

Church of St John The Baptist Dundee
Scottish Charity No. SC001147



THE MESSENGER



Letter from the Rector

January 2014

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted...” (Ecclesiastes 3: 1 ff)

The writer of this particular book of the Bible recognises that there is a timeliness to much of life, that there are seasons: times when one thing is appropriate, times when the opposite is needed; times when it is right to do one thing, times when something else needs to be done; times when things begin and times when things draw to a close.

The Feast of Candlemas, 2 February, will be my final service here in the Linked Charges, as I move on then to take up a new position as Associate Priest in Dumbarton and Alexandria. It is a time to say goodbye; followed (for me at least) by a time to say hello. It is a time to draw to a close our current life as three Linked Charges together, followed by a time of new beginnings and opportunities for us all. Everything is changing (again!).

All of us experience change everyday, but inevitably it is the sudden or big changes we feel most acutely – whether it is a change we have freely

chosen or one we have had forced upon us; a change that we welcome or one that we definitely don't want. For a while the anchors are hauled up and we float free. Usually there is a whole mixture of feelings to contend with – yet perhaps two feelings underpin them all as we go through the process of change: fear and trust.

Fear: will it be alright? Is it the right thing? What will it be like? What happens if...? Can we do this? Fear is an awful abyss to fall into – it drags us under into worry, panic, dread; it undermines our sense of wellbeing, direction, hope. Fear can freeze the soul. Break you down.

Trust is rather different, speaks a different language: It will be alright; you can survive this, no, not only survive, but thrive; there are new possibilities to be explored, new opportunities to be seized, new horizons to glimpse. Trust can bear you up. Set you free.

In times of change, I think, we often walk a tightrope between these two – fear and trust. Both are there but fear is the one which holds us back and causes us to stop and to wobble. Only trust is the one which enables us to step forward. Somehow, though we must inevitably experience and listen to both, trust is the only one which will carry us through.

Mother Julian of Norwich's well known words are the words to hold onto in all times of change:

Lord Jesus Christ, deign to free me, your servant King
Richard, from every tribulation, sorrow and trouble in
which I am placed... hear me, in the name of all your
goodness, for which I give thanks, and for all the gifts
granted to me,

because you made me from nothing and redeemed me out of
your bounteous love and pity from eternal damnation to
promising eternal life.

Prayer from Richard III's Book of Hours
(Lambeth Palace Library)

CANDLEMAS: 2 February 2014

As mentioned in my letter above the Feast of Candlemas will be my last service as Rector. We will come together for a final time as 3 Linked Charges on **Sunday 2 February at St Martin's at 10.30am**. Please come and help us celebrate both our journey together and as we look forward to new beginnings.

My licensing as Associate Priest of Dumbarton and Alexandria – to which all are invited - will be on Friday 21 February (time and church to be announced). It would be lovely if some of you are able to come – you have supported me so much in my time here and your blessing and prayers for this new phase in ministry would be much appreciated. And please be assured always of my prayers for you all as you continue your journey as God's holy people in St John the Baptist's, St Martin's and St Margaret's.

Bless to us, O God
the doors we open
the thresholds we cross
the roads that lie before us.
Go with us as we go
and welcome us home.

Answers to Your Bible Quiz

The Boyhood of Jesus

1. In the temple at Jerusalem
(Luke 2 : 25, 27, 36 – 37)
2. In a dream (Mat. 2 : 12)
3. Egypt (Mat. 2 : 14)
4. Death of Herod
(Mat. 2 : 19 – 20)
5. Every year at Passover
(Luke 2 : 41)
6. c. twelve years old
(Luke 2 : 42)
7. a day's journey
(Luke 2 : 44)
8. three days (Luke 2 : 46)
9. b. They were astonished
10. False (Luke 2 : 51)

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

I hate this time when we say things like “This is the last magazine with a letter from Alison.” “2nd February will be Alison’s last Eucharist.” “This is her last.....” We have come a long way since Alison came among us, she has encouraged us to regularise ways that we’ve been living with just because it was easy to leave them alone, for example, the situation with Boomerang. Now we have full control of what happens to *our* halls. We pay the energy bills for *our* property. We are responsible for what *we* own.

Alison has introduced us to different liturgies, so we have grown away from reciting the same words each week which, after time, become meaningless because we know them off by heart. The liturgies for the different seasons of the year have taught us to value the seasons more and to understand what they represent. The baptisms have become an opportunity for relaxing and joyful celebration. And I’m sure that we have all had the experience of thinking that Alison was speaking to us, alone, during one of her thoughtful and intelligent sermons.

We’ll all miss her but at the same time we recognise that her work over the last three years has been extremely stressful and sometimes overwhelming. So we understand why she’s moving on and, thankfully, it isn’t too far away. I’m hoping to be in Australia on the day of her induction to her new charge, but I hope some of you will journey through to Dumbarton and let her see how much we have loved having her and show her support for her new ministry.

Alison, we hope this next chapter of your life is happy and fulfilling, we thank you for all you have done for us. We trust you and Angela quickly settle into your new home; and we know you won’t forget us.

*May the Seeder of Quests direct your steps!
May the Holy Ones protect your passage!
May helping hands be extended to you on every side!
And may you always be loved and cherished!*

Jean Forbes
Editor
January 2014

THE UNCERTAINTY OF FAITH

Christian faith can be understood in many different ways. Some people may say simply, I have faith in God. I would ask of that person, where does that lead you? For me, faith is more than an affirmation. Faith is a dynamic quality of life. It is not something that once you have it, it is yours forever. It is not something you can inherit. Yet, faith is a reality so compelling that it can be the guide for one's life.

Faith requires a commitment constantly renewed, a change of heart, a test and a decision to act.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews describes faith as the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews then goes on to affirm that Abraham's faith compelled him to leave his home without any certainty about where he was going. From that act of faith flows the story of our people.

When faith is mentioned in Christian scripture it generally is associated with an action, usually a healing. It suggests movement, a change. I think that faith gives the energy to move from where we are to where we want to be, even when we have no assurance of success.

And old Negro spiritual, "We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord," was sung during the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960's. The song suggests a struggle and a pilgrimage with success and failures, but always pulled forward by trusting in the Lord. We don't have to wait until we are sure and have all the facts before acting. We stick our neck out because faith compels us to move. We may not get the results we hoped for, but invariably there is a blessing in having reached beyond what we knew was possible. I don't know that I will succeed; I know that faith requires me to move toward a goal. It is the faithful thing to do. Even when the goal is not reached, there is a blessing in the process itself.

It is by faith that many of us in the Priority Areas dedicate our lives in the struggle to end poverty, even when a cold analysis of world history raises doubts about our success. We wouldn't want to live any other way. While faith sustains us in the process, doubts linger; yet the power of faith becomes known at profoundly uncertain moments of life. A friend of mine, reflecting on a life and death struggle that she and her husband faced, wrote "In all of this we were supported by our

faith, faith that came and went like the ebb and flow of the tide.”

(Letters to Freya, p. 397)

Faith is invariably entangled with uncertainty and doubt. An American poet, Christian Wiman, living with terminal cancer writes, “Certainty is the enemy of faith.” Faith pushes us beyond the boundary of what’s certain and leaves us into unknown lands. It is only in the crucible of doubt that faith matters. If I am sure of something, then faith has no place. We persevere on the life pilgrimage that faith promotes, sometimes confidently, other times with unsure footing, yet with the confidence as the poet James Russell Lowell writes, “Behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow.”

Paul K Chapman

Retired American Baptist Minister and volunteer with The Church of Scotland 2007-12

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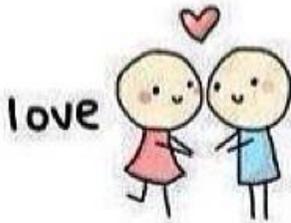
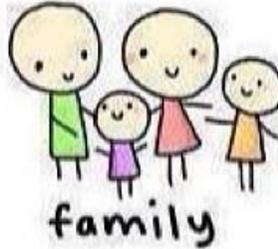
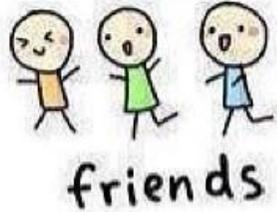
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Paul K Chapman January 2014
Retired American Baptist Minister and volunteer with The Church of Scotland 2007-12.

the best things in life are free.



Don't You Agree ?

WHAT IS CANDLEMAS?

Of the various Christian holy days that take place throughout the year, Candlemas, on February 2nd, may be one of the least well-known ceremonies in the Christian world. Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox churches hold it in high esteem .

The celebration of Candlemas originated in the late fifth century as a tribute to the light of God's glory that was manifested in The Christ. The earliest known observance within the Church was in the year AD 496, during the time of Pope Gelasius. In AD 542 the Emperor Justinian ordained that the Eastern Church celebrate the festival, which he called *Hypapante*, or "Meeting". The name was derived from the Gospel of Luke 2:22-40, where Simeon the priest and Anna the prophetess met the infant Jesus in the temple at the time of his consecration. Simeon's prophecy declared Jesus to be the Lord's salvation and "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." This passage continues to be the focus of the celebration.

During Candlemas, candles are blessed, lit, and borne in a procession in celebration to



Jesus being the light of the world. In AD 638, Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, proclaimed the importance of the celebration in his sermon to the church, stating: "Our bright shining candles are a sign of divine splendour of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light." The candles are generally considered to represent the inner light of Christ, which he brought to share with the world.

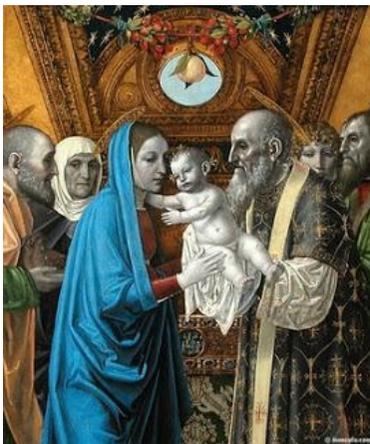
The timing for Candlemas is also in accordance with the Mosaic Law, which required that a woman should purify herself for forty days after giving birth, and, at the end of her purification, should present herself to the priest at the

temple and offer a sacrifice (Leviticus 12:6-7). The Roman Catholic Churches seem to devote greater focus to this aspect of Candlemas, as evidenced by their ritual of the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin.

The date of February 2nd places the Candlemas celebration forty days after Christmas and continues the religious cycle that leads up to Easter Sunday. Additionally, it is also the mid-

point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, which is the basis for various ancient European celebrations that commemorate the annual beginnings of the agricultural season.

For the Church, however, Candlemas remains a day of hope and light. It is a time to honour the Lord as the *Light of the World* and to remind us that we too have that light within us.



What is going to happen to worship after Alison's departure?

At the meetings with Bishop Nigel, St John the Baptist's and St Martin's have agreed to continue to work together even though the Partnership has been dissolved. How this is going to work hasn't yet been decided, but the Bishop has agreed to find a priest to celebrate one Eucharist each week. So the Eucharist may be in St John the Baptist's or maybe St Martin's. It may be week about, but it may be month about. NO

DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE. A Vestry Meeting will be held on Sunday 19 January and more information should be available then, after the decision has been ratified and there has been more discussion.

Your Bible Quiz – The Boyhood of Jesus

1. Where did Simeon and Anna see Jesus?
a. in Nazareth b. in the manger c. in the temple at Jerusalem d. on the road to Damascus?
2. How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?
3. Because of the danger from Herod, Joseph took Mary and Jesus to what country?
4. After what event was Joseph told to return with Mary and Jesus to the land of Israel?
5. How often did Jesus' parents go to Jerusalem?
6. How old was Jesus when he talked with the doctors in the temple?
a. six years old b. eight years old
c. twelve years old d. thirty years old?
7. How long did Jesus' parents travel without him before they turned back?
8. How many days did Jesus' parents search for him?
9. How did the doctors of the temple react upon hearing the young Jesus?
a. they were angry b. they were astonished
c. they were sorrowful d. they were without understanding?
10. True or False: After the events in the temple, Jesus was no longer subject to his parents.

Answers on page 3

Sunday Services during February and March 2014

FEBRUARY

2	Candlemas	10.30am	Sung Eucharist	Linked Charges St Martin's
9	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist
16	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St Martin's
	5.00pm		Evensong	St John the Baptist
23	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist

MARCH

2	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St Martin's
	5.00pm		Evensong	St Martin's
9	Lent I			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist
16	Lent II			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St Martin's
	5.00pm		Evensong	St John the Baptist
23	Lent III			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist
30	Mothering Sunday			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St Martin's

March 5 – Ash Wednesday – details will be announced in Church

APRIL

6	Lent V			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist
13	Palm Sunday			
	10.30am		Sung Eucharist	St Martin's
	5.00pm		Service for the Start of Holy Week	St Martin's

**CHURCH OF ST JOHN THEBAPTIST DUNDEE
SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC001147**

St John the Baptist
116 Albert Street
Dundee DD4 6QN
Scottish Charity No SC001147
www.saintsdundee.org/stjohnthebaptist
Email: jeanforbes86@googlemail.com

Rector : Vacant at present

Ministry Team :

Clergy :

Lay Readers : Jean Forbes, Robert Pemble, Iain Turnbull.

Vestry Members elected at the A.G.M. 2013

Vestry Secretary	Jean Forbes
Minute Secretar	Val Black
Named Treasurer	Angela Kilby

Other Members

Steven Cassells, Duncan Fraser, Ronnie Neave

Chair - Revd Alison Jones



20	Easter Day		
	10.30am	Sung Eucharist	St John the Baptist
27	10.30am	Sung Eucharist	St Martin's

Services in Holy Week

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday will be advised later.

10.00 am each Tuesday Holy Communion St Martin

10.30 am each Thursday Holy Communion St John the Baptist