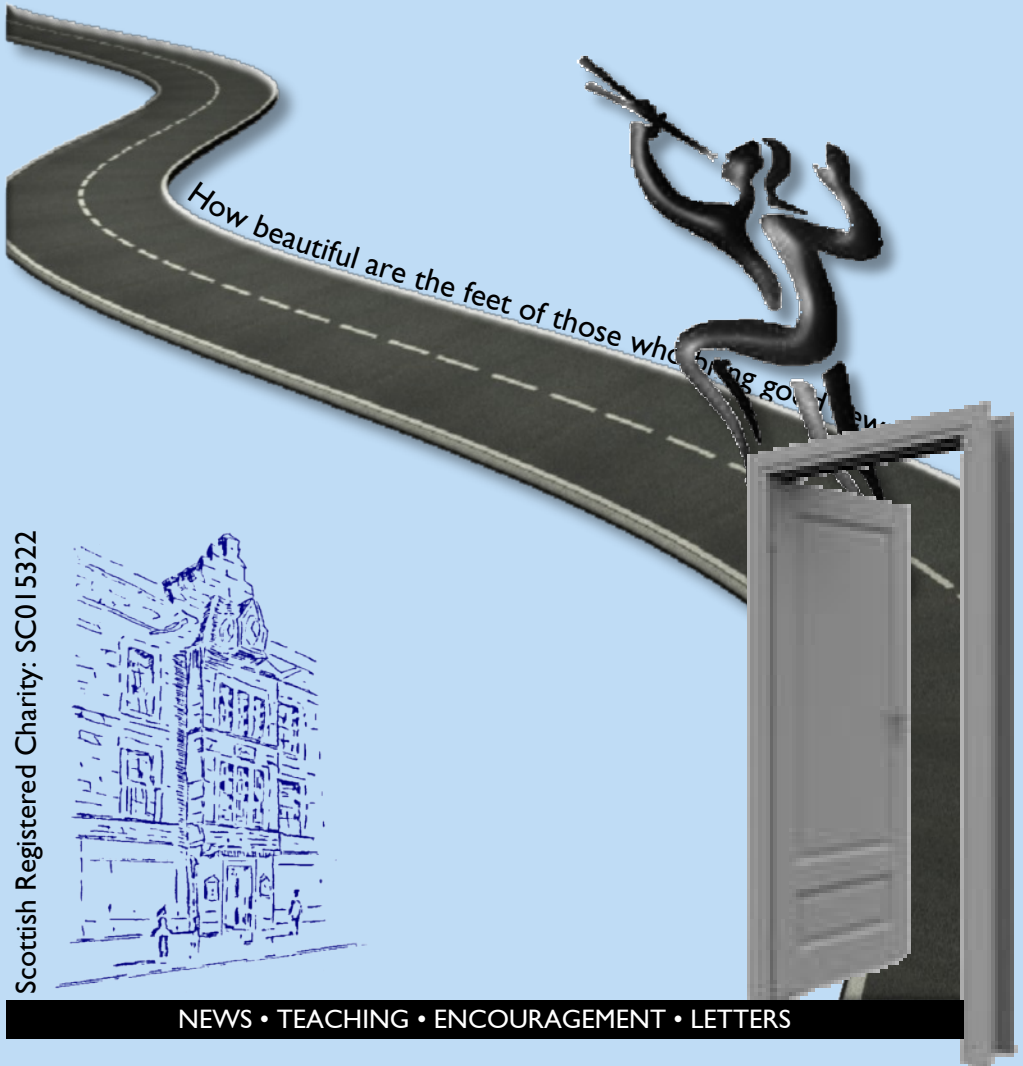


The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • February 2013



Scottish Registered Charity: SC015322

NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

		Tues	10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer
		Wed	07.30 p.m.	Midweek Prayer & Bible Study
February	5th	Tues	07.30 p.m.	Management Meeting
	23rd	Sat	9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.	Vision Day (See separate flier)
	27th	Wed	07.30 p.m.	Annual General Meeting
March	31st	Sun	11.00 a.m.	Resurrection Sunday
	31st	Sun		“Spring forward – clock change”

FUTURE SERMON PLAN

February	3rd	– “What It Means To Take Jesus Seriously” (Matt. Ch 8 vv 18 – 34)
	10th	– Pulpit exchange with Old Parish Church (Rev Andrew Patterson)
	17th	– “Leadership Lessons From Jesus” (Matt. Ch 9 vv 1 – 38)
	24th	– “Getting Over Being Overwhelmed” (Matt. Ch 9 vv 37 – 38)
March	3rd	– “Defining Your Mission” (Matt. Ch 10 vv 1 – 15)
	10th	– “Dealing With Opposition” (Matt. Ch 10 vv 16 – 33)
	17th	– “The Ultimate Sacrifice” (Matt. Ch 10 vv 34 – 42)
	24th	PALM SUNDAY
	31st	RESURRECTION!

SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

February	03rd	Rev Jarod Meenan (<i>Aberdeen University Chaplain</i>) & <i>Bridge of Don Baptist Church Pastor</i> Rev Jim Turrent (<i>Dundee University Chaplain</i>) & <i>Dundee Central Baptist Church Pastor</i>
	10th	Thurso and Scarferry & Selkirk
	20th	Sheddocksley, Aberdeen & Shettleston
	24th	Shotts & South Leith, Edinburgh

February 2013

Dear Friends,

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matt. ch 28 v 19 -- 20)*

Rích Stearns, the president of World Vision, calls it the domino theory of spiritual impact. Imagine a long line of dominoes. When one falls, it starts a chain reaction that can cause dozens or hundreds more dominoes to fall. For instance, Jesus set up 12 dominoes (His disciples), mentored them, empowered them with the Holy Spirit, and then sent them off to go and do likewise. Now there are over 2 billion followers of Christ in the world. That's a lot of dominoes!

Stearns provides the following story about the spiritual impact that one person can have. In the 1880s, Robert Wilder, a missionary kid from India, was preparing to return to the mission field. During college, he even signed a pledge along with friends to become a missionary. But because he was so physically frail, he never fulfilled that pledge. Instead, he encouraged others to take up the task. One domino fell.

During a preaching tour that took Robert through Chicago, he spoke to an audience that included Samuel Moffett. Samuel also signed Robert's pledge, and within two years he landed in Korea. Another domino fell.

A few years later, Samuel shared the gospel with a man who had become disillusioned with his Taoist practice. Kiel Sun-chu trusted Christ, and quickly another domino fell.

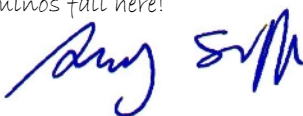
In 1907, Kiel was one of the leaders of the Pyongyang revival. In January of that year, spontaneous prayer and confession broke out during regular Church meetings. Thousands of dominoes fell. Those days of fervent prayer are now considered the birth of an independent, self-sustaining Korean Church.

When Kiel died in 1935, 5,000 people attended his funeral. The church in Korea now numbers about 15 million, and it sends more foreign missionaries than any other country outside the United States. Millions of dominoes continue to fall.

What might happen if we catch that vision. Our desire is not just to add numbers to the Church, but to make disciples, who will make disciples who will make disciples who will ...

Let's see some dominos fall here!

Your pastor

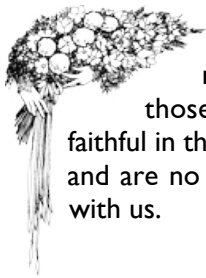


(Cont'd from Pastor's letter)

We have at least three new opportunities to do this:

- **TryPraying** -- a low key mission initiative. It simply involves asking someone if they have ever "*tried praying ...*", and then giving them a small booklet with stories and scriptures and guidelines to get them praying. The aim is for them to enter in to a relationship with God. Forty other churches in Edinburgh have been involved in this initiative for some years now. We are joining them. Ask Andy for a booklet.
- **Discipleship Explored** -- is a six week informal dvd based discussion on growing as a disciple. It suits new and also established Christians. It could be run during the day if that suits.
- **Prayer Chain** -- we plan to start a prayer chain for immediate dissemination of prayer needs. If you want to sign up, then see Andy.

THE CHURCH FAMILY



We continue to remember, in prayer, all those who have been so faithful in the service of the Church and are no longer able to worship with us.

PRAYING FOR THE FLOCK

(1 Thess. 5:17; Acts 6.4)

(Eph 6:18) "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints"



Each month this new section will include a cluster of names taken from the Church Directory so that we can uphold them particularly in prayer over this month.

CHURCH DIRECTORY 2013

Please see Ewan Sinclair if you would like to be included.

TRIBUTE TO MRS JEAN THOMSON

It is a privilege to pay tribute to Mrs Jean Thomson who passed away on Tuesday 8 January in St Anne's Care Home where she had been a resident for several years. She was 97 years of age, the oldest member of this Church.

She and her husband David joined Portobello Baptist Church on 30 March 1986 after a long association with the Christian Brethren. The meeting they attended up town was closing and they decided to join the local Baptist Church. Jean said they liked the preacher. She and David became actively involved and

devoted members. They were unfailing in their attendance. Jean was involved in women's activities. David was appointed a deacon of the Church and Jean was very active in a practical way.

At that time a coffee morning was held on a Friday morning and the story goes that a new minister came to the Church and met with the women on one occasion. He was asking what they did in the Church to which Jean replied "*I make the pancakes*".

Another of her practical skills was knitting and making tea cosies. A considerable number of these were sold within this Church, in other Churches and in the community. Jean kept the proceeds in a large jar. It was for needy causes including missionaries. She would say "*this is for my black babies*". Such was her generosity and so children in other parts of the world would benefit from tea cosies made in Joppa.

After David's death she showed bravery and determination. Her faith was strong and her beliefs steadfast. She told me that when she was unable to sleep in the middle of the night she would just pray.

Much could be said of Jean Thomson, her appreciation of her lifelong friends, her hospitality, her love of flowers and plants. The steps of her house in Arran Place would be decorated with a plant on every step.

How she would laugh at the time she drove to London at 60 miles an hour in the belief that the 60 signs meant that you should not drive below that speed.

With the passage of time, age caught up with Jean and her health deteriorated resulting in stays in the Royal Infirmary. Then the time came when she required

care and she moved into St Annes Care Home in Musselburgh where she was happy and well looked after.

We thank God for Jean's long life well lived, for our memories of her and that her faith has now given place to sight.

(Jack Spiers)

TRYPRAYING™ IS AN INVITATION

It's for those who wouldn't darken a Church door to begin talking to God.



It's the work of a traffic planner, a shop manager, a writer, a designer, an entrepreneur, a civil engineer and others.

A conversation on a train went like this. The guy in his 20s was asked, "Do you ever pray?" His reply was, "Yes. I prayed for two people who were seriously ill. One died and the other got better." He concluded he'd had 50% success.

This reflex – the desire to reach out to God – is basic to many, many people. Trypraying™ is a resource for people like that: no Church connection or interest, but open to find out about God. The Trypraying™ booklet is a 7-day prayer guide and is now being used by many to pass on to friends and family with a few words of encouragement – 'Why don't you try praying for a week and see what happens in your life?'



The point of all this is that it is possible to come to know God in a personal way.

In an amazing statement Jesus overturned almost all religious practice. He said what's important is relationship with God: "*This is eternal life that people may know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*" Relationship with God is not what we do for Him but what He does for us, a gift to be received not a reward to be earned. It's not dull religion but life as it is meant to be here.

How can we begin this relationship?

Understand:

- Something of God
- Something about yourself
- Something about Jesus
- This is for you

(<http://www.trypraying.org/>)

DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED™

Discipleship Explored™ is an informal 8-week course for anyone who wants to make the most of their Christian lives. It is perfect for guests who have been through Christianity Explored and have recently decided to follow Christ.



Looking at Paul's letter to the Philippians, guests can explore for themselves the meaning of Paul's words '*for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*' Those familiar with Christianity Explored™ will feel right at home. Each session has a group discussion, picking up on the previous week's material and a short study in Philippians, a short talk or DVD as a theme for that week, and a further group discussion on issues arising.

Course Outline

Week 1:

Confident In Christ - Philippians 1:1-11

Week 2:

Living In Christ - Philippians 1:12-26

Week 3:

Standing Together In Christ - Philippians 1:27-2:1

Week 4:

Transformed By Christ - Philippians 2:12-30

Week 5:

Righteous In Christ - Philippians 3:1-9

Week 6:

Knowing Christ - Philippians 3:10-4:1

Week 7:

Rejoicing In Christ - Philippians 4:2-9

Week 8:

Content In Christ - Philippians 4:10-23

Like Christianity Explored™, the material is so flexible that it can be adapted for use with groups of all sizes and in a variety of settings – even including established small group meetings of more mature Christians.

(<http://www.ceministries.org>)

IT ALL STARTS WITH GOD'S CHARACTER

from Steve Ham

(<http://www.answersingenesis.org/>)



When we think of the term biblical authority, many of us may think of the authoritative nature of the Bible's text itself. We think in terms of its inerrancy and infallibility, meaning that the Bible does not have any errors and does not have the capacity to deceive.

Based on this understanding of biblical authority, we build our understanding of salvation and true life in Christ. We also look at the world around us – rocks and fossils and living things – through the lens of biblical authority, and interpret every observation from this starting point (or at least we should). But how do we

know that the Bible text itself is authentic? Where does its authority come from?

We must start with the very character of God.

The Bible is truly authoritative, not because human theologians insist that it is, or because textual criticism validates its authenticity, or even because it claims to be authoritative. The Bible is truly authoritative because of Who it comes from. It is the Word of God. Any flaw in God's character would render the Bible unable to claim such commanding authority. God is the true source of the Bible, so His character determines the credibility of the whole Book.

The next logical question is: What do we know about God's character?

The Creator's Character

God's first words to us are "*In the beginning God created ...*" The Bible also tells us that humanity was created in the image of God. Being created in His image, we would certainly expect to share common attributes with Him, and we do. God is loving, patient, kind, just, merciful, gracious, joyful, creative, generous – even jealous and wrathful – and the list goes on.

We see these attributes of God all through Scripture. In man, these attributes are corrupted and imperfect, but in God, we see them in perfect and unlimited form. That is the great difference between God and fallen, sinful mankind.

This difference sheds light on the authenticity of God's authority. For example, consider jealousy. In humans, jealousy is typically ugly and sinful because

we seek control over something to which we have no right. God, on the other hand, has every right to us. His jealousy expresses His great love for His people (see Zechariah Ch 8 vv 1–3). He wants what is best for His dearly loved possessions, so He is jealous for us to reflect His awesome glory in our return love for Him.

This is the case even though we have sinned and rejected His authority. God's jealousy is part of His unblemished character; it reflects His zeal to demand what is good and right and to display His own glory. We can see how we share all of these character traits with God only as we see how they fit within His perfect plan laid out for us in His Word.

Just as we can see how some of God's perfect attributes share some commonality with humanity, we also would expect to see attributes that are foreign or uncommon to humanity. If God is Creator and the ultimate authority, we would expect Him to live beyond the dimensions of His own creation. As we look at the expanse and wonder of His creation, we can only marvel at His unlimited power that can create out of nothing.

The Bible tells us that God is independent (Isaiah Ch 40 vv 13–14). God doesn't require instruction or teaching. No person can add knowledge or understanding that He doesn't already have, and no one is His counsellor. The Bible tells us that God is unchanging (Psalm Ch 102 vv 26–27). While constant change is an inescapable part of our lives, God is unchanging. He doesn't age, His character never changes, and His purpose never wavers. Because of God's

unchanging nature, we can be confident in the security of our salvation.

The Bible tells us that God is infinite (Revelation Ch 1 v 8). To be unlimited in power, presence, and knowledge is something that humanity cannot comprehend. As finite beings worshipping an infinite Creator, we can only stand in awe of our unlimited God.

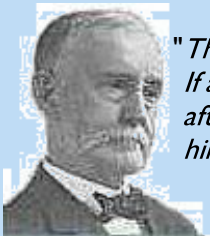
The Bible also tells us that God is timeless (Psalm Ch 90 v 2). God is the eternal, self-existent God. He has always been and will always be, and He is outside the confines of time.

As we read through Scripture and see the character and perfection of a limitless God, we begin to understand His absolute authority and the authority of His Word. God is the God of the Bible and the God of salvation. He is the starting point of biblical authority because He is the only limitless One and the only One who has always been, with full control of past, present, and future. He is the only true and living Creator of all. Biblical authority starts, continues, and finishes with God.

GRACE GEMS

We might find it filled with sharp thorns under the flowers!

(J.R. Miller)



"Then He said to them all: If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Luke Ch 9 v 23

It is our own cross, and not some other man's – which we are to take up. It is the particular cross that God lays at our

own feet, which we are to bear. We are never to make crosses for ourselves – but we are always to accept those which our heavenly Father has allotted to us. Each one's own cross – is the best for him.

Sometimes we think that our circumstances are peculiarly hard, and we compare it with the circumstances of this or that other person, and wish we had his cross instead of our own. But we do not know what other people's crosses really are. If we did, we might not want to exchange. If we put that cross which seems woven of flowers on our shoulders – we might find it filled with sharp thorns under the flowers! That cross of gold which seems so bright – we would find so heavy that it would crush us!

The easiest cross for each one of us to bear, is our own!

"Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation which God called him to!" I Corinthians Ch 7 v 24

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in poverty. I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength!" Philippians Ch 4 vv 11–13

(www.gracegems.org)

