

Rosyth  
Methodist Church



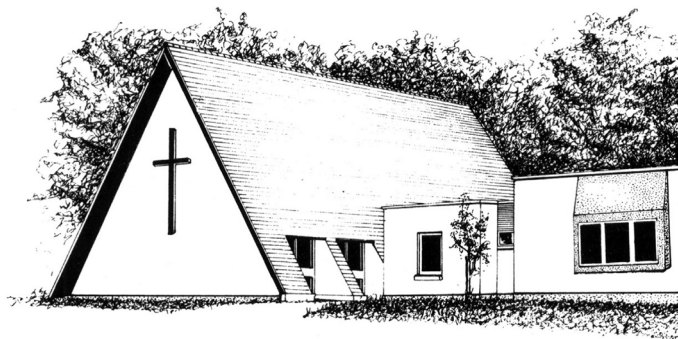
St Margaret's Scottish  
Episcopal Church



# Contact

the newsletter of the partnership between

Rosyth Methodist Church and  
St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church



Issue 108  
April 2020

Rosyth  
Methodist Church  
Scottish Charity SC028559  
[www.rosythmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rosythmethodist.org.uk)

St Margaret's Scottish  
Episcopal Church  
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## in partnership

Our partnership is formally recognised as a Local Ecumenical Partnership,  
with a constitution and Covenant signed on 14 June 2000

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*\* An asterisk indicates a change since the last issue*

## our regular pattern of worship is suspended due to the corona virus pandemic

Following guidance from the Scottish and UK governments and the Leaders of the Methodist Church in Britain, and Scottish Episcopal Church, all church services and all meetings have been cancelled or postponed until further notice.

***Instead, consider sharing in worship in your household or with others on-line.***

Links to worship resources are on the **Church Resources** page of the Circuit website [www.forthvalleycircuit.org.uk](http://www.forthvalleycircuit.org.uk). Regularly updated, these include: weekly service sheets; live-streamed materials via ZOOM or YouTube; music videos to support reflection and prayer; and other denominations and communities.

## where to find us

Our postal address is Queensferry Road, Rosyth, Dunfermline, KY11 2JH, and you'll find us at the junction of Queensferry Road and Woodside Avenue. The church is a short walk from Rosyth Rail station. The car park is behind the church and local on-street parking is limited, but there is much more parking space at the junction with Park Road.

# Contact

Newsletter of the Methodist—Episcopalian local ecumenical partnership in Rosyth

**Issue 108: April 2020**

## From the Editor's desk

The steps taken by government to reduce the threat of infection by the corona virus mean that this issue of CONTACT is both slimmer and has a shorter life (one month) than usual. There is no diary, due to the cancellation of church services, meetings and events. Moreover there are no printed copies; because the Methodist Church has (page 11) declared that its buildings are closed; and that that means “nobody should enter”, thus denying access to the church copier. Instead copies are being distributed as a pdf file by email. At least our distributors of printed copy can now stay safely at home.

With normal services abandoned, ministers and preachers are developing online services. For Methodists the latest information is brought together on the Circuit website's 'Resources' list (see page 2) . I recommend sampling the 11am Sunday services on YouTube from the Rev Mark Slaney's dining room. For Episcopalians during Holy Week, Holy Trinity Dunfermline are offering a

short service at 7pm each evening that will be live streamed on YouTube and Facebook. (Streamed services can be viewed later on if you miss the live transmission.).

Moreover, there is also increasing use of email to distribute basic news. So, if you think you are missing out because a relevant person does not know your email address, let them know it!

But that leaves a problem that those not on email or without an internet connection could feel increasingly isolated. How do we address that? At her service on 15 March Rev Helen Jenkins suggested sharing a list of telephone numbers amongst those who wish to 'Keep in touch'. Tell me if you would like to be on such a list.

This issue contains only two of our regular items, Fellowship News (p12) and the Puzzle Page (p 18). Other items help us understand/cope with our current strange state by including pertinent prayers, poems, hymns. See back cover for a special prayer.

Howard Kirby

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*Material for a subsequent issue is welcome at any time*

## Strange times

*A Circuit circular on 19 March by Rev Eddie Sykes remains relevant today*

When serving in the Bahamas, I experienced five hurricanes. When a hurricane is predicted in its early stages that it may travel in your direction, people are glued to the media for days to check where it is and what it is doing. Circumstances could change its direction and power. When you realise it is definitely heading your way, you batten down your homes, people pray for safety, all events, schools, business, etc, are put on hold and people brace themselves for the storm. The days before there is that 'calm before the storm' feeling: the sea is calm, the sky is blue, the sun is shining, and yet you have this surreal awareness that there is this monster heading your way just beyond the horizon. You then experience the full force of the hurricane – you are battered, nervous, and do all you can to stay safe. When it passes the mopping up operation and restoration of the community begins. *[Ed: see p16 for Dorian.]* However, there is the realisation that things will never be quite like they were before.

To a limited degree, I think we can see some similarities with these strange times that we are living in at the moment: the main difference, though, being that although you don't know exactly the damage a hurricane will cause, there is the probability that the force of the storm will pass relatively quickly. However, the recovery afterwards can take a while, and sadly some things may never recover.

Today we are all experiencing something we have not had previous experience of. Daily, new instructions and guidelines are being issued, as globally we seek to stay as safe as possible as the coronavirus threat evolves. As a Circuit we have implemented the guidelines issued by Connexion *[Ed: see page 11]* and suspended all Sunday worship, and other services and meetings taking place in our church buildings. We know that these and other steps taken by government are having significant impact on everyone's daily life and plans. It is not an easy time for sure, but with the realisation that we are all in this together, and the assurance of God's presence with us through this time we can journey forward. Worship, Bible studies, prayers will be shared on a regular basis, together with other resources that we hope will support and help all of us maintain our life of worship and service to God.

Pastorally, if you are aware of any emergency please let us know. Sadly, all visitation will have to be suspended or be of a very limited nature. All of us are seeking to support each other, even though that support for the most part will be in the virtual world of phone calls, email, skype, etc. We are aware that there are those who live by themselves, those who do not use technology, and may feel isolated during this time. I encourage all of us to do what we can, without putting ourselves at risk, to be supportive.

## Embracing Lament in Lent

*The litany of lament grows loud and long:  
The pulse of faith grows stronger once more.*

*Martin Tarr reflects on the impact of a memorable “Sunday@Six” on 15th March*

“Beware the Ides of March” was the soothsayer’s message to Caesar, warning of his death, familiar to many from their school studies of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. Not that in 1601 the expression was anything more than the usual way of saying “March 15th”!

The twenty of us who came out that evening will now have an additional long-lasting association, of the shared experience that was a memorable Sunday@Six. Two of the things that differentiate church services is how much of them you can remember, and how much they influence your thoughts and life afterwards, and the service led by Julia Reid and Michael Paterson scored highly on both counts. Everyone there will recall different aspects that illuminate their path – I for one will certainly look at my daily Psalm differently as a result – and it will have an ongoing impact on many.

“Embracing Lament in Lent” had been billed as a service in which we would be encouraged to “cry out to the Lord our God”, using some of the lamenting psalms to share our sorrows, grief, pain, regrets and complaints with God. Michael and Julia led us with an inspirational combination of music, recitation, stories and video clips, intermingled with prayer and periods

of quiet. This report includes just a few examples.

Michael told of an occasion when he was quietly praying in a church and was interrupted by someone who came in, thumped the communion table, and called God to account. We learnt that it’s all right to be angry – God understands. In the Psalms David openly expressed anger or frustration with God, yet God did not give up on David, and we too can trust in his unfailing love.

In an activity that Julia gave us, we chose pieces of paper on which to record our prayers to God, with different colours and headings:

*I want you to know God that I am not happy about ...*

*It’s just not fair Lord that ...*

*Save me God from ...*

*I need you God because ...*

When completed, we brought these back, laid them on the table, and lit a candle of hope.

These personal and confidential prayers were later taken away by Michael. As shown in our photograph (overleaf), they lie in his chapel before Rembrandt’s “Merciful Father” (part of his 1668 painting “The Return of the Prodigal Son”). Here they will be prayed over by Michael, though remaining unread, until Easter Day,

*Continued from page 5 (Embracing Lament...)*

when the papers will be turned to ashes by the Easter Fire. Who says that symbolic acts have no power?!

Many who come from a tradition of a monthly cycle of Psalms, and heard of the *weekly* cycle that had been Michael's early experience might feel that perhaps this was too much psalmody. Appropriately the psalm for Night Prayer on that Monday night outside the South African Embassy in the 'Release Mandela' vigil was Psalm 69 "Save me O God, for the waters have risen up to my neck"! We gained an understanding that the Psalms reflect different experiences and that, at any given time, for each of the psalms, there will be people around the world to whom that psalm speaks.

We learnt some new words, too. The Hebrew tune *Leoni*, familiar as the setting of "The God of Abraham praise" was a modern setting of Psalm 143, which ended with a wonderful prayer for guidance:

"Because I trust in you  
and offer you my prayer,  
let me, when morning comes,  
discern  
your loving care.  
My heart is set on you;  
this earnest plea I make,

that you will show the road my life  
is meant to take."

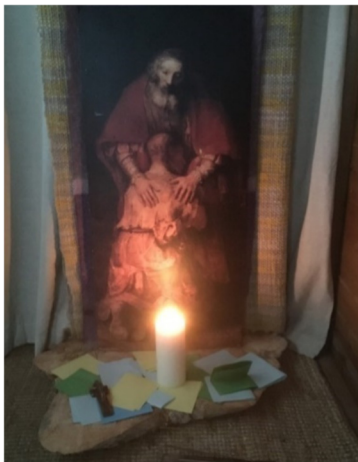
Two other hymns framed the service, which started with "O God you search me and you know me", based on Psalm 139 (Singing the Faith 728), and ended with the metrical version of Psalm 121 "I to the hills will lift mine eyes". With hindsight, given that the service turned out to be the last gathering for worship in the church for the immediate future, it was so appropriate that our last words were:

"The Lord shall keep thy soul; he shall  
preserve thee from all ill.  
Henceforth thy going out and in  
God keep for ever will."

### ***Afterthought***

While Julia and Michael developed their thoughts independently, it's another example of God's coincidences. This is the year that the Church Mission Society have been offering "Lament for Lent – only with eyes that have cried" – a weekly devotional resource "to give us a chance to let the unsaid out ... and to discover how we can genuinely be there for each other when things aren't fine." How much this is needed in today's coronavirus-hit world!

Martin Tarr



## Wilderness experiences

*Rev Helen Jenkins' sermon on 15th March, provided timely insights*

*Readings: Exodus 17: 1-7; Romans 5: 1-11*

We're now on the third Sunday of Lent – I realised two weeks ago how much I relate to the shape of the church year when I went to an evening service in a local non-denominational church, and was completely thrown when they read John's account of the resurrection! – I was like 'you can't do that, it's the first Sunday in Lent!'

So is Lent something that you engage with, or ignore? Something that you find helpful, or a struggle (or both!)?

Our Lenten pattern reflects something of the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness – have you ever stopped to wonder why that's something we'd want to replicate? I guess it's better than the forty years the Israelites managed. It's easy to see why we want to mark Easter, and even to remember the events of Holy week, but choosing to spend time in a desert? Does that not seem a bit odd? Today's lectionary readings take us to some different versions of wildernesses, so perhaps through them we can explore that idea.

Our Old Testament passage takes us back to Israel's wilderness experience - it's pretty early on in that time, not all that long after their miraculous escape from Egypt, but it follows a repeated pattern – things look hard, so they grumble and want to give up. To be fair to them, being stuck in the desert with no water is a pretty large problem. But how quickly it seems

they've forgotten God's provision for them – getting them out of Egypt in the first place, turning bitter water sweet, providing bread and quails to eat.

Do we ever forget?

Moses is faced with a load of thirsty, grumpy, scared people and they expect him to do something about it – the joys of leadership. And I want to note his response – he doesn't stop and argue (much, at least), nor does he send out scouts to look for water. Instead, he cries out to the Lord. He doesn't try and deal with it in his own strength, but turns to God. Ruth Haley Barton talks about this as being a pattern we see with Moses, and a model of intercession as 'being present to God on others' behalf', which I find a really freeing idea as it takes us away from needing to come to God with an articulate set of requests for others (not that there's anything wrong with prayers of intercession that we share in that way) and makes intercession about the way we are with God, and how we carry others into that place without necessarily needing any words.

Moses gives us a model of taking frustrations and struggles to God rather than reacting on a human level. Sometimes I need to remember that, when I want to fix things, to come up with a solution, or to get into an argument to prove that I'm right. I

*Continued from page 7 (Wilderness experiences)*

wonder too whether sometimes we need to remember it in our churches.

Moses goes to God on the people's behalf. And in that desert place, God provides for them.

Then we have the woman at the well. She's not literally in the wilderness, she's in a city, her home. But she has to collect water from the well, and here we find her doing so in the middle of the day, at the hottest time.

There may have been many reasons for this, but it's certainly widely suggested that she was avoiding being there at dawn or dusk when it would have been cooler but far busier. Perhaps her marital history or her current living arrangements make her the subject of local chitchat. Or perhaps she just doesn't want to queue up and partake of the local gossip.

Whatever the reason, it's pretty clear she wasn't expecting to meet a man, a Jew, who will not only speak to her, a Samaritan woman, but ask her to provide him with a drink. All of those things would have been forbidden for Jesus, but for him the needs of a person outweigh the societal rules.

So we have a woman who is clearly on the edges of her society in some way, meeting Jesus who not only knows her deeply, but offers her something she cannot understand but knows she needs. Into the desert of her life, however she might be experiencing it, Jesus offers living water. She's

desperate to get out of the daily routine of carrying water and Jesus' offer seems at first glance to give her that option, but as the conversation continues she discovers that this is something much deeper. And she is given an amazing gift – Jesus reveals to her, a Samaritan woman on the edge of society, what his male Jewish disciples are far from cottoning onto the reality of: that he is the Messiah, the Christ.

What is the living water that we need for our souls?

In Romans, Paul doesn't use the word wilderness, or desert, but he talks of our state of being in ways that fit: ungodly, weak, sinners, enemies of God. These are the realities of humanity in so many ways and it is into this reality that Christ came offering justification, grace, glory, reconciliation. A great lot of theological words there, and we could spend weeks unpacking Paul's understanding of them (the most baffling module I did when I studied theology was Romans in Greek – this is deep, complicated, amazing stuff). But it boils down to the fact that Jesus meets us as we are - human, flawed, messed up, hurting – and through his death enables us to be in relationship with our creator God, made right in ways we can never hope to fully understand but can live in the reality of, forgiven and free. Through Christ, we are transformed.

Paul knows that a life of faith in Jesus isn't an easy one – we can read in Acts much of what he suffered. But in what might be seen as wasteland, in the sufferings and the struggle, Paul finds reason to boast, because sufferings produce endurance, endurance character, character hope, and hope does not disappoint because of God's love poured into our hearts. Wow, what a response to suffering!

Boasting in sufferings seems completely counterintuitive, but then I stopped to think about it – how many of us know people who if you have an ailment, they've always had a worse version? Or I don't know about other professions, but clergy are far too often guilty of competitive overwork, comparing who is the busiest, with an unspoken implication that somehow doing too much is a sign of our worthiness.

Of course that's not what Paul's doing – he is seeing the result of suffering in his own life, and rejoicing because he can see what God has achieved through it. In the difficulties, he finds God at work.

I wonder what your experience is of wilderness in your life – perhaps you are fortunate and have rarely gone through such a time, but for many of us ill health, unemployment, grief, loneliness, family problems, all these things and more can (although don't necessarily) lead to us feeling like we're in a wilderness place. At the moment with all the uncertainty about the coronavirus but with people already having to self-isolate and

much fear and anxiety, I imagine life feels pretty wilderness-like for a lot of people.

Equally, on the surface things can look great, like we have life all sorted, but underneath it can be a different story. For many people of faith, there can be points in their lives that feel like a spiritual wilderness, where God who has seemed closely present now feels absent.

Today's passages remind us that no matter what wildernesses we may find ourselves in (and no doubt some of us feel like we're there today for any number of reasons), God is present. It might not feel like it – the Israelites certainly didn't seem to be aware of God's presence when they moaned about having no water – but God is there.

And in those wilderness places there is the possibility of encountering God. There are no guarantees, we can't summon God on demand expecting a particular experience (Caitlin and I have just finished listening to all the Narnia stories on CD, and one of the things that has stuck with me is the description of Aslan – 'he's not a tame lion'), and if we close ourselves off and decide that God can't possibly be in this bleak a place, then that may well be how we experience the wilderness.

But as we journey through the season of Lent, we remember that Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness was an experience that was formational at the beginning of his ministry; that in forty years of travel through the desert the

*Continued from page 9 (Wilderness experiences)*

Israelites experienced God's provision again and again; and that a woman collecting water at the height of the day in an attempt to create her own isolation met with Jesus who offered her more than she knew she needed. Paul too reminds us that even through suffering we can encounter God's love.

And so this Lent, where some of us may be creating our own mini-wilderness experience through giving up something we value, and others of us are living in deserts we would never have chosen, perhaps rather than running from those places that seem dry and unfruitful, or closing ourselves down to protect our hearts when things are a struggle, we might embrace the possibility that in those driest, most difficult of times, God might meet us.

It's not a panacea, there are no magic formulae, and there's no promise of a way out of the desert – remember it took the Israelites forty years and even then Moses saw the promised land but did not get to enter it. But perhaps the wilderness can be a place of encounter and transformation, that as we come through it we are changed, perhaps in ways we never expected.

The question is, are we prepared to take the risk of opening our hearts to that possibility, that perhaps when all around is dry, we might find living water.

Amen

## **A hymn to reflect upon**

Helen's sermon was followed by a hymn which invited us into those wilderness experiences in the hope of transformation. Written by Rachel Parkinson (to a tune for 'Beneath the cross of Jesus' in Hymns & Psalms 165), the words relate well to the strange desert world that the corona virus has brought about.

"Lord, save us from the desert"  
is what we often pray  
yet cushioned by securities  
we often lose the Way.  
So lead us into wilderness  
and gently strip us bare;  
That, trusting in your grace alone,  
we find your blessings there.

The desert meant for Hagar  
she met God face to face;  
A burning bush made Moses see  
the desert's sacred space.  
The manna in the wilderness  
led Israel to rejoice  
And Elijah in the wasteland heard  
the whisper of God's voice.

The wilderness, for Jesus,  
was preparation ground  
and later, wanting time to pray,  
deserted space he found.  
So may our journeying take us to  
that place of solitude  
where God's own Word, not bread  
alone,  
becomes our daily food.

© Rachel Parkinson, March 2009

# On the use of church buildings: Coronavirus Guidance

*Based upon the Methodist Church Official Guidance [dated 24 March]*

The Methodist Church has announced the closure of all its church buildings for the foreseeable future. The only exception will be for churches that are offering essential social outreach such as foodbanks, soup kitchens and night shelters, but these must be carried out closely within Government guidelines.

The Methodist Church suspended worship services last week [17 March] with some churches still opening for quiet prayer and reflection. This must now also be suspended. We would encourage people to use our online resources at home. These include downloadable services and links to online worship. *[Ed: see page 2]*

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference said: “We are asking people to change their way of ‘going to church’ to help to protect themselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable Methodists still to be part of the worshipping community, whilst for everyone’s sake staying away from church buildings. There is a range of resources available for people to use at home which we hope will help them to continue their cycle of prayer and worship. The Methodist Church is more than its buildings and if in these unprecedented times we can continue our life as Methodists without using our buildings we will help to reduce the chances of transmission of the virus.”

In terms of Church business, we recommend that all meetings including church councils and circuit meetings should be cancelled. Districts chairs will be in touch about Synods. Other community events like lunch clubs, after school clubs, playgroups and fellowship groups should be suspended.

Churches must only consider carrying out pastoral ‘visits’ by phone. You should refer to the Government guidelines on visiting vulnerable people if you are considering doing this. Remember that many people are anxious and a reassuring phone call and an offer to pray might be very much appreciated.

**For Frequently Asked Questions [FAQs] (and answers) go to**  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/>

*[Ed: And here to cheer you up are two cheeky chappies, wondering when they can next go to Sunday School/Messy Church!]*



# Fellowship News

## The good news

Congratulations to the Rev Michael Paterson who was commissioned as coordinator of Continuing Ministry Development by Bishop Ian at the Diocesan Synod on 7 March. In this new role Michael will be looking after the ongoing training and support of the clergy in the Diocese.

Readers may remember the Rev Liz Crumlish who has preached on a couple of occasions at our joint communion service. An ordained minister in the Church of Scotland for 25 years, Liz left Parish ministry a few years ago to co-ordinate a Pilot Project for the Church of Scotland – Path of Renewal (see Contact Issue 104 Page 30). Liz's ministry is about to take a completely new direction when she will be ordained as a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church. Liz wished us to know that her involvement with us played a key part in her decision. Liz's ordination (postponed due to the current coronavirus epidemic), will be conducted by Bishop Kevin Pearson, Bishop elect of Glasgow and Galloway, the Diocese in which Liz will serve. We remember Liz in our thoughts and prayers as she embarks on her new ministry.

## Remember in prayers

Karen McGuinness has news about her granddaughter, **Caevor**, whose long-awaited operation on 9 March was successful; and thanks the congregation for remembering Caevor in their prayers.

The funeral of **Gordon Marks**, who died on 10 March aged 82, led to the eulogy printed on the next page. As restrictions due to corona virus meant that only family members could attend, a service to celebrate his life will be arranged later in the year.

We are also saddened by the death of **David Slater** on 26 March at Victoria Hospital whilst recovering from an operation. A memorial service will be held later in the year,

## Rosyth Garden City Association (RGCA)

Congratulations to the team at RGCA – they received £500 from Asda's Green Token appeal – a big thank you to everyone who supported them in the appeal. Sadly recent events meant that they have had to cancel their annual exhibition from 4 until 9 May. The theme this year was based on Victory over Europe 75 years ago (VE75). The management committee had plans to hold a "Street Party" 1945 style on Friday 8 May. Our four Primary Schools were also preparing displays. A great pity but RGCA will be back!

## Gordon Marks—a family eulogy

Gordon John Scotland Marks was born on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1937 in Dunfermline. The eldest son of Jack and Ruby Marks, he was followed by his sister Helen, Jacqueline and Murray. He attended St Leonards School and Queen Anne School. On leaving in 1953 he became an Apprentice Painter in Rosyth Dockyard. He did his National Service with the RAF Regiment as a driver, travelling to Cyprus,

Gibraltar and Aden. After 3 years with the Regiment he returned to England and on his demob he married Jean Parker in Bolton in 1961. They returned to Dunfermline resuming work in Rosyth Dockyard, becoming dad to Hilary and Pamela. Jean sadly passed away in 1990.

He had known Helen since they were 12 years old and after a chance meeting (wooing her with tomatoes) they were married in 1992. Gordon loved his garden and supporting his football team 'the Pars'. He loved going on holiday, visiting Hong Kong, Canada, America, Spain and other countries. Gordon loved spending



time with his grandchildren Greig, Ross, Julie, Mikki, Marc and Kyle. Some of his happiest days were travelling to Bristol to see his great grandchildren Aiden, Harrison and Verity. His surrogate grandchildren (Sean, Callum and Jamie) lived next door; Jamie had much fun on his sit-on tractor.

Gordon will be sadly missed by Helen and all the family.

Some memories of Gordon:

- He loved his cars and teaching people to drive, he taught Hilary, Pamela and Ross. He used to tell the boys to forget about girls and save up to buy a white Rolls Royce.!
- He tried to sell one of his younger sisters for 6p.
- The story of when he was in Aden which involved a monkey.
- How he would encourage the children to sing 'why are we waiting' when dinner was being served up.

# The Temptation of Power

*This is the second part of David Rogerson's sermon on 19 January; the first part, on 'Avoiding three common errors', was published in the February/March issue.*

*Part 2: 'Overcoming three powerful temptations'*

*Readings: Mark: 1:12-13 and Matthew 4:1-11*

I've said that at the heart of Jesus temptation was a tension between Power and Love. The Devil presented Power with all its allure; Jesus successfully resisted by focusing on the demands of Love. When I mention Power, I am not primarily talking of the kind of power we have recently seen in Iran – missile strikes and drone attacks – although violence is always an aspect of Power. The temptations of Jesus were much more subtle than that. At first sight they seem innocuous, even attractive, and it is only under the surface that we find their corruption. Let's just briefly look at each of the temptations to see the kind of subtle and surreptitious power that is at work.

**The Power of the Provider.** This power is symbolized by a loaf of bread. This is an attractive power. It is the power of our heavenly father and bread features in Jesus prayers and parables. So why not tell these stones to become bread? Because "man cannot live by bread alone"; because we need more than to be provided for. Our dignity, the realization of our human potential, requires more than just the gift of daily bread. Indeed, someone has said that it is only by feeling our love that the poor will *forgive us* our gifts of bread. There is little worse than the heartless provider – the one more

concerned with self-esteem of giving than the self-respect of the person to whom is given. It's a criticism that could be levelled at the welfare state, a criticism embedded in that new adjective "woke". But the power of the provider extends to every parent, every manager, every minister. Like the parent of the prodigal son, "all that we have is yours" can so easily turn into "they who provide know best for you". It's a subtle and slippery slope, and Jesus knew that the only way to avoid corrupting this power was to seek to lose it.

**The Power of the Possessor.** This power is symbolized by money. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with money, with ownership; the stories Jesus told show that he understood the satisfaction and the value in having enough to be able to give away with extravagant generosity. But just below the surface of possession lies a predator: not just wanting to possess but to acquire, and to keep on acquiring, until we have it all. The Power of the Possessor extends to all of us with our little empires of houses, cars, salaries and pension pots. It is a power that will corrupt us unless we acknowledge that God is the true owner of all that we have; and we only have it on short-term lease. "We shall worship the Lord, and him only shall we serve."

**The Power of the Performer.** This is perhaps the most devious power of all. Many of those who serve God, and in whom others put their trust, are essentially performers. At this moment, I am performing, just as I was earlier with my magic trick. Jesus also performed. His parables are masterly performances and he never seemed to have difficulty attracting a crowd. So why not throw himself off a temple into the arms of angels? It's the temptation of the performer: the more one loves truth, the more one wants to convince others of it; the more one hopes to persuade, the more one hopes they will love the persuader. So, the performances become ever more dramatic, but if we are not careful the performance becomes the purpose, and the truth is hardly necessary: "What matters is not what I say, but how I say it". Jesus completely rejected this approach; his focus was always on the message, on the love of God, on the ways of God's Kingdom. For us too, the message ought to be the focus of all that we do.

Each of us is more or less tempted by these three powers: the provider, the possessor, the performer. If we want to know how to avoid the corruptions into which they can so easily fall, we need only remember the provision that Jesus most wanted his followers to recall. It was a private performance in an upper room, before a public performance at a show trial: "This is my body given for you; this is my blood shed for you." For what we have received, may the Lord make us truly thankful.

## On lighting a candle\*

*Martin Tarr reflects*

No choice about where to put the candle last night – only one window with a window-sill and a view of the street! But, with the Christmas candles away in the loft, I had to dig round for a candle.

Unbelievable as it may sound, this one was a remnant of a pack I bought during a 1970s power crisis! It had been with me through bereavement, multiple redundancies, and crises of many kinds. It still burned brightly. And it reminded me that, with the Lord's help, I've come through those difficulties.

I thought of the line in John Newton's hymn, *Begone, unbelief*:

*"His love, in time past,  
Forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last  
In trouble to sink."*

And the candle burned more brightly

...



*\*[Ed: the occasion was the first 'National Day of Prayer' called for by the Scottish Church Leaders Forum; see also 'Sunday@Seven?' on page 17]*

# **Hurricane Dorian— Six months on**

*An update by All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain*

In early September 2019, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas – the most intense tropical cyclone on record to hit the region.

Hurricane Dorian ripped through the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, killing at least 70 people and leaving many more missing. An estimated 70,000 people have been made homeless, and the Bahamas now faces a long and difficult road to recovery. All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain launched a joint emergency appeal in response; supporters responded quickly and generously, having raised more than £100,000 to date since September.

In the wake of the hurricane, All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain responded through a local humanitarian partner to deliver emergency food items, including rice, flour, sugar, and tinned items, for vulnerable families in Grand Bahama. This vital support helped families cover their immediate food needs, helping to sustain them as they face the long road to recovery.

Six months on from the disaster, All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are committed to supporting families as they seek to get back on their feet and rebuild their lives. On Man-of-War Cay, a small remote island off the shore of Abaco Island, All We Can is supporting access to a safe water point. In the immediate

aftermath of the hurricane, access to clean drinking water was compromised following a storm surge – a coastal flood that commonly follows a severe storm. ‘Waves reached over 20ft high in some parts of Grand Bahama and Abaco Islands’ explained Anna Roughley, All We Can’s Humanitarian Aid and Partnerships Manager. ‘This created mass devastation, with more than 70% of the islands covered in water in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane.’

Before Hurricane Dorian, the community on Man-of-War Cay relied on household cisterns fed by rainwater, as the islands lack a central water system. Following the storm surge, many cisterns and rainwater collection systems were either damaged, or compromised by saline water. By supporting the provision of a water treatment system on Man-of-War Cay, All We Can is helping to provide access to a safe water point for the community that lives there.

As the Bahamian people look toward the future and longer term recovery, All We Can continue to be committed to walking alongside the most vulnerable and marginalised people in these communities. We are grateful to churches and individuals across the country, whose generosity has brought about hope for people in the face of a natural disaster unprecedented in their region.

# The National Day of Prayer (Sunday@Seven?!)

*This is the statement released on 24th March by the Scottish Church Leaders Forum*

Following the overwhelming response that the Call to a National Day of Prayer\* received last Sunday [22 March], we invite you to continue to pray at 7pm on Sunday 29th March.

***Further, we invite you to pray each Sunday at this time over the weeks to come.***

We pray in solidarity with those across Britain and Ireland and in solidarity with those across the world who face the challenge that the Covid-19 pandemic brings. We offer a prayer at this time:

We turn to you, our Father, for we need your help. Lord Jesus, as you have promised, be with us, whatever lies ahead, Strengthen us, Holy Spirit, as we face this together.

We pray for our world and our country, as coronavirus threatens our lives and our livelihood, leaving many in lockdown, while key workers continue, despite the risk.

We pray for government leaders at Westminster and Holyrood, responding to medical and scientific advice, making tough decisions for the wellbeing of all.

We pray for all who serve on the frontline in the NHS and in social care; facing increasing numbers, overstretched resources and distressing human need.

Bless those who are ill, those who are alone and afraid, those exhausted looking after their family, those worried for the vulnerable, those fearful for their finances, those shut in to their fears.

Thank you for those who have returned from retirement to help, or joined the volunteer army.  
Thank you for those working: to manufacture needed resources, to find a vaccine, to keep in contact with the isolated, to encourage others at this time.

Have mercy on us, O Lord.  
Give us faith, hope and love and hear our prayers, in Jesus' name. Amen.

***Signed by leaders of 14 Christian denominations in Scotland.***

***\*[Ed: But what about the Candle?***  
*When the Scottish Church Leaders commended the original call for a National Day of Prayer (which had been initiated by the Presidents of Churches Together in England) the invitation was "to light a candle at 7pm this Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, in the window of our homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, the source of hope in this life." It is sad that 'lighting the candle' is now omitted from the stated intention. Is it not a beacon, to show that prayer is happening? And see page 15 for the surprises and joy a candle can bring.]*

# Puzzle page

*With puzzles from Dave Ward*

## New puzzles

- 1) **In the Strange family** each daughter has the same number of brothers as sisters, but each son has twice as many sisters as brothers. How many sons and daughters are there?
- 2) **How high** would you have to count to reach the letter A (whole numbers only)? *Setters note:- most will get it wrong.*
- 3) **An ageing question.** The day before yesterday Suzy was 9. Next year she will be 12. How?
- 4) **Just one word.** There is 1 seven lettered word in the English language that contains 10 words without rearranging any of the letters. What is it?
- 5) **Relationships.** What is the closest relation that your Father's Sister's Sister-in-law could be to you?

## February/March answers

- 1) **Where next?** The answer is **Budapest**, because the list is of Capitals for the following countries in alphabetical order: **Austria**, **Belgium**, **Czech Republic**, **Denmark**, **Estonia**, **Finland**, **Greece** ; and finally **Hungary**.
- 2) **AHA.** They are all **palindromes**: Kayak, minim, noon, eve, ewe.
- 3) **Cheek.** They are all **SAUCES**:- Bread, Brown, mint, tomato, worcestershire.
- 4) **Who. MIKE** Each of the words is in the NATO phonetic alphabet, and also begins with a Roman Numeral. **I = 1, V= 5** etc. **M** being the roman numeral for 1000. .
- 5) **What links D, X, 4th, Y ?** They are all British rivers:- **DEE, EXE, Forth, WYE** .

Dave Ward

## Junior Puzzles

- 1) Even if they are starving why won't Eskimos in the Arctic eat Penguin eggs?
- 2) What word is actually shorter when you add 2 letters to it?
- 3) Before Mount Everest was discovered what was the highest mountain on Earth?
- 4) If you saw your mirror image holding a letter "d" in your left hand, what would you actually be doing?
- 5) Finally a maths problem:- How many cubic metres of dirt are there in a hole measuring 6 metres by 3 metres and 1 metre deep?

## Contact points and *normal* meeting times

This list supplements the list of formal contacts given on the inside cover, and is for the activities and organisations run by the Methodist Church Council, St Margaret's Vestry and by affiliated but independent organisations.

***But due to the steps needed to contain the spread of the corona virus, in April 2020 all these activities are cancelled and the building is closed.***

### Church activities

Methodist Gift Aid enquiries to  
Stuart Fowell 01383 823936  
stuart.fowell@btinternet.com

Property matters & letting enquiries to  
Martin Rogers 01383 415458  
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

St Margaret's Choir  
Myra Tarr 01383 723989  
myra@mtarr.co.uk

St Margaret's Gift Aid enquiries to  
Gordon Pryde 01383 249106  
gordonpryde@btinternet.com

Sunday School and Messy Church  
Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779  
gm Kirby@hotmail.com

Toddlers' Group (Tues/Wed/Fri 0930-1100)  
Elaine Lambert 01383 417071  
elaine.lambert1@sky.com

Traidcraft  
Myra Tarr 01383 723989  
myra@mtarr.co.uk

Wednesday Fellowship (Wed 1415-1600)  
Mary Kidd 01383 872332  
cmariykid@btinternet.com

Coffee, Cake & Crafts (1st Tue 1930-2100)  
Sue Masson 01383 824887  
susan.masson@btinternet.com

### Organisations meeting in our premises

Parahandies Disabled Club (Mon 0930-1400)  
Peter Merckel (sec) 01383 822940  
peter.merckel@yahoo.co.uk

### Scout Group

Group Scout Leader  
see Martin Rogers 01383 415458  
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

Beaver Scouts (Tue 1730-1830)  
Tracy Mitchell 07582 731158  
kiso0709@yahoo.co.uk

Cub Scouts (Tue 1830-2015)  
Martin Rogers 01383 415458  
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

Scouts (Fri 1900-2115)  
Alan Connery 01383 731391  
scouts\_13th\_fife@btinternet.com

Explorer Scouts (Fri 1900-2115)  
Bob Broderick 01383 411938  
robertbroderick@fife.ac.uk

### Guide Unit

\*Rainbows (Mon 1800-1900)  
Skye Fraser 07565 531886  
6throsythrainbows@gmail.com

\*Brownies (Mon 1800-1930)  
Nicola Byrne 07956 005996  
6throsythbrownies@gmail.com

\*Guides (Thu 1800-2000)  
Linda Wallace 07491 971989  
6throsythguides@gmail.com

Rangers (Thu 2000-2130)  
Linda Wallace 07491 971989  
rosythrangers@gmail.com

*\* An asterisk indicates a change since the last issue (in either meeting time or contact details or both)*

Please let the Editor know of any changes or additions to this list, preferably by email to: editor@rosythmethodist.org.uk

## **A Prayer by Margaret Reeson**

(from our LEP Facebook page, via an Australian cousin of a member)

Lord, I have never travelled this way before.  
I don't recognise this track at all.  
Road signs are twisted and unreadable.  
I have no idea where it is leading.  
Please shine some light on my path and, if that is not possible just now,  
please hold my hand in the dark.

Lord, my friends have never travelled this way before.  
They are stumbling along just as I am.  
They ask a neighbour for directions, but  
'Sorry, I am a stranger here myself', they say.  
Please hold my friends and this community in your safe embrace,  
even when I cannot offer a hug.

Lord, our church leaders have never travelled this way before.  
There is no simple roadmap, no precedent to follow.  
They long to give reassurance and a word from you  
but the familiar ways of connecting are being taken away each day.  
Please give our church leaders hearts of love, spirits of grace  
and minds of deep wisdom.

Lord, our national leaders and decision makers have  
never travelled this way before.  
Crushing responsibilities have suddenly landed on them without warning.  
Everywhere they turn they are faced with another crisis, another catastrophe.  
They are isolated from international support as every nation is struggling.  
Please give all those in authority the wisdom to listen to the very best advice and  
to act responsibly for the well-being of this whole besieged nation.

Lord, as we all blunder along in uncertainty and anxiety,  
we give thanks for beautiful autumn weather, for clean air, for water in our taps,  
a roof over our head, the benefits of electricity, telephones and the internet,  
for food on our table.  
We give thanks for time to read, and listen to music, and create craft and quilts  
and books and photography, and to make art.  
Speak to our hearts in this strangest Lenten period we have ever lived. Amen.

### **CONTACT on-line**

You'll find this issue, and many previous issues of Contact, on the archive pages of our websites—[www.stmargaretsrosyth.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsrosyth.org.uk); [www.rosythmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rosythmethodist.org.uk)—where you will get the benefits of colour without the extra printing cost.