

The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • February 2016



*Love you  
God*



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

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

Scottish Registered Charity: SC0153322



NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

# dates for your diary



February	Tues	10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer [drop-in for all or part of the time]
	14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun 1.30 p.m.	Management Meeting
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Thurs 7.30 p.m.	Annual General Meeting

[check 'Buzz' newsheet for last minute details]

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

February	7 <sup>th</sup>	Bourtreehill Baptist Church
	14 <sup>th</sup>	Broughty Ferry Baptist Church
	21 <sup>st</sup>	Buckie Baptist Church
	28 <sup>th</sup>	Calderwood Baptist Church

## FUTURE SERMON PLAN

### THE APPRENTICE – I TIMOTHY

February	7 <sup>th</sup>	I Timothy 2 – A team player
	14 <sup>th</sup>	I Timothy 3 – Resume
	21 <sup>st</sup>	I Timothy 4 – Tools for the task
	28 <sup>th</sup>	I Timothy 5 – Job direction
March	6 <sup>th</sup>	I Timothy 6 – Integrity

## JANUARY OFFERING



3 <sup>rd</sup>	£520.00	17 <sup>th</sup>	£502.50	31 <sup>st</sup>	£499.50
10 <sup>th</sup>	£1,110.00	24 <sup>th</sup>	£646.50		

Building Fund, running total :- £34,465.43

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

### Church as family - Walking in the light

*"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin"*  
(1 John Ch 1 vv 6 -- 7 NIV)

What is the difference between Church and any club of which we might be members?

Of course, Church is more than a club – it is our extended forever family. Like a family, we cannot choose brothers and sisters. But we can treat it like a club. We can meet each other and talk politely, and never let it go any deeper.

As I read the New Testament, I see a different dynamic. I see rumours of Glory. I see people who walk in the light, anticipating the life of the Kingdom to come.

But fellowship requires honesty. When there is pretence there can be no genuine fellowship. John begins his first letter with such a good picture of this truth about the nature of fellowship. People who can't or won't be honest with each other are people who will never experience the kind of nurturing fellowship God desires among His people.

And just calling it fellowship doesn't make it so. We mock God's character and power if we claim to be intimate with Him but our lives are a mess. When God's around, the lights are on! Walking in the darkness means we may bump into each other, but we won't have fellowship.

When we see ourselves and one another clearly under God's clarifying and purifying light, we are in position to appreciate each other, observe the cleansing work Jesus performs in one another's lives, and experience the common ground that creates fellowship.

John is clearly pointing to the heart of authenticity in these verses. Authenticity requires honesty – not putting on a mask; not coming to church and acting okay when I'm not. It is weeping with those who weep; rejoicing with those who rejoice; bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. God forbid our churches would ever become a place of pretence and mask-wearing and acting like I'm fine when I'm not.

Lord, help us walk in the light. Help us fulfil the prayer of Jesus – that our unity will reflect the unity of the Triune God. Amen.

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:

## 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"*

F  
E  
B  
R  
U  
A  
R  
Y



## FLOWER CALENDAR 2016

F 7<sup>th</sup>  
E 14<sup>th</sup>  
B 21<sup>st</sup>  
R  
U  
A 28<sup>th</sup>  
R  
Y

## VALENTINE'S FROM

## JONATHAN EDWARDS

A favourite love letter is from the 19-year-old Jonathan Edwards to the girl he was falling in love with in the summer of 1723. On the front page of his Greek grammar he wrote the only kind of love song his heart was capable of. Take a deep breath.

They say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever . . . She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested himself to her mind . . . She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have someone invisible always conversing with her.

Sarah was thirteen years old at the time! Four years later they were married. In the next 23 years they had eleven children, eight daughters and three sons.



## THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY

(by Bill Federer)

In the 3rd century, the Roman Empire was being invaded by Goths. At the same time, the Plague of Cyprian, probably smallpox, broke out killing at its height 5,000 people a day. So many died that the Roman army was depleted of soldiers. Needing more soldiers to fight the invading Goths, and believing that men fought better if they were not married, Emperor Claudius II banned traditional marriage in the military.

Emperor Claudius II quelled internal rivalries resulting from the previous Emperor Gallienus' assassination by having the Roman Senate deify Emperor Gallienus to be worshiped with the other Roman gods.

Citizens were forced to worship the Roman gods by placing a pinch of incense on the fire before their statues. Those who refused worship of the Roman gods were considered 'unpatriotic' enemies of the state and killed. Emperor Decian's persecution specifically targeted Christians with legislation forcing them to deny their consciences or die.

During the first three centuries of Christianity, there were ten major persecutions in which the government threw Christians to the lions, boiled them alive, had their tongues cut out, and worse.

Christian writings, scriptures and historical records were destroyed. Because so many records were destroyed, details of Saint Valentine's life are scant. What little is known was passed down and finally printed in the year 1260 in *Legenda Sanctorum* by Jacobus de Voragine, and in the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, 1493.

Saint Valentine was either a priest in Rome or a bishop in Terni, central Italy. He risked the Emperor's wrath by standing up for traditional marriage, secretly marrying soldiers to their young brides. When Emperor Claudius demanded that



Christians deny their consciences and worship pagan idols, Saint Valentine refused. Saint Valentine was arrested, dragged before the Prefect of Rome, and condemned him to die.

While awaiting execution, his jailer, Asterius, asked Saint Valentine to pray for his blind daughter. When she miraculously regained her sight, the jailer converted and was baptized, along with many others. Right before his execution, Saint Valentine wrote a note to the jailer's daughter, signing it, "from your Valentine."

Saint Valentine was beaten with clubs and stones, and when that failed to kill him, he was beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate on FEBRUARY 14, 269AD.

In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius designated FEBRUARY 14th as "Saint Valentine's Day."

In the High Middle Ages, Geoffrey Chaucer, called the father of English literature, wrote Parliament of Fowles (c.1393) that birds chose their mates in mid-February: "For this was Saint Valentine's day, when every bird of every kind that men can imagine comes to this place to choose his mate." After Chaucer, literature began associating Saint Valentine's day with courtly love.

This eventually developed into the 18th-century English traditions of presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending Valentine greeting cards.

People often sign Valentine cards with X's and O's. The Greek name for Christ – Χριστός, begins with the letter "X" which in Greek is called "Chi." "X" became a common abbreviation for the name Christ.

This is why Christ-mas is abbreviated as X-mas.

In Medieval times, the "X" was called the Christ's Cross, or "Criss-Cross." The "Criss-Cross Row" was the way colonial school children learned the alphabet, where they would start at the X and say "May Christ's Cross grant me speed (success)" and then proceed to recite the 26 letters. It reminded students that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"

*"Mortals ne'er shall know more than contained of old the Chris'-cross row."*

The Christ's Cross was a form of a written oath. Similar to the ancient practice of swearing upon a Bible, saying "so help me God," then kissing the Bible, people would sign a document with or next to the Christ's Cross to swear before God they would keep the agreement, then kiss it to

show sincerity. This practice has come down to us as "sign at the X", or saying "I swear, cross my heart." This is the origin of signing a Valentines' card with an "X" to express a pledge before God to be faithful, and an "O" to seal the pledge with a kiss of sincerity.

History is intertwined with Valentines references:

Frederick Douglass was born a slave and separated from his mother as a child. All he remembers is her calling him, 'my little valentine.'

Theodore Roosevelt's wife and mother died on Valentine's Day in 1884. Depressed, he dropped out of New York politics, left his infant daughter with a relative, and went off to ranch in the Dakotas.

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre occurred in 1929 during the Prohibition era. Al Capone's Chicago mob murdered seven members of Bugs Moran's Irish gang.

Accompanying Al Capone's hitman Frank Nitti as he terrorised neighbourhoods was the young Saul Alinsky, who later adapted this technique into the political tactic of community organizing.

Since the Roman persecutions, Christianity has become the most persecuted faith in the world, with over 300 being martyred each day, or one every five minutes, predominantly in Muslim countries.

Saint Valentine's heroic, loving example still inspires believers to follow the scripture:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

**LET LOVE BE  
YOUR HIGHEST GOAL!**

(George Everard, "Bright and Fair!  
A Book for 'Young' Ladies" 1882)

"Let love be your highest goal!"  
I Corinthians 14:1

Love is the most beautiful of all graces.

Love comes down from above, for love  
is one of the first-fruits of the Spirit.

Love is a plant of Paradise.

Love is a breath of celestial air.

Love is a beam from the  
countenance of a God of love.

Love is the golden belt,  
the bond of peace,  
that knits all heavenly virtues in one.

Love is full of humility,  
forbearance, and patience.

It is slow to anger, but quick to support  
and comfort those in trouble.

It is full of tender consideration for the  
sorrows, trials, weaknesses, infirmities,  
feelings, of those around.

Be clothed with love.

Now be honest about this point.

What is your religion worth?

Is it a sham and a pretense  
– or a reality?

Are you daily waging war against  
these three deadly sins

– sloth, self-will, and selfishness?

Are you shining as a bright lamp in your  
own home?

Are you careful about common, every-  
day duties?

Are you mindful . . .

to curb the tongue,

to watch against vain

and evil thoughts,

to be considerate of the feelings

and needs of those around you?

Are you ever ready to seize an  
opportunity for doing good, to lighten  
the burden of another, or to help a  
fellow-pilgrim on the way to Zion?

"A new command I give you: Love one  
another. As I have loved you – so you  
must love one another."

(John Ch 13 v 34)

*Grace Gems!*



**ABHOR EVIL, HOLD FAST TO GOOD**  
**ROMANS 12:9**

**DEPRAVEDWRETCH.**



Easter Sunday. Join with more than 2,000 people in celebrating the raising of Jesus from the dead. Led by the exile band, Origin Praise Choir (with members of the Cape Town Gospel Choir) and the Exile Chamber Orchestra.

Music, worship, praise, seeking God.

Tickets are FREE.

Please note: All tickets are seated. Wheelchair seating available in grand circle and stalls. Lift access to all levels.

There will be an offering at the event towards expenses. Please come prepared to donate as you are able.

Usher Hall, Sun 27 March, 2016, 7.30 p.m.

Venue Location:

Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH1 2EA

Admission: FREE Parking: Yes

Disabled Access: Yes

A fully symphonic concert of praise and worship in the stunning surroundings of St Mary's Episcopal cathedral in Edinburgh and Glasgow Cathedral. The event will be led by Origin's Exile Choir and Chamber Orchestra.

Sunday 5 June:

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh

Tickets will be available nearer the time.

Please note there is a flight of steps up to the sanctuary in the cathedral and there is no disabled access.

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral,

Sun 05 June, 2016, 8.00 p.m.

Venue Location:

Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AW

Admission: Admission FREE,

Parking: on-street



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:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

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CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

