

# NORTH LEITH PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

March/April 2022

Dear Friends,

Having been asked to submit my letter for this newsletter I have had to pause and think what could I possibly write about? As we are in the season of Lent and coming out of the restrictions of COVID it started me thinking about the washing routines we had introduced for us to comply with.



Thinking about Maundy Thursday foot washing has made me ponder the washing of our hands today. It has been such a ritual associated with the COVID 19 pandemic that we got obsessed with diligently washing our hands throughout the whole day more frequently than in the past. We used soap and water but also sanitiser and we were very more aware of touching in new ways.

Hand washing is a routine part of daily life and for those who do not have ready supplies of clean water the infection rate is increased. But for many washing hands is not simply about physical health but also spiritual practice. Devout Muslims will perform such ablutions throughout their day in association with prayer, I wonder how it would have been for all in the UK to associate the pandemic's call to wash your hands with reciting prayers and not 'Happy Birthday' as asked by the Prime Minister!



Washing of hands is not only associated with the absolution of sins and inner purity but quite the reverse, to wash our hands of something can often mean not taking responsibility or ownership of something when we should, being free of the consequence of a decision or action. This was clearly done by Pontius Pilate in absolving himself over the crucifixion of Christ; a very good reminder that our own responsibility cannot be given up to a desire for religious or moral purity. Being people of faith means that we often end up getting our hands dirty so we can fulfil our vocation in serving the poor and most vulnerable.

Hand washing rituals in the pandemic signified not just our desire to keep ourselves safe but to keep others free from disease. We have been challenged again to take responsibility for the well being of our neighbours, hand washing has made us recognise mutual dependency for health and community.

May each and everyone one of you have a very blessed and peaceful Easter.

Your friend in Christ                      *Karen*

## **PRESBYTERY PLAN UPDATE March 2022**

Since the last magazine there has been a lot of progress in starting to move forward towards the New Parish made up of the current parishes of Newhaven, North Leith and South Leith. Here is a short summary:

- Two good joint services, one in South Leith in February and one in North Leith on 20 March. It was great to see over 100 people at both and to enjoy the singing of the bigger congregation, even from behind face coverings!
- A positive joint elders' conference at Newhaven on 20 February
- A Steering Group, consisting of the Minister/Moderator, Session Clerk and three others from each church, formed and had its first meeting. North Leith members are Karen McKay, Anne Lamont, Tim Bell, Michelle Doig and Stewart Lowe.
- A positive *joint* response to the Plan new parish proposals agreed and sent to Presbytery.
- Communication with the congregations identified as a priority item and plans made, including spoken, paper and electronic regular updates – watch out for further details – and various opportunities for feedback
- Steering Group second meeting in April to discuss our Mission in more detail

Please continue to pray for this exciting development.

From Stewart Lowe:     DOORS



In our conversations and interactions with other human beings we catch glimpses of their lives and, using what we believe to be true of our own inner life, we construct a reality, a reality built upon our assumptions of what a life amounts to, its good moments, its sad moments, its fluctuations, its hopes and dreams. The “normality” of our lives leads us to construct a “normality” of other lives. However it only takes a moment to reveal the weakness of that argument. The

lives of others can be very different from our own.

How was it that I, a retired teacher, came to meet John a middle-aged alcoholic. The explanation is a very modern tale. John was hungry and needed food. I served at the foodbank. Over eight years we have shared the ups and downs of our lives, shared many honest glimpses of what defines us, to the extent that I could say we know and care about each other.

John has had more than his fair share of challenges: a mum's too early death; father who walked out on his boys; moved to a children's home in a challenging area of the city. Falling, falling, falling the very foundations of his life turned into chimera. Oh, John, who would cuddle you now?

Last Friday I arrived at the foodbank where I bumped into John's brother who informed me that John's best friend had succumbed to the Covid. John didn't appear so I set out to find him. I needed to know that he was okay. I wanted him to know he was in my prayers. I had an address but John lived on one of those streets which drive rooky postmen mad: house numbers bounced around like lottery balls. I spoke to a lady who was resting on a low wall in the vicinity of the elusive number. She was busy assessing whether I was a good guy or a bad guy; suspicion was her default strategy. She succeeded in keeping me at bay.

The following morning with a sympathy card and scribbled note in hand I set off again. My determination was rewarded. I climbed to the topmost flat to arrive at John's front door. My mouth hung open in disbelief. That door said it all. It was not a door to a home. It was an entrance to a tomb. We have all seen those crime dramas where the drug baron conducts his operations behind a ton of metal door. That was John's door. The hard, unforgiving metal, forged in the hardest of heats, burning bright, bright, told its own story: eintritt verboten, a wall of silence, a Berlin wall of division and secrecy. The card in my hand had nowhere to go. I ran strange hands along its cold surface, the invisible letter box. Every door in my world had a letter box. It would take one of Putin's mad tanks to gain entry. After a bad

day in the world I have felt the surge of relief that shutting the front door against the world brings. But to close John's door would more resemble the clanging shut of a prison door.

And what of John? When he passed that door on the way to the kitchen, when he took himself to bed at the end of the day, did he glance at the door and think, safe or did he think, I'm imprisoned? I imagine John waking in a cold sweat, nerves of his dreaming stretched taut, the weight of the door suffocating him.

Glimpses of lives, thinking we understand each other. Oh, Lord, only you can see and understand the nuts and bolts of our lives, you understand all that is deep within us, all that we hide from ourselves and those who know us.

Some doors take time and determination to open. Thankfully, God's door remains always open, never refusing you entry.

### **BIBLE CAKE RECIPE (for 24 people!!)**

Mima Robertson of Commercial Street, a member of Juana Molina's district, reminded Juana of this, and Juana managed to find it!

Thanks to both ladies. Why not try it and tell us how you got on?

*(Juana made one cake for 6 people reducing the ingredients to a ¼ )*

<b>Ingredients:</b> 1. 4 ½ cups 1 Kings 4:22 2. 1 cup Judges 5:25 3. 2 cups Jeremiah: 6:20 4. 2 cups chopped Nahum 3:12 5. 2 cups 1 Samuel 30:11 6. 2 cups Numbers 17:8 7 2 teaspoons 1 Samuel 14:25	<b>Preparation:</b>  Preheat oven at 175c. In a bowl combine well all the ingredients. Pour into prepared 9 x 13 inches cake bake tray. Bake for 40 minutes at 175c.
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## PANDEMIC POSITIVES

Pandemic positives are there any?  
Pandemic positives there are many  
The focus now is all on health  
For truly only health is wealth  
We're in the same boat are we not?  
Being careful is what we've got  
No one's perfect that's for sure  
God knows best the double cure ....  
*written by Norma Anne Macarthur in 2021*



### Holy Week Services & Events

You are warmly invited to join any/all of the following:

- Thursday 14 April,  
7pm Maundy Thursday Reflections in *South Leith*
- Good Friday  
12noon - 3pm 'Tre Ore' the last three hours of Christ on the Cross in *South Leith*  
3-5pm Messy Church at *Newhaven*  
7pm Stations of the Cross - Joint Service with St Mary's Star of the Sea in *St Mary's*  
7pm Communion service at *Newhaven*

- Saturday Family Fun Day in SL church grounds  
2pm The Easter Play in Princes Street Gardens West (free entry)
- Easter Day  
8:30am - Early morning service in SL church grounds ( Secret Garden) with communion  
10.30am **Joint New Parish Service** in *Starbank Park* or North Leith if bad weather

On Sunday 24 April, 11am there will be a **Joint New Parish Communion Service** in South Leith

### Retiring Offering to help displaced Ukrainians

The recent retiring offerings raised £512. Thanks to all who contributed.

### Planned NL events in May

#### **Christian Aid Week 15th to 21st May**



- we will be using delivery only envelopes as last year and delivering to main doors only (no entry phones to cope with)
- we will need about 12 volunteers - names to Jimmy Hudson
- we will resume our Bread and Cheese lunch and invite the other congregations to join us for lunch (or service and lunch)

#### **Coffee Morning Saturday 28th May 10.30 - 12 noon**

- the other congregations will be invited
- One World Stall

## **Church family**

Congratulations to Mark and Jude Cooper on the birth of their son, Aidan Donald Drake Cooper.

We send best wishes to David and Betty Black who will be moving to Livingston to be with their daughter and husband. We shall miss them.

The Kirk Session has admitted and warmly welcomed Tom Scott of Easter Warriston to membership at North Leith

*Please keep sending in your contributions for future magazines.*

*Please also remember to update us with any changes of contact details.*



“Only when we begin to experience Christ as dead can we celebrate the joy and surprise of him risen.”

*Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York*

Wishing all our readers a blessed, joyful Easter time