

The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • February 2015



*Love you  
God*



Scottish Registered Charity: SC015332



*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News*

NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

# dates for your diary

2015

March  
2

May  
18

March  
30

February  
26

April  
27

August  
27

		Tues 10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer [drop-in for all or part of the time]
		Wed 6.30 p.m.	Midweek Prayer & Bible Study
February	8th	Sun 1.30 p.m.	Management Meeting
March	29th	Sun	'Spring Forward' clock change
April	3rd	Fri 6.30 p.m.	Good Friday
	5th	Sun 11.00 a.m.	Resurrection Sunday

[check 'Buzz' newsheet for last minute details]

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

February	1st	Carol Campbell (Healthcare Lead Chaplain, Clyde area) Bathgate, Harry Sprange Belshill, Keiran Banks Bearsden, John Craib
	8th	John Craib, HMP Low Moss
	15th	Philip Craven (Chaplain, Inverclyde Royal Hospital, Greenock) Broughty Ferry, Brian Talbot
	22nd	Broxburn, Frank Murray Buckhaven Buckie, Gavin Hunter

## JANUARY OFFERING



4th	£513.00	18th	£767.00
11th	£927.00	25th	£578.00

Building Fund total, so far :- £16,716.75

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12.1-3)

It is the state song of Kansas and the unofficial anthem of the American West:

*Oh, give me a home where the Buffalo roam  
Where the Deer and the Antelope play;  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,  
And the sky is not cloudy all day.*

Originally written as a poem called "My Western Home" by Dr. Brewster M. Higley in the early 1870's, it paints a picturesque view of homestead life on the open prairie. This was their vision of what their new life would be like.

Imagine what the real picture would look like:

Leaving all familiarity – home, family, possessions – only keeping what was vitally necessary and would fit in a 4' X 10' covered wagon, travelling for months over rough terrain with no roads, making camp every night and repacking every morning, having no contact with anyone outside your travelling party, finally arriving at your staked claim and still having to sleep in the same covered wagon for a month while you built a sod hut to live in, digging your own well – by hand (and carrying all your water in a bucket), turning soil for the first time – by hand behind the same team that has pulled your wagon for months (the view still hasn't changed), hunting and gathering food – every day, etc. Yet somehow the hardships of pioneer life didn't make the song. Why? The reality is harder going than the ideal picture.

There are ideals we hold as a church. We long for the day when every seat will be filled. I believe that day will come. But more importantly, we long for the day when every member will be living the Jesus-life out in the community, attracting others to follow Him. I believe that day will come.

However, the life of the pioneer requires blood sweat and tears, not rose coloured spectacles. Jesus, the "*pioneer of our faith*" has gone before. He has demonstrated that it is gloriously possible to see His kingdom on earth.

When the ideal seems too far away, that is when we fix our eyes on Jesus, and join the race once more.

Your pastor,



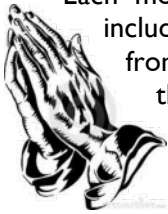
## THE CHURCH FAMILY

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:

Please pray for Jack Logan and family as they come to terms with the loss of Thea, who passed away on Tuesday 27 January. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

## PRAYING FOR THE FLOCK

(1 Thess. 5:17; Acts 6.4)



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.

F  
E  
B  
R  
U  
A  
R  
Y

*(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"*

## FLOWER CALENDAR 2015

F 1<sup>st</sup>  
E 8<sup>th</sup>  
R 15<sup>th</sup>  
U 22<sup>nd</sup>  
A  
R  
Y

## TRIBUTE TO MRS JEAN GEE

(Winnie Beattie)

It is a real privilege for me to write this tribute to Jean Gee who passed away in the Western General Hospital on Thursday 8 January 2015.

Jean was a faithful member of the Church for over 70 years having been baptised and received into membership on the 25 July 1943. She was of a quite and gentle disposition and quite happy to stay out of the limelight. However, over these many years she was involved in the work of the Sunday School, The Christian Endeavour, The Women's Own and the Women's Auxiliary. She also served on the Management Committee for a number of years. Before her health began to deteriorate she was very faithful in her attendance at both services on a Sunday and for many years the Wednesday evening Prayer Meeting.

Jean had a very strong faith and was a woman of prayer, she met with 3 or 4 of her friends on a regular basis -- often in her own home -- and they shared a time of prayer together. She was also involved in one or two other prayer groups.

A big part of Jean's ministry was in visitation. She had a wide circle of friends and was very faithful in visiting them whether they were in their own home, in hospital or in a care home.

We give thanks to God for our memories of Jean Gee. Her suffering is over and she has now entered into her rest and is present with the Lord whom she loved and served.

We extend our love and sympathy to Cyril, Douglas, Colin, her daughter-in-law and her three grandchildren.

## SEVEN RESOLUTIONS TO PURSUE LOVE IN 2015

by John Bloom ([www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org))

Among the Devil's chief strategies is destroying relationships of love between Christians by eroding their trust in one another. It is highly effective and highly destructive. As we ponder new resolves in 2015, we would be wise to consider increasing our vigilance against this very subtle tactic, since we are likely to face it repeatedly.

### What Mirkwood Can Teach Us

In J.R.R. Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins and his 13 dwarf companions must travel through the



forest of Mirkwood on their way to the Lonely Mountain. The forest had once been known as Greenwood the Great, but the evil Necromancer had crept in and infected it with fear, corruption, and the shadow of death. Just before the company sets out, they are warned not to stray from the path because the disorienting evil influence in the forest is so strong that they might never find the path again.

Sure enough, as they trudge through Mirkwood they fall under an oppressive discouragement. This is powerfully portrayed in Peter Jackson's film adaptation (the 2nd film of the trilogy) where we see each character's

perception of reality become warped. Evil plays on their minds. They not only become more disheartened than they should be, they also become distrustful of each other. Conflicts break out. Bad decisions are made. The quest nearly ends in tragic disaster.

Mirkwood gives us a helpful picture of what it's like for us to journey through life together in a world that lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). We are walking through a dangerous, deceitful place. Many things we perceive and feel are distortions of reality, but they can feel so real.

### What Satan Targets to Kill Love

Among the most painful and destructive of our "Mirkwood" experiences are when doubts and distrust develop between our "traveling companions" and us. Something happens — a sin or a perceived sin occurs — an offense is taken, relational tension builds, trust deteriorates, and the result is relational alienation. Often it's not clear why or how things became so toxic. And that's because more is in play than meets the eye.

Relationships of love trade on the currency of trust. If trust can be broken, love dries up and the church will split, the small group will fall apart, the marriage will break up, the friendship will disintegrate, and the professing Christian will walk away from the faith. When love dries up, Christianity dries up. So to destroy love, Satan targets trust. It's the quickest way to kill love.

Satan may not like when faithful churches are planted and passionate Christian marriages commenced and vibrant Christian friendships formed, but he is willing to bide his time. He knows

that a strong start can still end badly and do a great deal of damage in the collapse. He knows how to play on our fears and our pride. He knows that the journey through the Mirkwood of this world is long and the evil influence is strong. And he knows how to wait for an opportune time (Luke 4:13). He will endure a happy beginning in the hope that an unhappy ending will produce that much more disillusionment and cynical unbelief.

For this reason, we must be prepared to remain alert and keep our wits throughout the long Mirkwood march.

### What We Must Resolve

Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). This love — John 15:12–13 love, I Corinthians 13:4–8 love, I John 3:16–18 love — is the single greatest evidence that we belong to Christ. It surpasses spiritual giftedness, social justice action, and martyrs’ boldness in importance (I Corinthians 13:1–3).

This is precisely why Satan seeks above all to destroy such love between Christians. And it’s why we find it so difficult to love — our love is under assault. And in the middle of it all, it appears like we are wrestling one another when we’re really wrestling with cosmic powers of darkness that are attacking Christ’s kingdom (Ephesians 6:12).

So if Satan seeks to destroy our love for one another, and he routinely seeks to do that through corrupting our trust in one another, then we must redouble our resolve to vigilantly protect our love by guarding our trust. Here are seven resolutions:

**1. Resolve to remember Mirkwood.** Because we are journeying through a

treacherous realm under the power of the evil one (I John 5:19), we must have a healthy suspicion of our perceptions. Our indwelling sin, limited perspectives, and past experiences make us vulnerable to deception, easily misinterpreting others’ motives or intentions.

**2. Resolve to assume the best in others.** Sometimes the worst happens. I have friends who have been horribly abused by professing “Christians.” But far more often we think worse of others than we should, inflating an offense through speculation. Rather, we should assume the best motives in others until proven otherwise.

**3. Resolve to pursue reconciliation quickly.** Jesus tells us to go quickly to someone who has been offended by us and be reconciled to them (Matthew 5:23–24). Most issues that erode trust between Christians would be resolved if both parties humbly talked them through as soon as possible following an offense. This habit will save us hours of fruitless stewing in speculative and sinful anger.

**4. Resolve to not gossip.** Offenses and resentment are contagious (Proverbs 26:20). Don’t pass it to others and make trust rebuilding harder.

**5. Resolve to forgive offenses.** When an offense has really occurred, the Bible is very clear: We are to bear with one another and forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven us (Colossians 3:13). We live the gospel when we let love cover a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8).

**6. Resolve to kill the weed of resentment (Ephesians 4:31).** If we allow resentment to grow it will choke love to death. When we recognize that it has taken root, we must kill it through confession and

doing all we can to pursue the peace of reconciliation (Romans 12:18).

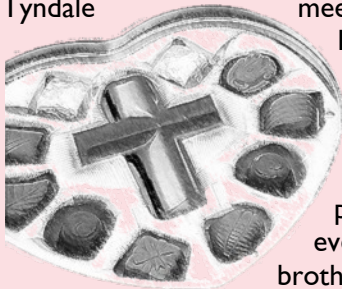
7. **Resolve to remember the gospel.** The cross of Jesus reminds us of how much grace has been shown to us, settles all accounts of justice, and frees us to serve our enemies (and much more offending friends) in love (Romans 12:19–20). If the great King forgave our debt of 10,000 talents, we can forgive our fellow servant a debt of 100 denarii (Matthew 18:23–35).

### PROVIDENCE IS LIKE -- A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

I humbly submit to our readers this recent exhibition of God's providence as relayed to the Fellows during the recent League of Tyndale meeting on

February 16, at 8.00 p.m. Having finished the business portion of our evening,

brother Melvin Wilberforce came forward to issue this report for the edification and consideration of the Fellows. Last Saturday, being Valentine's Day, Melvin endeavored to go to McGonigle's General Store to procure a box of chocolates for his wife, Alma Fay, which he did as a token of his affection, in acknowledgement of how Cupid had wounded his heart with an arrow when he first laid eyes upon his bride almost thirty-three years ago. Bursting with anticipation, Melvin hurried home with his gift and was greeted at the door by Alma Fay, whereupon Melvin unveiled the chocolates from behind his back and presented them to his wide-eyed spouse.



Surprisingly, Alma Fay was not pleased, as the lines in her forehead suddenly furrowed into an infuriated glare, with the obligatory gnashing of teeth following close behind.

A Whitman's Sampler? she protested! In what universe have I ever wanted a Whitman's Sampler, Melvin Hopkins Wilberforce? You know that I prefer the Russell Stover's Dark Chocolate assortment in the one pound box, which is the only chocolates you have ever bought me lo these thirty-three years! Have the sands of time erased this from your memory, my pitiabale husband?

Indeed, Melvin had always gotten her Russell Stover's in the past, but the Whitman's Sampler had been specially marked down in price as part of McGonigle's "I Heart You" Sale. Scrambling for an explanation, Melvin began to divulge this very fact, but soon realized it was a grievous mistake.

ON SALE, she shrieked! Do you so esteem my love at such a petty discount? Perhaps you should spend the night at the Cobblestone Inn and think on it further, husband.

Before Melvin could speak forth, the front door slammed in his face. This had not been the first time that his wife had made such an accommodating suggestion, so Melvin gathered up his shattered pride and dutifully headed for the Cobblestone where Room 15 was waiting for him.



*Angus W. Duncan*

Thus we come to the point in this lurid tale where Melvin relays the particular revelation of God's providence upon his life. Having been delighted to find a bag of Funions in the inn's vending machine, Melvin settled into his

room and ate his modest dinner as he lay on the bed. In time, it came upon his mind that this would be a good point in which to consult God's word for the benefit of re-examining the duties of a Christian husband and see where he went wrong. He opened the drawer to his bedside table and found it empty. Alas! Had the Gideons forsaken him?

Upon further investigation, Melvin had found out from the innkeeper that the Gideons had never furnished the inn with Bibles, as they are renowned for doing. This news greatly disturbed Melvin as he thought of the many years in which the temporary residents of the Cobblestone Inn were away from their homes and left without the benefit of Scripture when perhaps they needed it most.

It was at this point that Melvin interrupted his story and introduced a motion that the League of Tyndale might step in to provide enough Bibles to fill every darkened room of the Cobblestone Inn with the light of God's revelation to mankind for the sake of spreading the Gospel. Brother Farley Jacobs seconded the motion, and upon voting, the resolution passed with unanimous ayes in the hall. There was not a dry eye in the house.

Melvin thanked the League and boldly testified to the grace of God, Who even in Melvin's time of distress, guided him to this great need in our community. Said Melvin, "Praise be to God, for He worketh His will among us lowly men even in the midst of our trials. For we know 'that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.'"

What a glorious view of God's guiding Hand among the League! And to further enhance the happiness of this happiest of endings, Melvin was joyous to report that he had reconciled with Alma Fay just before Sunday worship, and was later able to purchase a one pound box of Russell Stover's Dark Chocolate Assortment on Monday morning, of which his wife happily and graciously accepted, showering him with affectionate kisses as a mark of her unwavering love for him.

Those in attendance quickly resolved to never divulge to Alma Fay that the chocolates Melvin purchased were priced 50% off because Valentine's Day had passed. After all, dear reader, it is the thought that counts!

**Soli Deo Gloria!**

([www.sacredsandwich.com](http://www.sacredsandwich.com))

### VISITOR RESPONSE

I am a visitor and would like .....

- Information about the Church
- A visit from the Minister
- Information about becoming a Christian

**PLEASE FILL IN YOUR CONTACT DETAILS BELOW**  
and either place in the offering bag, hand to a steward or post to  
189 Portobello High Street, Portobello, Edinburgh, EH15 1EU

**NAME:**  
**EMAIL:**

**PHONE:**

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CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

