noon in Balerno Parish Church Halls

Why, with 'official Fairtrade Fortnight' now moved to the autumn, is there still a Balerno Spring 2025 Fairtrade (FT) Morning? There are two main reasons: First: Twenty years on, a FT Morning @ BPC is now simply part of local Spring life, welcome like daffodils and sunshine, and a fresh reminder to take practical care, via FT, about our fellow-humans, whoever and wherever in the world we all are. And, second: running a Schools FT Spring Art Competition works better than over the summer.

What's planned this time? FT info, craft and food stalls with goods from around the world; a hamper and lovely 'Mill' cake to win; a Pentlands Eco Group Seed Swap; the chance to pedal yourself a FT banana smoothie thanks to Edinburgh Bike Cooperative's great smoothie bike (remember 'Bert's year', with eighty years between our youngest and oldest pedallers?); a display of winning entries from the recent Balerno Schools FT Art Competition, and the prizegiving by the Lord Provost at 11 am. In the Ogston Hall, the mighty Guild's famous refreshments and home baking, - Donations of bakery, especially small cakes and traybakes, would be most welcome for that, from BPC bakers - plus a children's activities table. Our politicians often turn out in support as well: what a chance to catch them all, and indeed to welcome our whole community. All the morning's profits will go to Transform Trade.

So many people, from BPC and way beyond, help with all of this. Detailed thanks are already being treasured for the next 'Blether', but meantime, you know who you are: thank you so much for all you're doing. And to everyone else, a huge thank you in advance for coming on the day, to support all that's going on in both Halls; without you, none of this could happen!

See you there,

Lesley Henderson for Balerno Fairtrade Village Group





Vacancy

Café Supervisor required



Balerno Parish church's initiative -The Mill Café is a thriving community café for all in the centre of Balerno which is open 4 days-a-week and on the monthly Farmers' Market Saturdays. It is staffed mainly by volunteers working with a small staff team. The Mill Café is 12 years old. Staff Positions rarely come up making this a wonderful opportunity for someone to work locally.

Part time Café Supervisor – Wednesday & Friday 8am-3.30pm (15 hrs) & a share of Farmers markets Saturdays

We would be happy to consider splitting the days to create 2 Positions should we get interest.

Job description available upon request.

Send CV with appropriate qualifications and relevant experience to:-

The Mill Café manager:- Lynsey Inglis themillatstjosephs@gmail.com

Closing date for applications: - 28/02/25

We reserve the right to offer the position to the right person should they come along earlier.

- Balerno Parish Church has been accredited as a Real Living Wage Employer



The Mill Café

**Come and visit The Mill Café at the St Joseph's Centre.
Open Tuesday to Friday,
9.00am to 2.00pm.**

(and the second Saturday of every month when Farmers' Market is on)

There is something for everyone at the Mill Café. A warm welcome awaits families, walkers, locals – in other words, the whole community. It is bright and spacious and the food is fantastic. You will find good quality coffee, freshly-baked scones, cakes and much more besides. Try it once and we guarantee you'll be back!



Why not try one of our bacon rolls or fresh-griddled pancakes? Every day we have two varieties soup, lovingly made by our Mill volunteers and staff. Or try our baked potatoes, toasted sandwiches or paninis, with a variety of tasty fillings to choose from.

We use Fairtrade products wherever possible.

The Mill Café, St Joseph's Centre, 2 Main Street, Balerno EH14 9EH

Psalm 23

Howard Goodall's setting of Psalm 23, the theme to the TV series The Vicar of Dibley, has proved to be an extremely popular piece of music in its own right. The composer's intention in writing the theme had always been to write a piece of church music which could have a life of its own, beyond the series, and this has certainly been fulfilled in his setting of Psalm 23.

Anyone who thinks about the BBC programme The Vicar of Dibley, is likely to focus on one of two things: the dry wit and humour of Dawn French or, and more likely, the now instantly recognisable theme of The Lord is my Shepherd.

23rd on the 23rd

The combined choir of Currie Kirk and Balerno Parish Church is pictured here with Michael Wilson, Organist at Currie Kirk, at Currie on 23rd February. The joint choir sang the lyrical Howard Goodall setting of the 23rd Psalm, well known also as the Vicar of Dibley arrangement.

Remembering

May 8th 2025 will mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe with the surrender of German forces on land sea and air after almost five years of warfare across the world. Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) in 2025 will be on Friday 15th August will mark the 80th anniversary of Japan's surrender and the end of World War II.

We live in uncertain times but we owe it to those who died during that conflict, and to those who lived through it, both not to forget what happened and also to try to continue to learn lessons from it.

In 2018 Balerno Parish Church commemorated the centenary of the Armistice of November 1918 in a number of ways including the mounting of a Trenches Exhibition, and the dedication of a memorial bench outside the Church. The Exhibition included a collection of memoirs from members of the congregation and the broader community, reflecting on both lived experiences and stories passed down to them by relatives and friends.

There are some 57 individual papers in the collection of memoirs under the title Voices 2018, and those can be viewed on line on the Parish Church website. They are an important statement of who we are in Balerno Parish Church, which we had intended to publish in book form but events made that impractical. However as we mark the upcoming anniversaries of the end of fighting in the Second World War, and as we move towards a union with Currie Kirk the preparation of a hard copy of that collection arguably becomes even more significant. Those involved in the preparation of the collection think it is appropriate now to restart the process.

There may be people who would like to contribute memories at this stage, and we would welcome the opportunity to include further memoirs in the collection. If you would like to then please let the Blether know and we will respond.



Do you have a minute, Lord?



It was some weeks ago that Holocaust Memorial Day was observed. This year there was added poignancy with the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz in the presence of the few remaining survivors who lived to bear witness to its horrors.

That event was rightly given widespread coverage in the media in the hope that such events should never be allowed to happen again. As a younger generation grows up with less exposure to the narrative of the horrors of the World War 2, there is a justifiable fear that they – in their ignorance - might allow an opportunity for such events to be repeated. It is commendable that the Holocaust Educational Trust continues to fight an uphill struggle trying to ensure that the excessive inhumanity of man to man is not forgotten.

But on the same news media, we still see regular reports of countless refugees in Gaza who have been rendered homeless by war and may be denied the opportunity to return and rebuild them. It may be a different time and a different place with different people, but we seem to be witnessing another outbreak of aggression with another generation being condemned to experiencing displacement and persecution.

There's a line in Matthew's gospel where Jesus talks about hypocrisy by drawing attention to our individual lack of vision with his line about, "taking the plank out of your own eye." Lord, help the world to realise that it is not enough to commemorate survival from past persecutions and oppression; we must stop it happening again to anyone.

from the Blether team



Given the dominance in the headlines of the actions of a certain American politician over the last few weeks, it doesn't seem inappropriate for the Blether to make some modest observations. One of the features of recent political change has been the strong identification of evangelical Christians with particular political parties; this has been obvious on the other side of the Atlantic and there are suggestions that the same process could be emerging in European countries.

It is reported in some parts of the press that there are politicians who would advocate a 'return to Judeo-Christian' values but, as with many political assertions, that is a statement intended to mean all things to all men – although, in this age of universal suffrage, women are included too. The exact nature of the link between religious values and social behaviour has long been a subject of academic interest and debate.

In 1904, the German sociologist, Max Weber, published his thoughts on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He came to the conclusion that Puritans who were preoccupied with the belief that salvation could neither be attained through good works nor through personal faith, tried to compensate for that uncertainty through hard work and conscientious frugality in financial management, which they hoped might put God in a more generous mood at the last judgment.

Twenty-five years later, R H Tawney, the future professor of economic history at the LSE, in his book *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, explored the relationship between Protestantism and the upsurge of economic development that followed the Reformation. Tawney, as a committed but private Christian, broadly agreed with Weber and "bemoaned the division between commerce and social morality brought about by the Protestant Reformation, leading as it did to the subordination of Christian teaching to the pursuit of material wealth."

Tawney had come to the conclusion that, as stated in Matthew's Gospel, you cannot serve God and mammon but there may be an increasing number of politicians who would like to persuade us that we can. We should not allow our politicians to forget that Christian values include those which were exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A Hint Of Spring

Haiku for March by K R Smith

Budding flowers dance
To the rhythm of the wind;
The waltz of new life



And remember Monday March 17th is St Patrick's Day.
So here's some Shamrock.



Balerno
8 February

Dear Lesley,

Food for Thought

The Old Testament is entirely Jewish, it is the record of the ups and downs of the Jewish people through the centuries, what they were subjected to, what they subjected others to and most importantly their relationship with God. It charts Israel's journey from the family of Abraham, through Moses leadership of a nation out of Egypt to what we now know as the Holy Land. It tells us of the 'purple period' with King David and King Solomon as well as subjugation to Babylon and much more.

Woven into the story is guidance, and instruction, most notably the ten commandments, and messages from God through the prophets. During Moses 40-year leadership when the Israelites escaped from slavery in Egypt and journeyed to the Holy Land Moses laid out the ground rules to help maintain order. In Exodus Moses spells out what you can expect from someone who does you wrong part of which includes the well-known phrase 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. (Exodus 21: vs 24)

Later on Micah, speaking as God's prophet, reminds the people of Israel what God has done for them in the past and says burnt offerings and sacrifices are not what he is looking for. The Lord has told you what is good: he has told you what he wants from you: to do what is right to other people, love being kind to others, and live humbly, obeying your God (Micah 6:vs8).

Jesus who studied and understood the Jewish law better than anyone, a rabbi in his own right, took Moses instructions on to the next stage telling his followers to love their enemies, pray for those that persecute you. (Matthew 5: vs 44).

There are people in Israel today claiming the whole of Israel/Palestine as their God given right, the place Moses led the people of Israel to several millennia ago, but these same people seem to be completely ignoring the guidance and laws that Moses spelt out for them. The Old Testament is packed with stories about what happens to the people of Israel when they habitually break God's laws and depart from what God has asked them to do.

Is it reasonable, right or honest to claim the Holy Land as God's gift to your nation and call out anyone who questions it while at the same time ignoring God's guidance and instruction?

Yours sincerely

Martin Petty

Letters to the Editor is an occasional column, which depends of course on there being any such letters. We are sure that there are many more questions lurking in our readers' minds than make it onto paper. But we are patient!

The Blether welcomes and will publish correspondence from our readers on the understanding that views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of Balerno Parish Church or of the Editorial Board of the Blether.



Mill Cafe welcomes Jen!

The Mill Cafe is delighted to announce the appointment of a new Cafe Supervisor for Tuesdays.

Jen Summers joined the team in early February, and here she introduces herself to the Blether readers, and looks forward to meeting you all over the next few weeks.

'Hello Blether readers,

Originally from East Anglia, via university & various jobs across the UK my husband & I moved to Balerno in 2014. Having known little about the area we soon realised we had fallen on our feet! We really clicked with all this fab village has to offer & have enjoyed becoming part of community life, especially now we have 2 young sons. We love living so close to the Pentland hills, the local climbing centres, Hillend ski slope & being close enough to Edinburgh to enjoy city daytrips too.

Joining the team at the Mill is a new challenge for me, but also brings back happy memories of my first teenage job working in ice-cream vans & catering trucks for my uncle! My working life has been quite varied since then. I've worked as a vet in practices across the UK, in animal welfare research, taught epidemiology at the Royal Veterinary College in London & in a practice management role co-ordinating mobile specialist veterinary teams travelling to operate in clinics across Scotland.

Since my 2 boys arrived I've become a huge advocate for supporting wellbeing in parents & new families. As such I have trained as a doula, breastfeeding peer-supporter & have co-run the Positive Birth Edinburgh peer support group for parents-to-be for 8 years. This ongoing interest regularly takes me across town to Leith where I volunteer at the Kin Collective Parental Wellbeing Centre as a baby-wearing consultant, providing support & advice to parents keen to carry their wee ones safely, comfortably & in whichever way works best for them. My younger son & I are also regular faces at the Mill café on a Thursday, as part of the volunteer team running the Balerno Baby & Toddler group in the Ogston Hall.

The wonderful Tuesday team at the Mill have been so welcoming already & I'm really excited to learn the ropes while getting to know all our regular volunteers & customers better.

I'm really looking forward to meeting you all as customers and friends of the Mill Cafe!

Best wishes

Jen

And we at the Mill are also looking forward to welcoming you all into the warm and cosy Mill Cafe where you can enjoy a morning coffee with scones and cakes, or lunch with our delicious home made soups and snack lunches,

Lynsey and the team

Some Prayers for Retirement

God, grant me the senility to forget
The people whom I never really liked anyway;
The good fortune to run into the
Ones that I did; and the eyesight to
tell the difference.

Dear God, so far today, I've done all right.
I haven't gossiped and I haven't lost my temper.
I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish.
But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed
And that's when I'm going to need a lot of forgiveness!

Spring moves in to Balerno; but never mind, it'll soon be autumn

The official start of spring in Scotland is 20th March, and the season continues until Saturday 21 June. It is of course followed by Summer which goes on until Monday 22 September, by which time the shops will be getting dressed up for Christmas, and we can get down to thinking about 2026. All nice and cyclical. But hang on a minute; if summer starts on 21 June and goes on until 22 September - during which it is just possible that the mercury



Snowdrops Malleny 16 February

may rise sufficiently to allow thermals to be dispensed with - why is Midsummer's Day on 27th June, only three days after the start of Summer?

For most of the northern hemisphere, the spring months are usually March, April and May, and so by this definition spring starts on 1 March. Meteorologists tend

to divide seasons into periods of three whole months based on average monthly temperatures, with summer as the warmest and winter as the coldest.

Midsummer's Day is typically celebrated a few days after the start of summer (marked by the summer solstice) because of historical and cultural reasons, where many traditions considered the "middle of summer" to be a few days past the longest day of the year, likely due to variations in the calendar and the way people perceived the progression of the summer season in the past; essentially, it marked a point where the peak warmth of summer was most noticeable.

Why isn't the Summer Solstice in the middle of summer? The tilt of the Earth produces the seasons including the weather associated with them. When the

northern hemisphere is tilted towards the Sun, it receives more direct sunlight and for a longer portion of the day, so the temperature increases.

Now another way of looking at the start of Spring is to look around at lengthening days, and at new growth. Wikipaedia will tell you that snowdrops are a sign of Spring, so that must be true must it not?. Only snowdrops are not a native species as far as Scotland is concerned although we don't know when they arrived.

Leaving all of that stuff on one side, we can see for ourselves that Spring is moving slowly into Balerno for its three months annual tour.



Winter Aconites
Malleny 16 February



Bitcoin - asset or liability

So then, just how risk averse are we? For years our banknotes have 'promised to pay the bearer - that's a comforting thought - at least if the world is going 'bust', the good 'Old Lady of Threadneedle Street' will keep us on dry land.

Those of us with decent memories will remember the so-called 'dot.com' bubble where shares in companies just invented were being snapped up by greedy investors who were watching prices rise daily. But in what were people actually investing? - a commodity? - no, simply the financial nous and

entrepreneurism of the people who floated the companies. There are no reserves, rather some balance sheets which in effect were doing anything but balance. Millions had been frittered away to the point where people's initial investment was practically worthless. That era, around 25 years ago saw many such companies go to the wall.

So' what is the difference between investing in dot.com or in Bitcoin? It is surely obvious that crypto currencies have no intrinsic value and to say that any one coin was recently 'valued' at almost \$100,000 is stretching the point to incredulity. The phrase about 'spilled milk' springs to mind in that investors could suffer horrendous losses, both actual and potential. Just how easy it might be to liquidate an entire holding in those circumstances, given a plunging 'price', would not be for the faint-hearted. Perhaps, as with dot.com companies, wise investors should have taken a quick profit.

So, what makes people invest? - often the fear of missing out on an easy ride. It has been described as the 'Greater Fool Theory' - I'll leave it to you to choose.

from Jerusalem

A Light Shining in Darkness



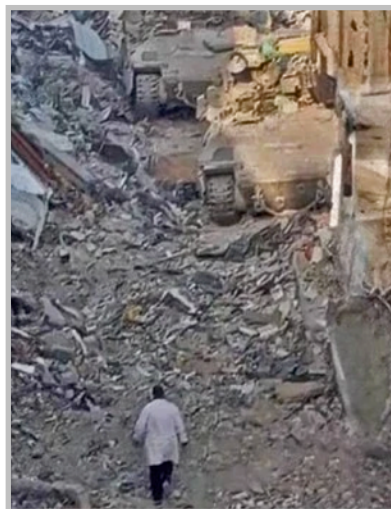
Rev Stewart Gillan
with
Rev Derek Munn
and

Rev Douglas Nicol, Interim Moderator

St Andrew's Memorial Church, also known as the Scots Memorial Church, hosts the Church of Scotland's presence in Jerusalem. It was opened in 1930, having been built as a memorial to the Scottish soldiers who died during the almost four years of the Sinai and Palestine campaign in the First World War. Today it is part of the Presbytery of Jerusalem and is currently led by Rev Dr Stewart Gillan and Rev Muriel Pearson, who together minister to congregations at St Andrews and Tiberias.

Stewart visited Balerno Parish Church on 12 February as part of a tour around Scotland during which he is speaking about his work and life in Jerusalem and as well as leading worship with congregations. The evening of 12 February was cold night but a good crowd of over forty listened to a tour d'horizon which set out just how difficult life is at present in Stewart's conflict torn corner of the Middle East. Stewart is of Scottish ancestry – his parents are Scots – and grew up in Canada. His first ministry was in South Africa, where he served as parish Minister in Alexandra township and as a researcher with the Commission of the Restitution of Land Rights. He completed his PhD at New College, Edinburgh, where he did field work with communities that had been forcibly removed from ancestral land under apartheid. You might say he was born for the post in Jerusalem.

Stewart's theme A Light Shining in Darkness was drawn from St John's Gospel (1:5) - 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' Having made reference to the modern relevance of Sir Edward Grey's reflection in 1914 that the lights were going out all over Europe, he then proceeded to pick out and focus on those glimmers of light and hope which he could see amidst the current chaos and oppression that is the West Bank and Gaza – illustrated by a striking image looking down on a white coated medic walking purposefully through towering mounds of grey rubble towards grey-brown tanks.



One point of light was Musalaha, a faith-based organisation aiming to facilitate reconciliation. Another was an Interfaith March for Human Rights in Jerusalem on June 3rd last year, in which some 300 people took part.

We also heard of what seemed like a chance encounter between a group of three Russians, and a Ukrainian and himself, a Canadian, in the middle of Jerusalem, which provided an opportunity for reconciliation between people from different nationalities whose homelands are in conflict. We were shown the icon pictured above written by a Palestinian Christian in which he identifies the background gold as the dust of Gaza.

These rays of light were set against the dark background of an oppressive system in which huge numbers of people are detained without charge far less trial. He illustrated an adversarial process to which Palestinians are subjected if they wish to register, once again, titles to land for which they hold Ottoman documents and authority. He shared a sense of frustration at

witnessing incidents of intimidation of Palestinian shepherds, by heavily armed settlers, whilst being quite unable to do anything to defuse the confrontation.

One of the unforeseen benefits to arise from the pandemic for the members of the congregations of St Andrews and Tiberias has been that people had already been introduced to meeting online through Zoom. With the flow of tourists dramatically reduced, Sunday worship sees few visitors and so online worship has perhaps become less formal to allow time for mutual support and reassurance.

The situation in Gaza and the West Bank which he described was dark and disturbing. It presented a sobering evening in which we were given a personal insight to a situation where the contrasting human emotions of love and hope are flickering in an environment dominated by fear, aggression and despair.

While the audience were generous in their donations to the work of Stewart's congregations in the Holy Land, one was left with the feeling that much prayer was also required.

Postscript; some interesting logic. It was in the course of this talk that the audience became aware of an interesting line of logic followed by some Jewish thinkers. What follows may be a little simplified, but the line of thought seems to go like this: if we start with the opening verses of Genesis where we read, 'In the beginning was the word,' we are led to understand that the word came first; and the word was God. The logic of the argument is based on the idea that God exists as the word: they are regarded as being synonymous. The logic of what then follows seems to involve the dropping of the definite article of 'the' word and its replacement with the indefinite article 'a' word to argue that if something does not have a name, then it does not exist. Following that logic, it would appear that there are Jews of a particular persuasion who refuse to use the name 'Palestine' in the belief that without a name it does not, and cannot exist, and therefore requires no consideration.

In some ways it is an appealing logic as it implies that global problems such as poverty, racism and ignorance could be simply resolved by the deletion of these words from the dictionary. Would that solutions could be so simple!

Have you been watching Traitors?

Yes, it was quite good fun. Fancy someone getting murdered every night

Don't get carried away – it's only a game.

Do you remember when you invited me to your Presbyterian meeting?

What's that got to do with Traitors?

Every time they meet, they all sit round in a circle and say their piece

That's because it's a church as well as a place to hold their meetings.

How do we know which of them were traitors?

There weren't any Traitors – like in the TV programme they were all Faithfuls.

Well, whose job was it to murder people, and how do they decide who to choose?

They don't – each person has been chosen by their own Kirk Session, so why would they want them to be murdered?

That's not much fun then, it's as if they all get immunity – that way the game will never end

It's not a game – they discuss serious matters relating to their churches.

But if everybody has a different opinion, whose idea gets rejected first?

They take a vote among all the people present.

Well, that's just what they do in Traitors, except that to speed up the process there's a nightly murder plus someone gets sent home.

You can't do that – it would be like being a traitor.

That's what I've been telling you, but how do you know who were originally chosen as Traitors.

AAghh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Treasurer's Thumb waking up to a fine ale

'Saw some cracking snowdrops today Thumb!' 'Well done Sir!', says I while at the same time trying thumbfully to understand why he felt the need to tell me, especially at three in the morning, when most right minded folk might think people, even thumbs, might be entitled to some down time. Thinking also, however, that since I have been rudely awoken, and deprived of rest, it was only right that I should somehow return the compliment, I ventured, therefore, five minutes later, 'I wonder sir, whether you have ever pondered how useful a thumb is to your good self?' 'Don't tempt me.' The 'o' was somewhat drawn out, indicating mild irritation. 'Don't tempt me', he repeated, showing he was indeed awake even if only just. On reflection and remembering that discretion is almost always the better part I retreated from the field, for the time being at least. Now you may think it unworthy that I should take any satisfaction from troubling himself's sleep. And you would be right; of course I should not have disturbed his slumber. Except that his sleep is my sleep; he wakes up, I wake up and am expected immediately to be on duty.

In the great scheme of things a thumb is always only a thumb, even if a thumb can be so much more. Consider. Names; Tom Thumb for example, who became a General, or did he?. Or Thumbelina? Then what about the verb 'to thumb'. How many of you, my friends, share not just your name, but your species, with a verb. Yes I know there's 'head the ball' of as people will insist here; 'heid the ba'. Then there's 'eye' someone or something; or 'eye right' although that's maybe there's an 'a' in there somewhere. But the expressions 'to thumb' is well recognised, as in the pressing of a button or something, or thumbing through a book, or thumbing a lift. Or 'thumbs up'; in Germany pressing thumbs together is a sign of support; both fists together and pushed out in front of you. Careful there's nobody in the way.

While we're about it a thumb can be a literary figure. Take Sir Arthur's great Sherlock Holmes work, the Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb; although my namesake comes to an exceedingly messy end near to the beginning of the tale, in a passage altogether too gory to repeat here. Besides which it reminds me of my own sad experience - which you can of course revisit if you wish in the August 2022 issue of the Balerno Blether. So while it is a good tale we'll pass swiftly on from the Sherlock's imaginer even if he supplies probably the best pies and ale in the City - York Place with a fine view down Leith Walk. (no advertising, please - Ed).

It's not easy being a thumb but I have to bury the hatchet - all these idioms make me nervous - so I move on to ask himself, 'Where were these cracking snowdrops then, sir?'

'Snowdrops? What snowdrops Thumb? What *on earth* are you talking about?'

Silence. 'Stupid boy'; with the usual emphasis on the first of course.

Oh dear; business as usual. 'Thank you Sir...Will that be all for to-daySir?' 'What's that? Oh yes, yes, carry on Thumb, carry on.'

Copy deadlines

Copy for April issue of the Blether by Friday 14 March, please!.

WOOF

[by appointment]

Hello again my friends,

Sadly, as I expect you were suspecting, my hopes of a 'royal' future failed to materialise but the position of guard dog at the local butchers does have some benefit – especially the tasty bites.

So, its back to normal everyday doggie problems and the excitement which one hopes will inevitably follow.

Talking of which, we have two newcomers in the area - lady doggies and possibly twins, who are creating quite an amount of interest. All the local lads are trying to head the queue, but what does one offer a lady in an effort to secure her companionship? Some have dug up their supply of old bones and selected a suitable one – others simply prance up and down, showing off.

In my case, I thought of reserving some juicy titbits from the butcher to offer a banquet of sorts but then I thought, that would reduce the amount available for me and if an intended liaison wasn't to be a lasting event, such generosity would have been a total waste.

Oh dear, the best laid plans – you know there really are benefits to being a single chap – and I'm not getting any younger.

'til next time! woof woof



Calendar announcements

Unless otherwise notified Sunday worship is at 10.00am every Sunday at Balerno Parish Church

March 2025 Services

Sun 2 Mar - Communion at 10.00am and 3.00pm
Wed 5 Mar - Ash Wednesday
6.45pm service at Balerno Parish Church

Easter services 2025

Sun 13 Apr; 10.00am; - **Palm Sunday**; Joint service with Currie at Balerno Parish Church
Service of readings and songs led by the Choir will include
Palm Sunday Cantata
Thurs 17 Apr; 7.00pm **Maundy Thursday**
Joint service at Balerno Parish Church
Fri 18 Apr; 7.00pm **Good Friday**
Joint service at Currie Kirk
Sun 20 Apr; 10.00am **Easter Sunday**
Service at Balerno Parish Church

March 2025 events

Sun 9 Mar; Lent Study Group; Sundays throughout Lent; (9 March - 13 April) at 7.00pm at St Joseph's;;contact Church Office to book a place! bpc-admin@balernoparishchurch.org.uk
Fri 14 Mar; Messy Church at Gibson Craig Hall, Currie; 2-4pm; fun & games, crafts and bible stories

Sat 15 Mar; A Fairtrade Morning; St Joseph's Centre; 10-12 noon
FT crafts and food stalls; childrens activities; Win a hamper!; Win a cake; SMOOTHIE BIKE!!!: FT Schools are displaying and awards by

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh

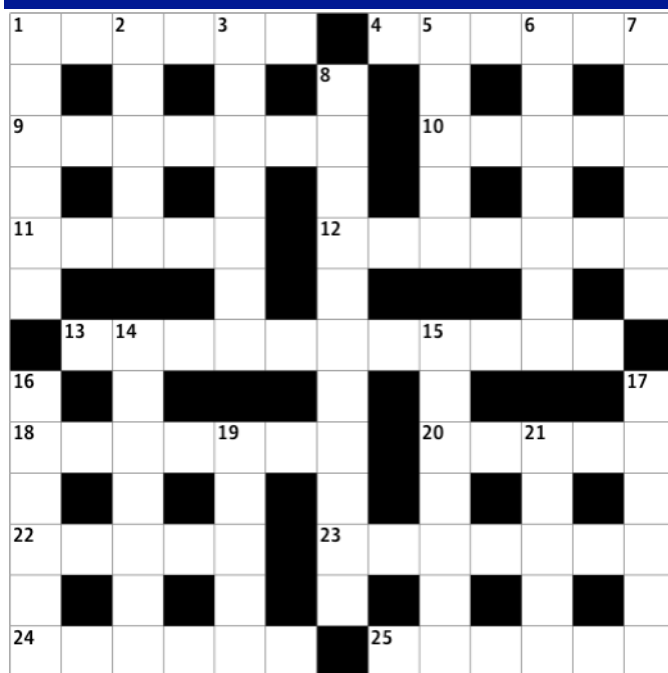
Refreshments by the Guild in Ogston Hall(Donations of bakery, especially small cakes and traybakes, would be most welcome for that!)

Sat 29 Mar ;Classical Charity Concert BPC; 2.00pm -3.00pm. by students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland;Tickets &7.50 from Church Office; U18 free but must be accompanied by an adult

Crossword corner February answer

S	C	R	I	M	P	M	E	D	I	A
P	A	O				O	U	I		
P	A	U	P	E	R	A	U	S	S	I
R	P	A				N	T	A		
K	I	L	O		T	E	D	D	Y	B
N	R	O			E			I	E	
G	E	T	C	R	A	C	K	I	N	G
S	M		I	O				N	U	
P	U	B	C	R	A	W	L		F	U
I	A	E			L	I	Z			
D	E	S	I	G	N		E	N	D	A
E	S	A			T	E	E			
R	I	Y	A	L		P	E	D	L	A

Crossword Corner March 2025 puzzle



Across

- 1 Demand firmly (6)
- 4 Delivered personally (2,4)
- 9 Jersey (7)
- 10 Prestige (5)
- 11 Large passenger ship (5)
- 12 Kindly reception (7)
- 13 Supine (4,7)
- 18 Malicious gossip (7)
- 20 Umbilicus (5)
- 22 Commotion (informal) (3-2)
- 23 Tympanic membrane (7)
- 24 Circle of flowers or foliage (6)
- 25 Truth - girl's name (6)

Down

- 1 Treat with contempt (6)
- 2 Unyielding - rump (5)
- 3 Liberate (3,4)
- 5 Country bumpkin (5)
- 6 Robot in human form (7)
- 7 Drive away (6)
- 8 Person attracting a large audience (5-6)
- 14 Fashionable (French) (1,2,4)
- 15 Home of the Grand National (7)
- 16 Shun (6)
- 17 Ham-fisted (6)
- 19 Distributed the cards (5)
- 21 Drive (anag) - composer (5)

**Copy deadline
for April issue
Friday 14 March**

Balerno Parish Church and Currie Kirk LENT STUDY GROUP



LENT STUDY GROUP



We will meet on Sunday evenings from 7pm at the St Josephs Centre in Balerno, Edinburgh starting 9th March until Palm Sunday 13th April to book a place email bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk

Additional material available at sanctuaryfirst.org.uk



Useful Numbers

Locum Minister Rev Derek Munn
dmunn@churchofscotland.org.uk
Interim Moderator. Rev Douglas Nicol
Church Administrator (Church Office)
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bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk
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