

The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • October 2015

LET EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO,  
LEAD OTHERS TO THE CROSS.



Scottish Registered Charity: SC015332

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]

[check 'Buzz' newsheet for last minute details]

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

October	4 <sup>th</sup>	BMS World Mission Motherwell BC; Mull fellowship; Nairn BC & Lerwick BC
	11 <sup>th</sup>	European Baptist Federation New Prestwick BC; Newton Mearns BC
	18 <sup>th</sup>	Oban BC; Paisley Central BC; Peebles BC
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Pollock BC;

## FUTURE SERMON PLAN

October	4 <sup>th</sup>	What's in a name – Christian
	11 <sup>th</sup>	World Mission Focus
	18 <sup>th</sup>	What's in a name – Disciple
	25 <sup>th</sup>	What's in a name – Daughter/ Son
November	1 <sup>st</sup>	What's in a name – Friend

## SEPTEMBER OFFERING



6 <sup>th</sup>	£1,004.00	20 <sup>th</sup>	£527.50
13 <sup>th</sup>	£602.50	27 <sup>th</sup>	

Building Fund, running total :- £51,502.75

## END OF SUMMER

British Summertime officially ends on Sunday 25 October –  
at which point remember the saying  
“Spring Forward and Fall back.”



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*"I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places,  
that you may know that it is I, the LORD,  
the God of Israel, who call you by your name"  
(Isaiah 45:3)*

I read recently about a woman in a church who was asked to describe her faith journey. *"Okay, I'll tell you. But I have to know that it won't get me fired."* She was dead serious. She spoke of her disappointment with God. In her twenties, while engaged to be married, her fiancé had died suddenly. But her fiancé wasn't the only thing confiscated from her on that day. She lost her faith too. She said that most of the things communicated to her about God didn't seem true after her fiancé died, and that his death sent her on a mission to find a deeper understanding of what she really believed.

*"All of the good in my life has a contrast. And that contrast is where I learn the great life lessons. When the contrast comes, I plop myself down in the middle of the pain, frustration, or unmet expectations and I wait on God. When He shows up, I begin working to hear His still small voice so that I will know what He is trying to teach me. I ask Him, 'What is it that you want me to learn so that I can accomplish your will for my life?' I no longer spend my life trying to escape pain."*

She has found what Isaiah called "the treasures of darkness". She has found God in those dark places of life that seem cold and empty. Maybe God has grown weary of our drawings of rainbows, blue skies and jagged green grass. *"Let's see what you can do with these"*.

He pulls up a chair, takes our hands into His own and looks us straight in the eyes. *"Now,"* He says to us, *"tell me what happened to you. I really want to know."*

We have found God in a dark place. Some months ago we may have been sceptical about the possibility of finding the resources to fix the building. But God met us in that uncertain place and honoured our prayers and our faith. So the work has begun.

But there is far more than bricks and mortar that needs His touch and our faith. The broken lives of people who need to know that God loves them.

Let's find those treasures today.

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:

- Ella Hill
- Olive Nicol
- Betty Ward

## 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.



*(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"*

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## FLOWER CALENDAR 2015

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4<sup>th</sup>  
11<sup>th</sup>  
18<sup>th</sup>  
25<sup>th</sup>



## CHRISTMAS #SHOEBOX APPEAL

James Campbell, Chief Executive of Blytheswood writes: "So often I have seen tears – tears of joy – when handing over Blythswood shoeboxes. To realise that someone cares for them, someone like you, whom they've never even met, can bring indescribable happiness to people in need. It is the unexpected act of kindness that brings joy to everyone who receives a box filled with such care and generosity by you and by the many others who support this important project."



Wow! What a privilege to be able to share joy with others this Christmas.

Please grab a leaflet from Morven and fill a shoe box or if you'd like to contribute money towards us buying items for a box that's great too. Also, some of the young people are planning on having a bake sale on October 25th to raise money to buy items for #shoeboxes and so it'd be great to encourage them by buying cakes after church.

For more information go to <http://www.blythswood.org/> or speak with Morven or Moira or any of the kids.  
(Morven Wraight)

## FOUR PRAYERS for BIBLE READING

by David Mathis ([desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org))

When we open our Bibles to read, we're never alone. The Holy Spirit hovers over and in the words of God, ready to stir our hearts, illumine our minds, and redirect our lives, all for the glory of Christ (John 16:14). The Spirit is the X-factor in Bible reading, making an otherwise ordinary routine supernatural — and making it utterly foolish to read and study without praying for our eyes, minds, and hearts.

Prayer is a conversation, but not one we start. God speaks first. His voice sounds in the Scriptures and climactically in the person and work of His Son. Then, wonder of all wonders, He stops, He stoops, He bends His ear to listen to us. Prayer is almost too good to be true. With our eyes on God's words, He gives us His ear, too.

How then should we pray over our Bibles? Here are four verses you might pray as you open God's word.

### 1. Psalm 119:18: Open My Eyes to Wonder

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18). We ask God to open our spiritual eyes to show us the glimpses of glory we cannot see by ourselves. Without His help, we are simply “natural” persons with natural eyes. “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand [see] them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14–15).

“Seeing they do not” was Jesus's phrase for those who saw Him and His teaching only with natural eyes, without the illumining work of the Spirit (Matthew 13:13). This is why Paul prays for

Christians, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened” (Ephesians 1:17–18).

Join the psalmist in praying not just for the gift of spiritual sight, but for the gift of seeing wondrous things in God's word. Wonder is a great antidote for wandering. Those who cultivate awe keep their hearts warm and soft, and resist the temptations to grow cold and fall away.

### 2. Luke 18:38: Have Mercy on Me

Pray, like the blind man begging roadside, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” For as long as we are in this life, sin encumbers every encounter with God in his word. We fail friends and family daily — and even more, we fail God. So it is fitting to accompany our opening of God's word with the humble, broken, poor plea of the redeemed: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13).

Bible reading is a daily prompt to own our failures, newly repent, and freshly cast ourselves on His grace all over again. Prayer is the path to staying fascinated with His grace and cultivating a spirit of true humility.





### 3. James 1:22: Make Me a Doer of Your Word

Pray that God, having opened your eyes to wonder and reminded you of the sufficiency of His grace, would produce genuine change in your life. Ask Him to allow the seeds from Scripture to bear real, noticeable fruit in tangible acts of sacrificial love for others. “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22). You need not artificially capture one, specific point of application from every passage, but pray that His word would shape and inform and direct your practical living.

Ask that He would make you more manifestly loving, not less, because of the time invested alone in reading and studying His word.

### 4. Luke 24:45: Open My Eyes to Jesus

This is another way of praying that God would open our eyes to wonder, just with more specificity. The works of God stand as marvellous mountain ranges in the Bible, but the highest peak, and the most majestic vista, is the person and work of His Son.

As Jesus himself taught after His resurrection, He is the Bible’s closest thing to a skeleton key for unlocking the meaning of every text — every book, every plot twist, the whole story. First, “He interpreted to them in all the

### 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:

Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27), then He taught His disciples that “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). And in doing so, “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

The great goal of Bible reading and study is this: knowing and enjoying Jesus. This is a taste now of heaven’s coming delights. “This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). This gives direction, focus, and purpose to our study. “Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD” (Hosea 6:3). This forms great yearning and passion in our souls: “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8).

Keep both eyes peeled for Jesus. Until we see how the passage at hand relates to Jesus’s person and work, we haven’t yet finished the single most important aspect of our reading.

We are desperate for God’s ongoing help to see, and so we pray.



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CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

