

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister

Winter 2017

Dear Friends,

Sometimes we hear phrases or use phrases which we believe are in the bible, but actually they are not, at least not in the form in which they are commonly recited. One of them is the phrase that Jesus is reported as saying:

"Peace, peace, where there is no peace."

Now, from a human point of view, it sounds like something that Jesus would have said. I am writing this letter the day after the terrorist assault on more than 300 Muslim worshippers in Egypt. All around the world, there are constant reminders that there is a definite lack of peace in the world.

Yet, as I have looked at three concordances, for the Authorised Version, Revised Standard Version and the New International Version of the bible, I have found that Jesus does not actually say these words. What He does say though is thought-provoking.

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matt 10:34)

"Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division." (Luke 12:51)

This all seems somewhat inconsistent with the rest of the gospel story. After all, the angels heralded the birth of the Christ Child with the song:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests." (Luke 2:14)

John's gospel is full of Jesus announcing peace to his disciples.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you..." (John 14:27)

"....so that in me, you may have peace..." (John 16:33)

"Peace be with you..." (John 20:19, 21,26)

Does not the prophet Isaiah, in his messianic prophecy, call the

One who is to come "Prince of Peace"? (Isaiah 9:6)

"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And He will be called, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

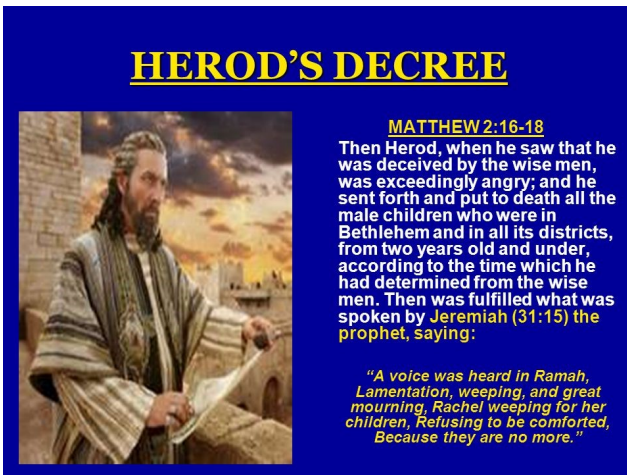


How do we reconcile these seemingly contradictory sayings?

It is actually the apostle Paul who warns the Christians in Thessalonica that the coming of Jesus Christ as Lord and Judge will be preceded by a time when

“People will be saying, “Peace, safety” when destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not be able to escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

The problem with Jesus Christ is, that wherever He appears, in person or by his spirit, there is always a divisive reaction. For some he is the “...aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that bring life”. (2 Corinthians 2:16)



We see this clearly in the Christmas story. For the religious establishment and King Herod, the birth of Jesus was an event that unsettled the established order and security of things, and led to the murderous reaction of Herod.

And yet for the shepherds, wise men and Mary and Joseph, He was the “..one who is born King of the Jews”. (Matthew 2:2) and “...the Saviour who has been born to you; who is the Messiah, the Lord”. (Luke 2:11)

gathered in:

“...there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...” (Luke 13:28ff)

As Christmas approaches, there is much talk about the need for peace on earth. And rightly, humanity longs for that day when all wars and injustices and pain cease; both the troubles between nations and the troubles within and around the individual. And yet that day will **only** come when He who has the power to make that peace, and secure a lasting peace, comes again (Revelation 6). That is why Advent and Christmas belong together. We look with anticipation to the great and final day, whilst looking back and rejoicing that, into a world of wars and rumours of war, the Prince of Peace was born in order that His peace might reign and rule within the human heart.

May we all consciously seek to know His Peace within us this Christmas, so that in the hassles and strains of the festive season, the

“...peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard and keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”. (Philippians 4:7)

With warm wishes for a peaceful Christmas and blessed New Year.



Mr B. R. Bull



The Gift of Giving

The Kirk Session and Board of Managers would like to extend a BIG THANK YOU to all who contributed so generously to our Thanksgiving Fund at the end of August. The sum of £15,000 was donated with the promise of another £2,000 from Gift Aid which we will receive next year.

You may remember that we decided to send a gift to the Denomination of 10% of the total, representing a tithe offering, and so a gift of £1,500 was sent in October. Thanks to your generosity our funds have been replenished but the work of Christ's church goes on and the wider denomination depends on donations too. Their central fund, or Target as it is known, depends on the contributions from member churches to finance its work. Each church is responsible for giving a donation per member to Target. The current contribution is £73 per member, so if a church has 100 members, it gives a donation of £7,300 per annum which comes from our weekly offerings. The money is distributed to be used in a variety of different ways as you can see from the pie chart below.

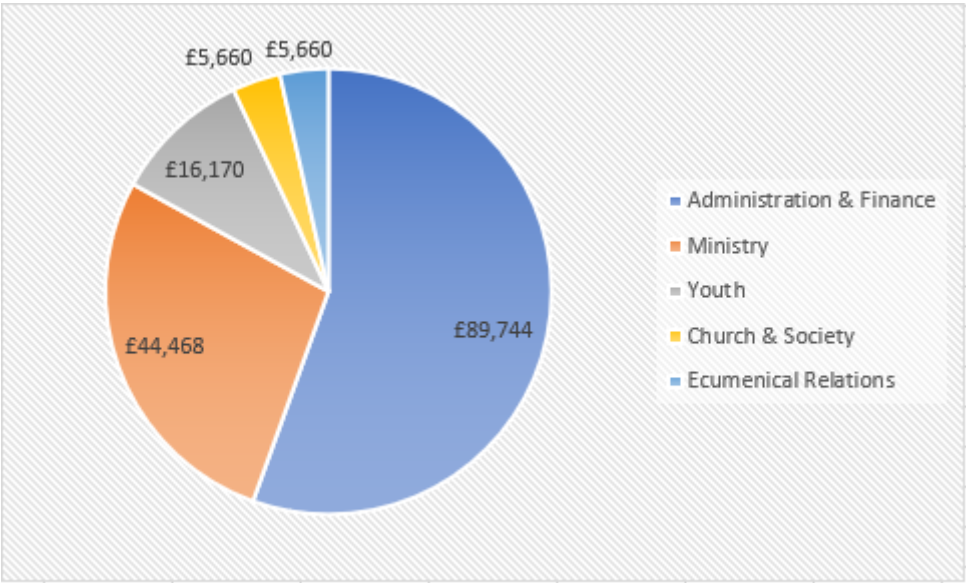
Everything we have is God's: our money, our time and our talents—He's simply loaning them to us here on earth and wants us to be good stewards of all He's entrusted to us. As He has lavished his generosity on us, may we also delight in honouring Him in our giving.

TARGET 2017 Where does the money go?

Youth:
Running Children's Camps and Events, employing a full-time Children and Youth Development Worker and developing strategies for working with young people.

Church & Society:
Contribution towards social and moral issues that the Church has an interest in.

Ecumenical Relations:
Strengthening links with other Churches in the UK and beyond.



Ministry:
Costs related to ministers, students for the ministry, ministry assistants and readers, including congregations without a full time minister. This also includes pension costs and complying with employment legislation.

Administration & Finance:
Cost of the office and office staff as well as other denominational costs including the annual General Assembly. It covers all the administration costs of all the committees, including the General Trustees.

The office administers the financial affairs of the denomination including payroll. Other work includes guidance on charity regulations and processing disclosure checks.

Building on a sure Foundation

**I believe in God our Father
I believe in Christ the Son
I believe in the Holy Spirit
Our God is three in one**

These words, sung by the band, were a fitting introduction to our **Rededication and Thanksgiving Service** on Sunday 27 August, affirming all that we believe. This was the first of two special services, celebrating God's goodness to us at Park, which rounded off the summer in style. We had just finished vital re-plastering and redecoration work, and despite unforeseen hitches, as is always the case with old buildings such as ours, the work was completed on time. This date was special to us as it marked, almost to the day, the 10th anniversary of our joining the United Free Church of Scotland. After a difficult few years we had found a new spiritual home which heralded a new beginning for us here at Park. We have never looked back!

In 2007, after the major renovation work, we dedicated the sanctuary building and ourselves to be used for God's glory. Our mission statement, ***To know Christ and to make him known***, is proclaimed from our notice board at street level for all to see and over the last 10 years we have forged links with our community through hosting events such as MEGA, music concerts, political hustings and the Art Exhibition as well as advertising our own Christmas, Easter and other special services through the use of colourful banners, which we hope will attract people into our church. In all this our aim is to bring glory to God and to further his kingdom.

So, 10 years on we find ourselves at another dedication service! Many changes have taken place over the years, not just in the fabric but also in the growth and spiritual development of our fellowship. Although our building is not decaying or falling down, the Kirk Session and Board of Managers believe it is important to keep it in good repair to show to our community that God is not dead, as many in 21st-century Scotland think, but that He is very much alive. Although the church is not the building per se, buildings do speak and are very much part of our witness. We feel it is important to have a warm, welcoming place we can invite people to.

We were honoured to have Rev John Fulton with us to represent the wider UF church community and to rededicate our sanctuary building. He reminded us that the building itself is not the church, rather the church is the people who make up the fellowship. As a people of God we need to be passionate about spreading the good news of the gospel, and when we hear the Spirit guiding us, we must respond and be ready to step out in faith. As we rededicated our building, we also recommitted our lives, our talents and our time, so that our fellowship will continue to be a beacon of light and impact our community. Our aim is to touch more lives so that more people will come to know God's love and mercy and join us in worship in the future.

Our scripture reading was from Nehemiah 12: 27-47, the story of the Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem when choirs came together to give glory to God. Rev David Easton, formerly of Burnside Church of Scotland, was our guest preacher, and spoke very eloquently and with great clarity on the topic, ***What is the worship that is pleasing to God?*** Although all Christians recognise the importance of worship, there are few matters more debated than what form our worship should take. We should set aside our own likes and dislikes and look to scripture for guidance. This passage in Nehemiah has important things to say.



We did not have a shortage of ministers that day!

First of all, the PURPOSE of worship is to manifest celebration, glad thanksgiving and dedication, as our minds are stimulated, our hearts moved and our wills bent. Secondly, the NATURE of worship is to sing hymns and songs as a glad response to God in gratitude and thanksgiving for all he has done for us. Our worship should have joy at its heart. Our PRIORITY in worship is to be right with God and with one another. As the people progressed round the walls and gates their worship drew on the psalms and worship that had enriched their nation in the past but they applied them to the new situation they found themselves in. We are to draw what is best from the old TRADITIONS but also to embrace the new. Our worship should show great VITALITY and our services should throb with life and fervour, reflecting the great hope we possess. True worship will always involve a COST and a giving of our time, talents and money.

However, our worship is not just something to be confined to a Sunday; everything we do throughout the week should commend our faith to others. The word that is preached must be backed up by the life of the fellowship and we must, as the popular saying goes, "*walk the talk*". As Nietzsche, the famous philosopher and atheist, said to his friend, "If I am to believe in your Redeemer, you are going to have to look a little more redeemed"! This is certainly a challenge to us all.

Fellowship was then enjoyed in the hall over tea and a specially made cake marking our 10 years in the UF Church.



Raising up a new generation!

On Sunday 3 September, we celebrated harvest thanksgiving. We not only celebrated the fruits of the physical harvest with our gifts to Glasgow City Mission, but we were also able to give thanks for a spiritual harvest within our fellowship. God had blessed us with an infant baptism and three adult professions of faith! Readings from Deuteronomy reminded us that it is the responsibility of parents to teach our children the things of God so that we see the bearing of fruit across the generations. God's covenant promise to Abraham was that **all** his descendants would be blessed. The sacrament of holy baptism is an outward sign of God's grace and an acceptance into God's covenant family. Craig and Laura brought their son, Daniel, to be baptised with the hope that he too would grow up and be part of a new generation of believers as seeds sown now, take root and bear fruit in the future.

James, Rachel and Shona, three of our young people who have been brought up in the fellowship and in Christian homes, came forward to profess their faith and spoke of their love for and desire to follow Jesus. They spoke movingly of how songs taught to them in Sunday School, many years previously, had come back to them and helped them through difficult times, how they felt God's presence with them when making difficult decisions and how they wanted to profess their faith in front of their church family before going off to university. Seeds of faith that had been sown, both in the home and in the church, many years before had come to fruition and now we were privileged and blessed to see the fruits of this harvest. Praise God for his goodness and faithfulness and in his raising up of a next generation to carry on his work.



Rachel, Shona and James

From Bothwell to Bombay and beyond...

Andrew and Kay Prentice have devoted their lives to helping the poor and underprivileged in India. Here Andrew tells us the journey God has taken him on.



Tell us a little about your background and how you came to faith.

I was born in Langside Avenue in Bothwell, and have happy memories of playing with my brothers and friends in the Covenanters' Field. Sadly, when I was seven, my brother Sandy who was eight, was killed in a road accident on Bothwell Main Street and after that my parents moved to Gardenside Street in Uddingston. My parents were both Christians and every Sunday I went with them to the Brethren hall in Greenrigg Street in Uddingston. I don't remember a time when I didn't believe in God but I made a public confession of my faith when I was eleven.

How did you become involved with Operation Mobilisation (OM)?

By 1993 I was a director in our family engineering business, married to Kay and had two boys, James and Richard. We lived in Bothwell and attended Bothwell Evangelical Church (BEC). I experienced some health problems that year which caused me to take time out from my busy schedule. On my return to work, I became more and more convinced that I was being 'called' into some other area of work. By 1995 the family business was sold and I was out of a job! My initial response was 'OK, God, what next?'. However, God seemed to answer 'ME', so the next months were spent mainly in study and seeking God. Gradually the concept of using my business skills and connections to raise resources for mission began to grow within me. This led ultimately to an appointment with the Director of OM, who it turned out had just prepared an outline job description for the brand new role of Financial Development Director. He asked me to start immediately.

Tell us a little about how long you were with OM and what your work involved.

Although I was never an employee of OM, I worked with them for 21 years. During that time, my main role was to build and establish a team involved in developing partnerships and raising finance to support OM's global ministry, and also to help train and establish similar teams in other parts of OM International. At varying times my role in the UK also included membership of the OM Board and Executive, which oversees the work of the charity.

By 2001 my role with OM had developed and grown to the extent that it was putting pressure on my role as part of a small lay leadership within BEC. After some time, and much prayer, we decided I should resign from leadership in BEC and concentrate on my role with OM. Having done this, we then felt it right to move on from BEC and after a few visits to Park Church of Scotland (as it was at that time), decided to settle there.

What were the highlights and low points of your time with OM?

My time with OM was the most challenging, but in many ways the most rewarding, of my working life...so far! OM works in over 100 countries around the world and I had the privilege of leading a team devoted to resourcing this global ministry. However, over the years I developed a very personal love for work amongst the Dalits and other low-caste groups in India. India's caste system condemns these people to an endless cycle of poverty and oppression. OM's work amongst these people grew to include education, health, empowerment and anti-trafficking. A highlight has been to see children from Dalit and low-caste backgrounds graduate from Good Shepherd schools, and go on to college and university to become professionals.

It has also been a privilege to help bridge between churches, organisations and people in the UK and the poor of our world to bring them Good News. Over the years it has been a particular joy to discover and develop friendships with many Christian businessmen and women who use their God-given gift wisely and generously for Kingdom purposes (see the email on page 7 I wrote after meeting one such man, entitled **Man of God**).

Low points were often associated with measuring our capacity to help against the scale of poverty and oppression in our world. At times I became overwhelmed by the cries for help coming in from OM teams around the world.

You are now involved in a new charity. Tell us a little about that - and what the future holds for you.

In 2016 it was decided, for a number of reasons, that the education, health, empowerment and anti-trafficking programmes in India should not be directly connected with OM. This means that partners in the UK, and elsewhere, are being transitioned out of OM into a different charity called Dalit Freedom Network (DFN). I'm overseeing this transition and building capacity with DFN to support these programmes. Kay's help in this is invaluable as she helps to co-ordinate my diary, arranges my travel and generally tries to keep me on track!

DFN UK was originally formed out of OM to focus on advocacy on behalf of the Dalit community in India. However, going forward, the aim is that DFN will have a much wider role in promoting and resourcing work in India which includes:

Education: 103 schools providing low or zero cost high-quality English medium education for 26,500 children.

Health: Trained health workers monitor the health of children attending the schools and are linked to a network of clinics and health professionals around the country.

Empowerment: Many of the schools also provide vocational training for adults. These are designed to reduce the grinding poverty and resulting oppression prevalent in rural India where nearly 2/3 of India's vast population live.



Anti-trafficking: Trafficking of children and young adults is often the result of people being unable to service the exorbitant interest rates demanded by money lenders. Anti-trafficking activity is dangerous work and for this reason we do not publicise detail on it. (We can be more open about our efforts to work with the authorities to shut down the illegal practice of temple prostitution, which involves young girls being dedicated to the temple god and becoming available to the priest, and later others, for lifelong use and abuse.)

The Future....?

As I look back, I thank God for his faithfulness to the promise he gave me over 20 years ago as I sat alone in a hotel in London. About to fly out to India for the first time, and conscious of my inexperience in 'mission', the wariness in OM of 'this business guy', of scepticism in the wider family of my 'career change', of inner doubts and fears for the future wellbeing of Kay and the boys, of my own propensity to fail, God spoke to me clearly from Psalm 121.....

I look up to the mountains - does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth!

He will not let you stumble and fall; the one who watches over you will not sleep.
The one who watches over Israel never tires and never sleeps.

The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.
The sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon at night.

The Lord keeps you from all evil and preserves your life,
The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go both now and forever.



Today as I look to the future I'm still trusting in his promise....

If you want to find out more about the work of DFN, please click on the following link: www.dfn.org.uk

Man of God

Today I met a man of God.

Picture the setting.....in a church, a chapel. He's the senior pastor or missions secretary, or missionary back on furlough or an evangelist, a gifted teacher, a miracle worker.

Actually, no. None of these. The setting was different. It's in an office in a Business Park. A nice office in a well-kept office block with BMWs parked outside and a polite receptionist who flicks a switch and announces my arrival.

Here he comes to meet me. Every inch a business man. Well-dressed in his business suit, matching shirt and tie. He gives me a warm welcome, coffee arrives, family news is shared, fellowship is immediate, partnership possibilities are discussed (his generosity is legendary), we pray, his prayer is for the lost, the poor, the displaced. As I leave I feel blessed, encouraged and deeply impressed by a man, mature in his faith who knows he is where God wants him to be and doing what God gifted him to do. His type are special. Christian businessmen and businesswomen who have the steady hand needed to hold the full cup of success and whose hearts God has filled with generosity.

Thank you, Lord, for godly men and women who inhabit the business world and are our special partners in taking the Good News of the Christian message to the poor of our world.

Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

As we continue our series on the story behind the song, we reflect on what the psalmist wrote: *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, bless His name!* (Ps 100 v 4)



We are to give thanks and praise God in all circumstances. Many hymns and worship songs are born out of tragedy and adversity in the authors' lives, and when we come to know the story behind these songs, we gain a greater appreciation and understanding of how the author's faith sustained them during this time. This is the case with both songs we are looking at, one an old favourite and the other a newer worship song.

What a Friend we have in Jesus

There can't be many of us who don't remember this song from our Sunday School days!

The author, Joseph Scriven, was born into an affluent family in Ireland in 1819 and was educated at Trinity College in Dublin where he met and fell in love with a young lady. However, the day before they were to be wed, tragedy struck and his fiancée fell from her horse and was drowned in the river. As a result of this tragedy, he turned to God for consolation and decided to commit himself to the ideals of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He left Ireland and travelled to Port Hope in Canada where he devoted himself to helping the poor, the widows and tutoring local school children. He met a young lady called Elisa Roche and fell in love again. However, tragedy struck for a second time and Elisa contracted pneumonia and died in 1854 before they could be wed. Once again he found strength in turning to a God he looked on as his closest friend. Joseph stayed on in Port Hope and became known as **The Good Samaritan of Port Hope** for his charitable works.



When Joseph himself became ill in 1855, a visiting friend found a poem by his bedside and asked Joseph who had written it. He answered, "The Lord and I did it between us". He'd actually written the poem to comfort his ill mother to tell her of the friendship he had with Jesus that gave him purpose and hope in the face of devastating grief and pain. He didn't intend for it to be published but Charles Converse, an attorney and composer, put music to it in 1868. Joseph died in a drowning accident in 1886 in Ontario.

The hymn itself talks of friendship with Christ and is simple in its message; it defines the essence of a right relationship with God who, as a loving father and friend, wants to carry our burdens and ease our pain.

**What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.**

Joseph must have felt indescribable grief on the death of his fiancées, a grief that could have easily turned to unbelief, bitterness and anger at God, but instead it led him to trust fully in Christ and to be able to write the words in the 3rd verse of this hymn:

**In his arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.**

Although his life was filled with tragedy, Joseph Scriven trusted God with the deepest burdens of his life and found the greatest friend he'd ever known in Jesus. Through his hymn, countless others have been given hope and comfort in their own lives and struggles.



Blessed be your Name

This song, written in 2002 by Matt and Beth Redman, also explores the idea of suffering and how we, as Christians, deal with it.

"**Blessed Be Your Name** stems from the story of our lives," Matt explains. "Both Beth and I had tough upbringings—a lot of different issues to do with fathers—and over the years we've come to realise that worshipping God is a choice, and the best choice we'll ever make." Matt and Beth were on sabbatical in the U.S. during the September 11 terrorist attacks. They wrote **Blessed Be Your Name** while in the shadow of those tragic events.



"It struck me how little a vocabulary we have in church worship music to respond appropriately in dark times of life," Matt says. "We all face seasons of pain and unease. And in those times we need to find our voice before God. The church, and indeed the world, needs songs of lamentation."

Many Christians have testified that their response of trust and praise to God, in some of the harshest of life experiences, has caused them still to proclaim, Blessed be the name of the Lord. Matt says,

"Worship is always a choice. At times it's an easy, straightforward one. When life is peaceful and painless, the choice to respond to God in thanksgiving and praise may not be such a hard one to make. But at other times in our lives, worship becomes a much gutsier decision. Caught up amidst a whirlwind of pain and confusion, the decision to cry out, "Yet I will praise you," is a costly act of devotion.....Yes, praise be to God for times of abundance and plenty in our lives—those carefree days full of peace and laughter. Yet we praise Him also in the wilderness times—those dark and stormy seasons of the soul when we're left crying out with the psalmist, "How long, O Lord, how long?" (Psalm 6:3)."

**Blessed be Your name in the land that is plentiful
Where the streams of abundance flow,
Blessed be Your name.
And blessed be Your name when I'm found in the desert place,
Though I walk through the wilderness,
Blessed be Your name.**

We are quick to seek God in times of trouble and hardship in our lives but we must never forget to praise him and give him the honour and glory when things are going well. Every blessing bestowed on us should be turned into a praise offering, both the earthly things like friendship and family but also the heavenly themes like salvation, forgiveness of sin, redemption! Nothing is too big, or too small, to give God thanks for. Matt says, "Mature worshippers of Jesus learn to bring an offering in every season of the soul, for every high and every low, knowing that the worth of Jesus outweighs each and every pain and pleasure in this life. Centred on Christ, wholesome worship has room both for the heights of joy and the pits of despair."

**Every blessing you pour out I'll turn back to praise
And when the darkness closes in, Lord,
Still I will say,
Blessed be the name of the Lord.**

The last section of the song comes straight from the story of Job. Many believe the Book of Job is about suffering, but Matt has a different interpretation. "I think it's really about something much grander—the sovereignty of God—of which suffering is a subcategory. At the end of chapter one it says: 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.'"

**You give and take away,
You give and take away,
My heart will choose to say,
"Lord, blessed be Your name."**



A season of suffering is a challenge to every Christian; the loss of a loved one, a miscarriage, making sense of terrorist attacks, redundancy, there are so many things that upset the equilibrium of our lives. Sometimes when we don't understand what is happening around us, all we can do is cry out to God, put our trust in Him and say "Lord, blessed be Your name". This is the best praise offering we can bring!

To listen to the song, click the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qp11X6LKYY>

Tools of the Trade

The following article was given to me by John Weeks and was first published in *The Evidence* by kind permission of World Outreach. Although the language is quite old-fashioned, the message is unfortunately timeless. This humorous tale of the carpenter's tools bickering among each other is so indicative of how we often act in the church today. The moral of the story is self-evident so I hope you enjoy it...

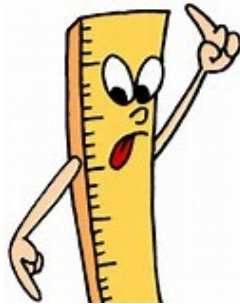
Labourers Together with God—The Carpenter's Tools' Quarrel



The Carpenter's tools had a conference. Brother Hammer was in the chair. The meeting had informed him that he must leave because he was too noisy. But he said, "If I am to leave this carpenter's shop, Brother Gimlet must go too; he is so insignificant that he makes very little impression".

Little Brother Gimlet arose and said, "All right, but Brother Screw must go also; you have to turn him around and around again and again to get him anywhere".

Brother Screw then said, "If you wish, I will go, but Brother Plane must leave also; all his work is on the surface, there is no depth to it".

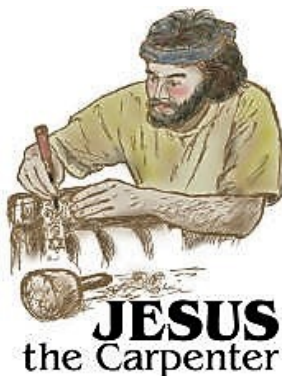


To this Brother Plane replied, "Well Brother Rule will have to withdraw if I do, for he is always measuring other folks as though he were the only one who is right".

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper and said, "I just don't care, he is rougher than he ought to be, and he rubs people the wrong way".

In the midst of the discussion, the Carpenter of Nazareth walked in. He had come to perform his day's work. He put on his apron and went to his bench to make a pulpit. He employed the screw, the gimlet, the sandpaper, the saw, the hammer, the plane and all the other tools. After the day's work was over and the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and said, "Brethern, I perceive that all of us are labourers together with God".

How many of we Christians are just like these tools—fussing at others because they don't do things just the way we think they should!



There was not an accusation against one of these tools that was not absolutely true; yet the Carpenter used every one of them and there was not a place where He used any one where any other one would have done at all. How careful we should be to guard against finding fault with any of God's tools.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3 v 12-13

It's the most wonderful time of the year.....

What does the word Christmas mean to you?

For some it **is** the season of joy with gifts under the tree, mince pies, silly Christmas jumpers, parties, Santa, carol singing, time with the family, turkey and Christmas pudding! For others, it is a very stressful time, trying to buy presents for the kids when money is scarce or running ragged ensuring everything is just perfect for the big day. And for many it can be a very lonely time, especially for those living alone, or for those who have lost a loved one or whose families cannot join them for Christmas.



For Christians, Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of the Christ child, a time to remember that God sent His son, Jesus, to save His people from their sins. In Luke we read, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people". God's love for us was made known through the Incarnation, when God stepped down from heaven and became one of us! "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3 v16)

Now that's really something to celebrate this Christmas!

Christmas Acrostic

by Johnnie DesRochers

- C** is for the Child born that night to be our light
- H** is for holy is His name
- R** is for rejoice with gladness and joy
- I** is for Immanuel, God with us
- S** is for the star that led the Wise Men to Him
- T** is for the truth and grace that was sent our way
- M** is for mother Mary laying him in swaddling clothes in the manger
- A** is for angels singing songs of joy
- S** is for salvation



Uddingston Pride Update

The award ceremony for the [Beautiful Scotland](#) competition was held on 7 September, in Dunfermline, and we were delighted when we were awarded a Gold Certificate, the highest possible level of award. We were just pipped for first prize in the Urban Community category by Dyce, who gained their first ever gold, and were just a couple of points ahead of us. So, it's "well done, Dyce" and "here's to next year".

After the award ceremony, we were able to meet up again with our judges, who went through the marking sheets with us, and made some very useful suggestions as to how we could improve the village even more. So next year we will try to follow their suggestions and have Uddingston as category winners once again.

At the end of October we heard from Llandudno that Uddingston had won another gold certificate in the [Britain in Bloom](#) awards and again had come a close second in the Urban Community category which was won by Didsbury.

The comments by the judges in both competitions were most complimentary, and they praised many of the highlights of their tour of the village, with special mention of the station and the churches.

We are most grateful for all the help we get from so many of the local residents; without their help we would not be able to achieve such outstanding results. So, a very big **"THANK YOU"** to all those who have turned out to support our efforts throughout the year.

In early October, we helped the children of Uddingston Grammar School, Muiredge and St John's Primary Schools, to plant several thousand daffodil and crocus bulbs in the vicinity of their schools, and we hope the children will enjoy the displays they produce in the spring.

The bedding plants have to be removed in the autumn as they wither and die off; the planters look so bare without them, but we can't hold back the seasons. If you have any suggestions for next year's displays, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Village Christmas

Our popular Christmas Open Day will be held this year on Sunday 3 December. The pipe band will start proceedings at 1.00 pm, and there will follow the usual mixture of activities to entertain all ages.

Our wonderful Primary Schools' Choir will sing for us in Park Church, always a delight, and our talented young dancers will perform outside the Anvil Inn. Another highlight will be the Salvation Army, playing all your favourite carols; why not come along and join them and sing along?

For the adults there will be Christmas pies, mulled wine, and gifts to buy at the Uddingston Pride Marquee, and Park Church will be running a café in the Church Hall. The Children will enjoy the "Cuckoo in the Nest" competition, and there will be lots of other entertainments and activities for all ages to enjoy during the afternoon.

No Christmas event would be complete without a visit from Santa, and we have been assured he will be there at some time to hand out sweets to all the children he meets.

This is an event that simply must not be missed, so come along, bring the family, enjoy all the fun, and start the Christmas period off with a bang.



Advent and Christmas at Park

Sunday 3 December 	10.30am Good News to the Poor Speaker from Blythswood Care Holy Communion Village Christmas 1.30pm Joint Primary School Concert Tea Room will be open in Church Hall	  
Sunday 10 December	6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols - St Andrews Church	<i>Lessons & Carols</i> 
Sunday 17 December	 10.30am Nativity Play by Park Kids Gift Service for GCM 6.30pm Advent Supper	
Wednesday 20 December	7pm Bield Housing Carol Service	
Sunday 24 December	10.30am Carol Service 6.30pm Crib Service 7.30pm Carols around the Community 11.30pm Watchnight Service	
Christmas Day		10.30am Celebrate the King!
Sunday 31 December	10.30am Café Church for Hogmanay!	 CHURCH CAFÉ-STYLE
Sunday 7 January 2018	10.30am New Year, New Direction	NEW YEAR NEW DIRECTION!



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