

The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • May 2013



*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news*

Scottish Registered Charity: SC015322



God is gone up with a shout,  
the LORD  
with the sound of a trumpet.

He alludes to the trumpets  
that were blown at solemn feasts:  
but He further signifies  
the triumph of Christ  
and His glorious ascension  
into the heavens.

Ps 47:5

NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

	Tues	10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer
	Wed	7.30 p.m.	Midweek Prayer & Bible Study
May		7.30 p.m.	Management Meeting (T.B.C.)
	11th	Sat 11.00 a.m.	Christian Aid Cafe Day
			– 2.00 p.m.
	23rd	Thurs 7.30 p.m.	Vision Group Meeting
June	1st	Sat 7.30 p.m.	Symphonic Praise by Origin Scotland (at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place)

## FUTURE SERMON PLAN

May	5th	– “Ascension”
	12th	– “Pentecost”
	19th	– “The God of Miracles”
	26th	– “Which gods will you serve?”

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

May	5th	Rev Adam Plenderleith (Chaplain, Glasgow Royal Infirmary) Rev Jim Simpson (Chaplain, Royal Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen)
	12th	Uddingston & Viewfield, Dunfermline
	19th	Westray, Orkney & Westwood, East Kilbride
	26th	Whyte's Causeway, Kirkcaldy & Wick and Keiss

## APRIL OFFERING



7th	£710.00	21st	£696.00
14th	£790.00	28th	£702.00

Dear Friends,

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:18-20)*

This month we celebrate Pentecost, when we remember God's gift of His Spirit to the Church. The early Church was not an organisation merely, not a movement, but a walking incarnation of spiritual energy. A. W. Tozer said, "The Church began in power, moved in power and moved just as long as she had power. When she no longer had power she dug in for safety and sought to conserve her gains. But her blessings, were like the manna: when they tried to keep it overnight it bred worms and stank. So we have had monasticism, scholasticism, institutionalism; and they have all been indicative of the same thing; ... absence of spiritual power. In Church history, every return to New Testament power has marked a new advance somewhere, and every diminution of power has seen the rise of some new mechanism for conservation and defence".



For many of us our problem in living for Jesus is not that we need more of the Holy Spirit, but that we need to appropriate the Gift He has already given. One writer said "Some people in church look like guests at a royal banquet, who couldn't afford to be left out, but have been forbidden by their doctor to eat anything". Does that describe you? We "know" it all, but are we living it? Paul in Ephesians is asking that "the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order that we may know the hope to which he has called us ... and His incomparably great power for us who believe".

I wonder, this Pentecost whether you know the power of God's Spirit filling you with praise, passion and purpose. Why not find a quiet place today where you can ask God to fill you again with His mighty Spirit? Why not use the words of that great chorus to express your longing:

*Spirit of the Living God,  
fall afresh on me;  
Spirit of the living God,  
fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.  
Spirit of the living God,  
fall afresh on me.*

Your Pastor

fill  
living  
Spirit  
melt mould  
God  
Break the Fall  
me of  
afresh on  
Living



## 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:

### A NOTE TO SAY

(addendum to March Messenger)

Just a little thank you to all who came to my aid and who were concerned in the days following my minor altercation on March 9 2013 with a No. 26 bus.

Your help and support was very much appreciated and made a traumatic situation so much easier to manage.

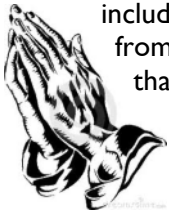
My sincere thanks.

(Margaret P)

### 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"*

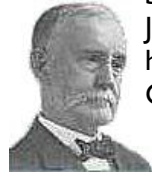


Each month this new section will include a cluster of names taken from the Church Directory so that we can uphold them particularly in prayer over this month.

## SPIRITUAL GREATNESS

(by J. R. Miller)

Spiritual Greatness – sanctified character, beauty of soul, the likeness of Jesus upon our lives and hearts – shall endure forever. God wants to train every one of us into this true spiritual greatness.



Many Christians grow sadly disheartened, because they seem never to become any better. Year after year, the struggle goes on with the old bad habits and ugly dispositions, the old selfishness, pride, and hatefulness – and they appear never to be growing victorious.

Yet Christ is a most patient teacher. He never wearies of our slowness and dullness as learners. He will teach the same lesson over and over, until we have learned it. If we only persevere, He will never tire of us, and His gentleness will make us great.

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go." Isaiah 48:17

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." Psalm 32:8

### FOCUS: PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

American  
Pastor  
Imprisoned In  
Iran Thrown  
Into Solitary  
Confinement



An American pastor that is imprisoned in his homeland of Iran for planting house

churches in the country a decade ago has been moved to solitary confinement, reports state.

The American Centre for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which has been fighting for the release of Saeed Abedini, states that ten prisoners, including the pastor, were moved to confinement after they signed a letter expressing concerns about the lack of medical care in prison. Abedini has been struggling with internal bleeding, but officials advise that he will have to wait several more months to receive assistance.

“That apparently prompted prison officials to retaliate, selecting ten of the prisoners and placing them in solitary confinement,” the ACLJ explains. “Our sources indicate that Pastor Saeed is likely to be beaten again, in private, away from other witnesses and prisoners.”

Abedini’s wife Nagmeh also notes that her husband’s health continues to decline, and that he is no longer allowed to see his parents.

“Saeed has internal bleeding and now issues with his kidneys because of the beatings,” she lamented. “We have no way of finding out about his health [now]. There will be no more visitations allowed and we will have no way of knowing how Saeed is doing.”

“Saeed had previously told his family that when he was in solitary confinement in the past, that was the hardest time in his life. That every hour was like one year and that he was losing his memory and his health was deteriorating quickly,” she continued. “Please pray for his health and healing. Pray for his release. Pray that the Lord would use this for His glory and the salvation of many.”

As previously reported, the pastor recently wrote a letter to his family outlining that one of the reasons he is being denied medical treatment is because Christians are considered “unclean” in the country.

“The nurse would also come to take care of us and provide us with treatment, but she said in front of others ‘in our religion we are not suppose to touch you, you are unclean. Baha’i (religion) and Christians are unclean!’” Abedini outlined. “She did not treat me, and that night I could not sleep from the intense pain I had. According to the doctor’s instructions, they would not give me the pain medication that they would give other prisoners because I was unclean.”

However, he said that he has forgiven all of those who have mistreated him behind bars.

“I forgave the prison doctor who did not listen to me and did not give me the medication that I needed,” the pastor stated. “I forgave the interrogator who beat me. Every day when I would see



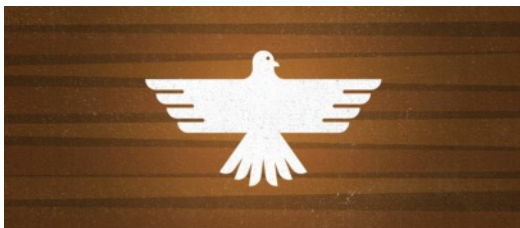
the interrogator and for the last time when I saw him, I forgave him. I smiled at him and with respect shook his hand and I said my goodbye.”

Abedini, 32, who has resided in Idaho with his wife and children since 2005, was incarcerated in Iran’s notorious Evin

Prison in late September for allegedly threatening the national security of Iran by planting house churches in the country a decade ago, and for attempting to turn youth in the nation away from Islam and toward Christianity.

(Christian News Network, April 30 2013)

## WE ARE A DEEPLY NEEDY PEOPLE



Have you ever considered why there are so many diverse spiritual gifts in the body of Christ? In the various lists provided for us in Scripture (Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; Eph. 4:7-12; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), you discover the wide scope of the Spirit's sovereign administration of gifts for the encouragement and edification of the local Church. Agreeing with most theologians, these lists are not to be considered comprehensive in description, but they are descriptive in the sense that they show all the various ways the Spirit of God enables members for service in the kingdom of God.

As I've reflected on this diversity of gifts, it comes to my mind how significant they are to the promise of Christ to build His Church (Matt. 16:18). His ongoing work (Acts 1:1) extends through the ministry of His Spirit to and through His body in order to minister to the needs of the saints, strengthening them in faith. Simply put, the diversity of spiritual gifts reveals the incredible depth of our need.

*The diversity of spiritual gifts reveals the incredible depth of our need.*

We are a profoundly needy people. One of the ways we discover the extent of our need is through Christ's provision of so many gifts of His Spirit. It is true that all we have and all we need is in Christ. But how is the abundant provision of Christ's life, death, and resurrection appropriated to every believer? Jesus meets us where we are, with our specific needs, through the ministry of His Spirit among His people as gifts (abilities) are exercised for the service of the saints. What we discover when the gifts are exercised is nothing less than Christ Himself working through His body to accomplish His purposes in the world.

Why are there gifts of teaching in the body? Because there is a great need for us to be taught God's Word accurately.

Why are there gifts of mercy and help in the body? Because we need the compassion and practical loving assistance of fellow members in various circumstances of life.

Why are there gifts of leadership and administration? Because we need direction and guidance from those with wisdom and skill to live in a manner consistent with God's Word and conforms to the character and ways of Christ.

Gift after gift, we discover need after need sovereignly met through the gracious provision of Christ for His Church.

Of course, this is not to argue that, should we not be gifted in a particular way we are somehow excused from meeting the needs of others. Some are gifted to teach, but we are all



commanded to teach, exhort, and instruct one another. Some are gifted to show mercy, but we are all commanded to be merciful to others. Rather, what we see in the exercise of spiritual gifts are the excellencies of the Spirit to magnify Christ by meeting the needs of the saints through mutual service and expressions of encouragement. When spiritual gifts are exercised, the Church is built up just as Christ promised.

When spiritual gifts are viewed through the lens of individual needs of fellow members, they are deployed, not simply debated. If Churches are to protect the unity of the Spirit and grow in grace, then each member must carry the stewardship to excel in meeting the needs of one another in ways that the Giver is glorified as the gifts are exercised (1 Pet. 4:11).

(by Pastor Tim Brister, Grace Baptist Church)



## QR CODE?

If you have a smartphone (iPhone, Android or Blackberry) then there a number of different barcode scanner applications such as Red Laser, Barcode Scanner and QR Scanner that can read and decode data from a QR code. The majority of these are completely FREE, and all you have to do (once you install one) is to use your phone's camera to scan the barcode, which will then automatically load the encoded data for you, and enjoy the hidden surprise!





SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD,  
open up my eyes  
Show me the pride that blinds me  
Stoop to my weakness,  
mighty as You are  
And show me Jesus as I ought to see Him  
For when I see Him, truly see Him

#### CHORUS

*All that thrills my soul is Jesus  
No greater joy can be  
He bore all my sins and sorrows  
His perfect love  
Is all that I need*

#### VERSE 2

Father, may Your living Word  
penetrate my heart  
And undo the lies that bind me  
Shine in my darkness,  
mighty as You are  
And make me know You  
as I ought to know You  
For when I know You, truly know You

#### VERSE 3

Jesus, still my wandering heart,  
tie me to the Rock  
That rests on Your work completed  
Keep me from falling, mighty as You are  
That I may love You  
as I ought to love You  
For when I love You, truly love You  
(© 2013 Sovereign Grace Worship (ASCAP))

