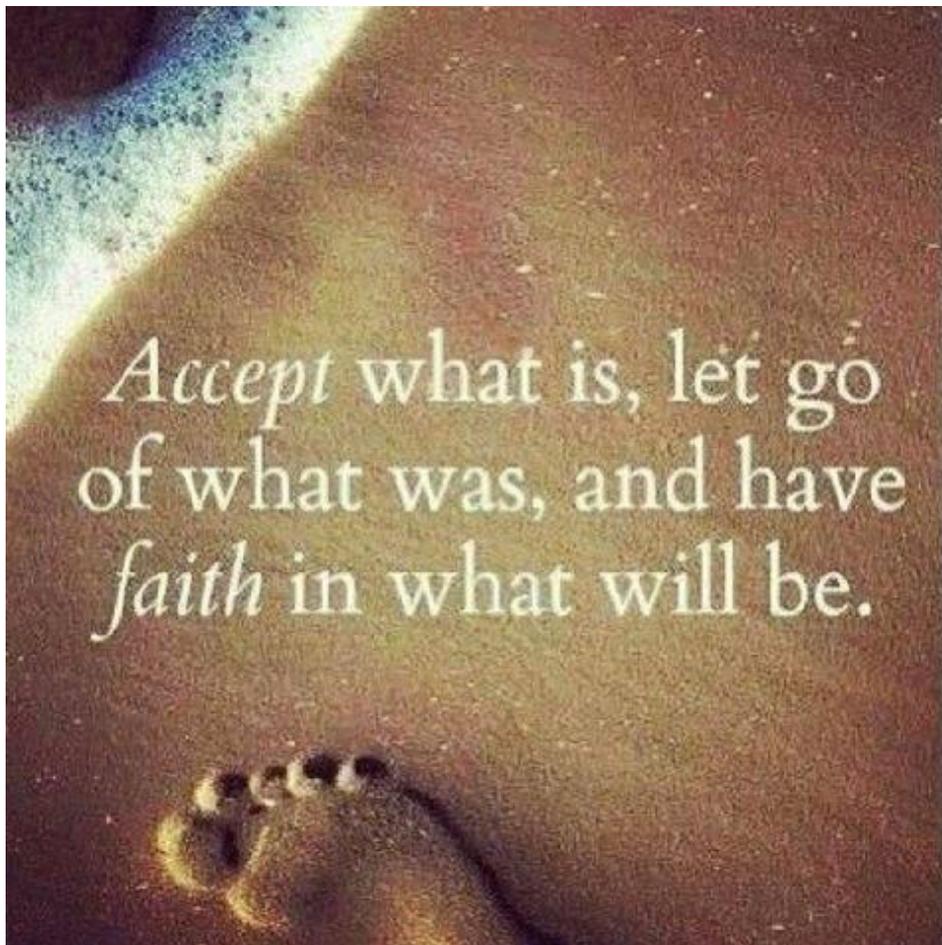


*Govan and Linthouse  
Parish Church  
Magazine*



*June*  
*2015*



### *Sidelines*

We have reached late spring in what has been a very rich year for us as a church. We have seen extraordinary growth in Messy Mondays and, significantly, growth in our membership. The Govan Heritage Trust will take over the ownership of Govan Old in 2016, not, as initially planned, for 25 years but for the foreseeable future. That will entail major changes in our constitutional relationship with Govan Old. We remain part of the Trust, and will be responsible for continuing worship.

At Govan Cross, at last, the sanctuary roof is about to be stripped and, we hope, in 2016, to receive some grant funding for the tower and ancillary roof over the office. If we were able to complete these sections, then for the first time in decades, the roof of the building should be secure and we can begin to think about another phase of restoration.

In April of this year, I passed the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my induction to Govan and Linthouse Church. It has certainly been one of the most interesting journeys of my life. In that time we have seen major regeneration: the media centre at Pacific Quay, the new hospitals opened, a new and stunning museum just metres over the river. - (remember the old square with the wall, the trees, and the broken paving stones, hiding even the river from view). We have seen visitors to Govan Old rise from 1000+ to more than 8,500 in 2014, and with the hope that those numbers will continue to increase. Orkney Street, with its miniature jail, although offices now, was saved as an architectural feature, as were Fairfield offices, now open to the public daily and with a digital display of the ships built in the yard. Slowly, very slowly, the public spaces have been improved, the housing stock has risen, the shop fronts have been revamped, the subway is about to be refurbished, new cafes, there are new schools and, for good or ill, a new bus route through the centre of Govan. That may not be to everyone's taste, but at least we are not a forgotten, post industrial building site, hidden from view.

And what of church life? We have had concerts of every kind: from classical to flute bands. We have enjoyed lectures about our medieval or industrial past and leaping Maasai Warriors; we have had plays, like the play about Iona 'An Island between Heaven and Earth' and the Govan Cat Panto; we have been the set for film making and rehearsing (the Decoy Bride, everyone got to meet David Tennant, but the film bombed). We have hosted the Subway Festival (remember Elvis coming to serenade the tea ladies) the RIAS conference, and we are about to hold our third Puppet Weekend for Govan's children. Meanwhile, all the hard work, the commitment, of our youth organisations, services, special services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, tea-rooms, open days, school assemblies, to name a few things, continues.

We are doing ok, by God's grace, not at the end of the road, but at least at the beginning. We are still here, we are still hoping, we are still walking beside those whom we serve.

Moyna.

Christine and I have always enjoyed walking but it was only last year that we got into hill walking. A few weeks ago we climbed Ben Lomond for the first time and it struck me that although the mountain has always been there, and I have always admired it from a distance, that we should have done it much sooner. For years I have looked at it and it sometimes seems that it is almost within touching distance. Yet I had never been close to climbing it, in fact the closest I ever got was sitting on the beach at Rowardennan! Some things struck me the day we climbed - obviously the pain in my legs that started that night and lasted the best part of a week was one of them! But for whatever reason, I always thought Ben Lomond was closer to the city than it actually is. As I said, it sometimes looks very close as I drive towards Glasgow from East Kilbride, so it took me by surprise that when we reached the top the city was much further away than I had expected. It gave me a new perspective seeing it from a different angle.

Then, as I reflected on the stunning views of Loch Lomond (my favourite part of our great country!), that sense of perspective came to me as I took in the wonder of God's creation, looking along the whole length of the Loch, over to Dumbarton and down towards Greenock, Arran in the distance, and to the other side Aberfoyle. Seeing this from 3000 feet makes it somehow look different and makes you appreciate it in a different way. But it struck me as I reflected on all of this that we very often don't appreciate what we have, preferring to lament what we don't have. Contrast the serenity of the Trossachs with the chaos of Nepal, and to those who have lost everything with no hope of a welfare state to help. Nepal has the most famous mountain in the world but that mountain was rocked as a huge tremor ripped people's lives apart with no regard for them or their possessions. Lives lost, lives ruined, people living in makeshift tents out in the open trying to keep safe and warm. All of this in one of the world's most beautiful places, part of God's creation.

Appreciating what we have in our lives rather than being despondent about what we don't helps us develop a new perspective. We have a chance to build something lasting, something future generations will thank us for. It is important that we keep our perspective so that the job of building is not hampered by what we perceive we lack, but instead celebrate the things we have. These will be the tools we use in that work of building the kingdom of God here in Govan and Linthouse as God's co-workers. He has given us much to work with, many people to help, and amazingly he says that he trusts us to work alongside him in the task of building something for his glory. So we take each negative thought and throw it away like a brick that has been damaged in the kiln, we keep the future in sight and we build. Appreciating all he has given us to work with we keep moving forward as he gives us that positive perspective till we hear him say, "Well done, good, and faithful servant."

Paul

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Dear friends,

Over the past month I have been reading some books about the Psalms as part of my ministry training.

The Psalms are so beautiful. They can be incredibly comforting. Perhaps, though, the most striking thing about the Psalms is their honesty. There is a psalm for every human emotion: joy (Psalms 100

and 150), despair (Psalm 22), anger (Psalm 137), loneliness (Psalms 13 and 25), longing (Psalm 42), hope (Psalm 130) and love (Psalms 103 and 136).

It is a popular pastime for many people to make up 'soundtracks' which contain songs which were special to them at different points in their lives. These often include songs they heard the first time they were in love, songs they heard at a concert, songs which they danced to at their wedding or songs that their children enjoyed or which contain lyrics which speak so personally to them.

It struck me that the Psalms are like a poetic soundtrack to our lives as Christians – individually and as a community. When we think of the happy and sad times in our lives there is a Psalm which speaks to the emotions we felt at the time. The collection of Psalms is one of the greatest gifts God has bestowed upon his people.

In my studying, I read something about the Psalms which made me appreciate them even more. In Judaism, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) are called the Torah – the Hebrew word for 'law'. In the five books of the Torah God speaks to his people – and we as his people listen.

The 150 Psalms in the Old Testament have been arranged into five books as well. According to one of the authors I was reading – Eugene Peterson (who wrote The Message translation of the Bible) – it is no accident that the Psalms have been arranged this way. He says that the Torah is part of the Bible which speaks *to us* – but the Psalms are a part of the Bible which speak *for us*. In the Psalms we learn how to speak back to God.

Peterson asks us to think about children learning to speak. They do so by *listening* to their parents and teachers. Children learn the meanings of words and how to string them together to make sentences by listening to others talking.

The Psalms are a kind of nursery for learning how to speak to God. In the Psalms, God gives us language – phrases, metaphors – which allows us to communicate with God in prayer. Think of the beauty in the metaphor of God being like a shepherd. The Psalms are rich with some of the best poetry ever written – and it has been made available to us within our holy book.

As I said above, the Psalms are above all honest. They do not shirk away from the darkest corners of the human condition. But neither do they hold back when it comes to praising and rejoicing in the love of God. If the Psalms are guides for how to pray, then above all they teach us that prayer is nothing other than being honest before God. There is no thought or emotion which we should be too ashamed to lift up before God in prayer.

And when we lift up our minds and our hearts to God in prayer, we find him ready to whisper comforting words back to us – words of love and compassion.

Christopher

# God's Gang

Hopefully, by the time you read this, summer will have arrived.

Since the last magazine the children have been thinking about Easter, breakfast with Jesus and the lost sheep. Our poster of 'Love' made from butterflies was admired.

On Ascension Sunday the children had a great time releasing the balloons. As there was also a baptism that Sunday we had lots of extra children who helped make a poster with balloons carrying our prayers to Heaven. It would be wonderful if we had that many children every week.

Pentecost Sunday was a day for making windsocks and the baptism of Oscar. It was lovely to see Madison and Emily's little brother being baptised.

Our prizegiving is on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June, as this is also the puppet festival weekend the children will be very busy.

We are going on our summer trip on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June to Wellsfield Farm near Falkirk. The farm has bouncy pillows, slides and many more activities. Let's pray the weather is drier than it was on our trip to The Kelpies.

We wish you all a sunny and restful summer.

## Loving God,

We thank you,  
for birds, bugs, and butterflies  
for barbeques and sausages,  
for playing outside,  
for ice cream and treats.

We thank you, Loving God  
for day trips and holidays,  
for parks and picnics,  
for family, friends, fun and faith!

We thank you, Loving God for all of the gifts of summertime.

Amen.



## The Guild

We have just completed our day working at the Saturday Tearoom, what a great day we had. Apart from making a great deal of money from the stall and the tearoom, the fellowship we enjoyed was tremendous. At the end of proceedings as we sat to enjoy a final cup of tea, I counted 18 of us. What a day, thank you to everyone one for your support and help.

We have had a busy few months as you will see; our trip to Eastwood Theatre was a great success, Guys and Dolls was performed in a most professional way and everyone enjoyed the night. We had an evening with organist and choirmaster, Jonathan Buchan, he sang and encouraged us to join in and we all had a very pleasant evening. Easter was celebrated by us as a Guild on the Monday night of Holy week, and many went on to share the rest of the week with the congregation. We then had a second visit from John with his Karaoke Hymns followed by our friend Matthew Ramsay whose singing continues to enchant us. Theatre South returned to us last week with a variety of singing and music. Tomorrow (18<sup>th</sup> May) is our last evening when we have our AGM and cream tea. I feel this has been an exceptionally good session and we will be going on our trip on 26<sup>th</sup> May to Aberfoyle and Callander, this is always a special day.

During this session we have continued to assist at Lodging House Mission, although this is slightly curtailed, we still feel it is important that we remain part of them. We will be meeting over the summer months to plan next year's syllabus.

We will be back in October. Thanks to Betty and my committee and all the members for your continual support and kindness over the past year.

Every Blessing

Elsbeth, President



# The Church of Scotland

Stewardship and Finance Department

Iain W Grimmond BAcc CA  
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Tel: 0131 225 5722  
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March 2015

Email: [sfadmin@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:sfadmin@cofscotland.org.uk)

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I write to thank you most sincerely for supporting the worship, mission and service of the Church through the money you give in your offerings. It is important that you should know what happens to this money and this letter (along with the enclosed Ministries and Mission leaflet) intends to explain how your congregation's Ministries and Mission Contribution will be used to enable the work of the Church in 2015.

## Glasgow: Govan & Linthouse

Total Contribution to Ministries and Mission for 2015

**£54,938**



### Ministries (86%)

**£47,247 of your total contribution** will go towards the costs of providing over 1,000 ministers and other parish workers in communities throughout Scotland and in the Presbytery of England. This contribution also assists with the costs of recruitment and training.

The 2015 cost of a parish minister at the top of the stipend scale is **£41,048** (stipend plus employer's national insurance and pension contributions). If your contribution to Ministries is above this figure, then your church is meeting the full cost of your ministry and supporting other congregations. If it is less than £41,048, your congregation (or linked charge) is being supported by other congregations.



### Mission (14%)

**£7,691 of your total contribution** will be used to support the Church's work in: resourcing congregations for Christian education and outreach; providing social care services in Christ's name to further the caring work of the Church to people in need; accompanying partners around the world on our shared Christian journey; contributing the Church's opinion in public debate and on issues affecting Scotland and the World; providing central day-to-day service work in administrative, financial and legal matters; and in planning the General Assembly and ensuring the Moderator represents the Church.

This is our annual letter from Rev Alan Gibson, the Head of Stewardship for the Church of Scotland, showing how our contributions to Ministries and Mission ensure that a very diverse ministry is maintained and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is shared in many ways and many places. Please note that the amount we give not only meets the full cost of our Minister (her salary plus all the employer's contributions), but also contributes towards supporting other congregations.

While I'm talking about finance, this seems like a good time to remind everyone about Gift Aid. Last year we received about £4,500 back from the Government in Gift Aid recovered. Anyone who pays income tax can get a form from Frank Brown, our overworked Treasurer, which lets our church recover the income tax paid on their offerings. It doesn't oblige you to give a certain amount (or anything at all) and if you stop paying income tax you simply let Frank know. You have already paid the income tax, so it doesn't cost you anything. Free money from the Government! How often do you see that?

Whilst on the subject of money the second offering at the June Communion will go to those affected by the earthquake in Nepal.

In September the second offering will go to the Ronald MacDonald House being built at the new South Glasgow University Hospital, where families of sick children can stay.

Elsie

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*If after Church, you wait awhile,  
someone may greet you with a smile.*

*But, if you quickly rise and flee,  
we'll all seem cold and stiff, maybe.*

*The one beside you in the pew  
is, perhaps a stranger too.*

*All here, like you, have fears and cares,  
all of us need each other's prayers.*

*In fellowship we bid you meet,  
with us around God's Mercy Seat.*



## **34<sup>th</sup> GLASGOW GIRLS' BRIGADE**



**This year our Company will be 85 years old. Sadly one of our founder members Emma Walker, who was at the Company on the first night has died. Our thoughts are with her son and all the members of her family.**

**On 1<sup>st</sup> April we had a Danceathon for our company funds. About 70 girls and officers danced the night away.**

**The first weekend in May we went off to Compass Christian Outdoor Centre at Glenshee. We had a great weekend. The Saturday was very cold and the Sunday was wet and cold but this did not stop us having a great time doing all of the activities. We went kayaking, wall climbing, down the zip slide, as well as completing the ropes course, archery, and a challenge course. There are some pictures on the next page.**

**On the way home we stopped at Perth to visit Noah's Soft Play, where the children had their tea and time for playing.**

**I am writing this article after our Display. Oh, what a night as they say! The children were so smartly turned out thanks to their parents and really did their best on the night. A big thank you to everyone who helped with tuck and helping to get the children changed. Your help was very much appreciated. Also thanks must go to all who came out to support us.**

**The leaders I have must feel proud to see how well the children did on the night and I can only say they make a great team and work very hard.**

**Our last night of the session is to GAMBADO soft play at Braehead where I'm sure the children will all have a great time.**

**The Company will start back on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 at 6.30pm in the church hall.**

**I hope the children and the leaders all have a well deserved rest over the summer.**

**Sandra MacDonald  
Captain**



Have you ever seen as many shoes in one place? Soft Play with the Girls Brigade!!



## Messy Mondays

Our wee Messy Mondays has grown arms and legs and we are now running with an average of about 50-60 per Monday night!! This is great considering we started off with about 20.

Dinner time is a bit of a challenge now our numbers are growing and we are always looking to try new things that we can make in a 'big pot' fashion so we can spread it out to suit the numbers, if anyone has any ideas then they will be very welcome, obviously we are trying to cook health filling meals but on a budget as we haven't won the lottery yet!!

We have been splitting the kids up into groups as it's really hard to tell them a story or do a craft when the age range is so big and it's been working really well. Paul has set up a crèche area for the really small ones and some of the mums are helping with that on a rota basis, the bigger ones then are split into 2 groups and half go into the church to hear a story or sing a song and the other half do a craft relating to the story or song they then swap over so they are getting the chance to do it all, this is a system we use for the SU group that runs in Pirie Park on a Friday lunch time and it really cements the story for them as we run it over 2 weeks so one group gets the story and the other gets a game or craft and then they swap over the following week.

The tea time for the mums and dads is great just to sit and chat about everything and anything and catch up on what's been happening.

It's great to get involved in the community, to bring people into the church and to share with them God's love.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helps at Messy Mondays whether it's setting the tables as Olive does so faithfully each week, serving the food, collecting in the dishes, cleaning the pots, loading the dishwasher, cleaning the tables, making the tea, helping with the crafts and stories, running the library and just generally pitching in with whatever it is that needs doing. Your help is very much appreciated and we couldn't do it without you. We have even got the kids helping to set up the tables for the Guild and it's great to see the members of the Guild chatting with the kids and the families. That's what it's all about, bringing the community together.

If you know of anyone who would like to come along and join in then please let them know about it, we meet each Monday night of school term time from 5.30-7pm.

Gillian

## Church Flowers

The Flower Diary is available in the Church Vestibule for any of the congregation who would care to donate flowers in Church for our Sunday Morning Services. If the date you would like to pick has already been taken can I suggest you may like to speak to the other person and share the particular date. I am sure we all have a special day, anniversary, birthday etc that flowers might be donated to our church. Can I say a huge Thank You to all the members of our congregation who donate flowers on a regular basis, you all know who you are and your continued support is very much appreciated.

Jean McFarlane

## Grand Prize Draw In Aid Of Church Funds

Would you like to be the owner of a genuine “Tower of London Ceramic Poppy” direct from the wonderful display at the Tower of London remembering all the brave soldiers, sailors and airmen and women who gave their lives in the First World War?

If the answer is ‘Yes’, then you will be pleased to hear that we have one which has been donated by two of our church members and with the approval of our Kirk Session, a Prize Draw has been agreed. Tickets are now available at the cost of £2 per ticket for the Poppy and all monies raised will go to our Church Funds. The draw will take place in our Church Hall on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May and the tickets are now available to buy from myself, Jean McFarlane, Rose McLoughlin and June Little. We would ask that the stubs and money for tickets purchased be returned at your earliest convenience and of course before 31<sup>st</sup> May.

Thank you for your help.

## Forth Coming Event In Aid Of Church Funds

The Flute Phonics group who have played for several concerts for our Church have agreed to come along to play another concert for us on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June. All monies raised will be halved between the Flute Phonics and our Church Funds. Tickets will be priced at £5 and will include tea or coffee and of course home baking.

Thanks again, Jean McFarlane.

ACTION AID

&

MARYS MEALS



Hi, yes it's the summer not that you would notice so hope you like my wee picture of a rainbow, just to cheer you up.

Mind you I think the people who get help from our two charities would love our weather as walking about in constant heat and dry ground must be difficult too, so we should enjoy our lovely green parks and gardens not forgetting the lovely flowers. I hope all the action aid supporters liked their letters thanking them, it's nice when a charity takes the time to do that.....Marys meals total is reaching higher than ever and is now at £4747.00 which is fantastic, so once again thanks and I hope you all enjoy our summer and any holidays you may be going on.

THANKS EVERYONE, ROSE

### Food Train

Do you need help with your shopping? Food Train Glasgow South are supporting local people at home. The Food Train is a Scottish Charity with local volunteers, providing a vital grocery delivery service to older people living in the South of Glasgow. Any older person living in the South who has difficulty doing their grocery shopping due to ill health, disability, frailty or mobility problems can enjoy the benefits of their local Food Train. The volunteers collect your list, do the shopping and return it to your home. A small charge is asked for this service and anyone wishing more information on this service can contact me and I will let you know more.

Elsbeth

## GOVAN AND LINTHOUSE

### “WALK FIVE HUNDRED MILES”

I am trying to get as many people as possible, congregation and friends, to come to Cumbrae (Millport) to walk as far as they can between 1 and 11 miles on the day to give us a total of 500 miles between us. The day proposed at the moment is Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August.

Hopefully everyone will get sponsors and the money raised will go towards the Renovation Fund. A car will be available on the day to pick up those who have walked enough and take them back to Millport.

This I am sure will be a fun day out and we could raise a lot of money towards this fund.

People will need to make their way to Largs to get the ferry. Possibly some of the car drivers may be able to take a few extra people.

If you would like to take part please add your name to the sheet on the notice board in the Govan Cross upper hall.

Fiona MacDonald



### Tuesday Morning Group

This is a group of men and women who meet on a Tuesday morning in the Salvation Army Hall in Golspie Street. It is open to all of a certain age and is a Project which is meant for the community regardless of faith or no faith and is geared to help us in so many ways. We are open from 11am-1pm and join together for lunch which is great because most of us live alone and seldom share company at meal times. After lunch we join in reminding ourselves of our past in so many ways. The games, discussions and visiting speakers help us to share, talk and receive appropriate help. If anyone is interested in joining our very popular group please speak to me and I will give further information.

Elsbeth

### Ascension Sunday

On Ascension Sunday we had a baptism in the church and it was one of our Messy Monday's families, it was great to see so many of our Messy Monday's folk in the church and also great that they got to share with us Ascension Sunday. We have now got a bit of a tradition going on Ascension Sunday with letting go balloons and watching them float up into the sky just as Jesus' disciples did on that very special day. I thought I would share a wee picture I took on the day.



*'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'*  
*Philippians 4:13*

Members Deaths

Mrs Peggy Scaglioni – Former Member of Linthouse St Kenneth's

Mrs Margaret Black – Elder Govan Cross

Mrs Betty Adams – Former Member of Linthouse St Kenneth's

*Our condolences go out to the family and friends of our members who we have sadly lost.*

New Members Joining

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May we will be welcoming Christine Beveridge, Scott McNamara & Richard Duncan into the family of the church and we are delighted that they have decided to become members of our congregation.

Baptisms

12<sup>th</sup> April 2015 - Holly McKendrick

26<sup>th</sup> April 2015 – Kason Walter Scott

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2015 – Jude Duncan Doyle MacKay

17<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – Konlin Patrick Meehan

24<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – Oscar William David Milligan

Weddings

Rachel Milligan & James Allan – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Renewal of Vows

Mr & Mrs Blantyne – 24 years – Govan Cross – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Mr & Mrs Jones – 60 years - Govan Old – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Puppets In Partnership 2015.

The Govan Puppet Weekend will take place from Friday evening, June 12<sup>th</sup>, until Sunday evening on June 14<sup>th</sup> in Govan Cross Church.

Performances will include Cran Theatre introducing the weekend with a storytelling piece called 'Threading Pearls', two classes from our local Primary Schools (Riverside are performing 'The Ugly Duckling' and Pirie Park 'Hotel Transylvania', a Gothic mystery.)

We have professional puppet companies: Clydebuilt Puppets, who have a piece called 'The Myths of the Vikings', Soko Bauno (last Year's flea circus) who will bring a small caravan to the car park which becomes the theatre, and the wonderful Puppet State, who will perform 'The Man who Planted Trees' and preview another, new, play. And, in addition, we have our liturgical puppet play as part of our service - this year, 'The Journey to Jericho'. Dancing and singing are to be expected.

We need stewards and helpers, and also an audience, so make sure you book your seat early.

All performances are free.



Pirie Park children making a Gothic graveyard for Hotel Transylvania.



# GOVAN PUPPET WEEKEND



## FRIDAY

**19.00** **THREADING PEARLS**  
CRAN THEATRE

## SATURDAY

**11.00** **THE UGLY DUCKLING**  
RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**13.00** **HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA**  
PIRIE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

**14.00** **PUPPET MAKING WORKSHOPS**

**17.00** **THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES** AGE 7+  
PUPPET STATE THEATRE

## SUNDAY

**11.00** **JOURNEY TO JERICHO** GINGER BREAD PUPPETS  
THIS SHOW FORMS PART OF THE GOVAN CROSS CHURCH REGULAR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP.

**13.00** **THE LITTLE FAWN GARAVAN**  
SOKOBAUNO

**15.00** **MYTHS OF THE VIKINGS** AGE 5+  
GLYDEBUILT PUPPET THEATRE

**17.00** **PREVIEW** A NEW PLAY FROM THE MAKERS OF 'THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES'  
PUPPET STATE THEATRE

**ALL SHOWS FREE**  
GOVAN CROSS CHURCH, G51 2YL  
PUPPETS IN PARTNERSHIP  
[WWW.GOVANLINTHOUSEPARISH.ORG](http://WWW.GOVANLINTHOUSEPARISH.ORG)



## Fun Corner

The answer to the last 'find the phrase' quiz was: The Lord is risen indeed - Luke 24: 34

Unfortunately no one contacted me with regards to it so no one won the chocolate which means I get to eat it!!

Please remember that the words have been found in the Good News version of the bible. Let's see how you get on this time ☺

Mark 9: 13 1<sup>st</sup> Word

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Exodus 24: 2 2<sup>nd</sup> Word

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Genesis 31: 6 3<sup>rd</sup> Word

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2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 20: 22: 5<sup>th</sup> Word

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Exodus 33: 13 8<sup>th</sup> Word

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Psalms 41: 4 1<sup>st</sup> Word

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Matthew 14: 17 3<sup>rd</sup> Word

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Isaiah 9: 4 1<sup>st</sup> Word

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1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2: 1 5<sup>th</sup> Word

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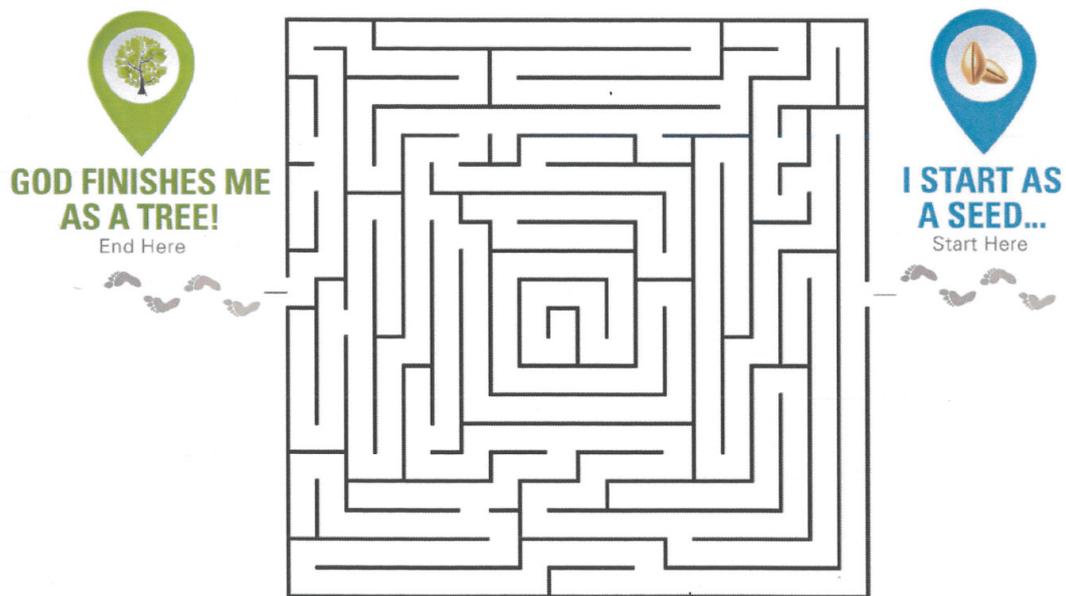
The phrase is:

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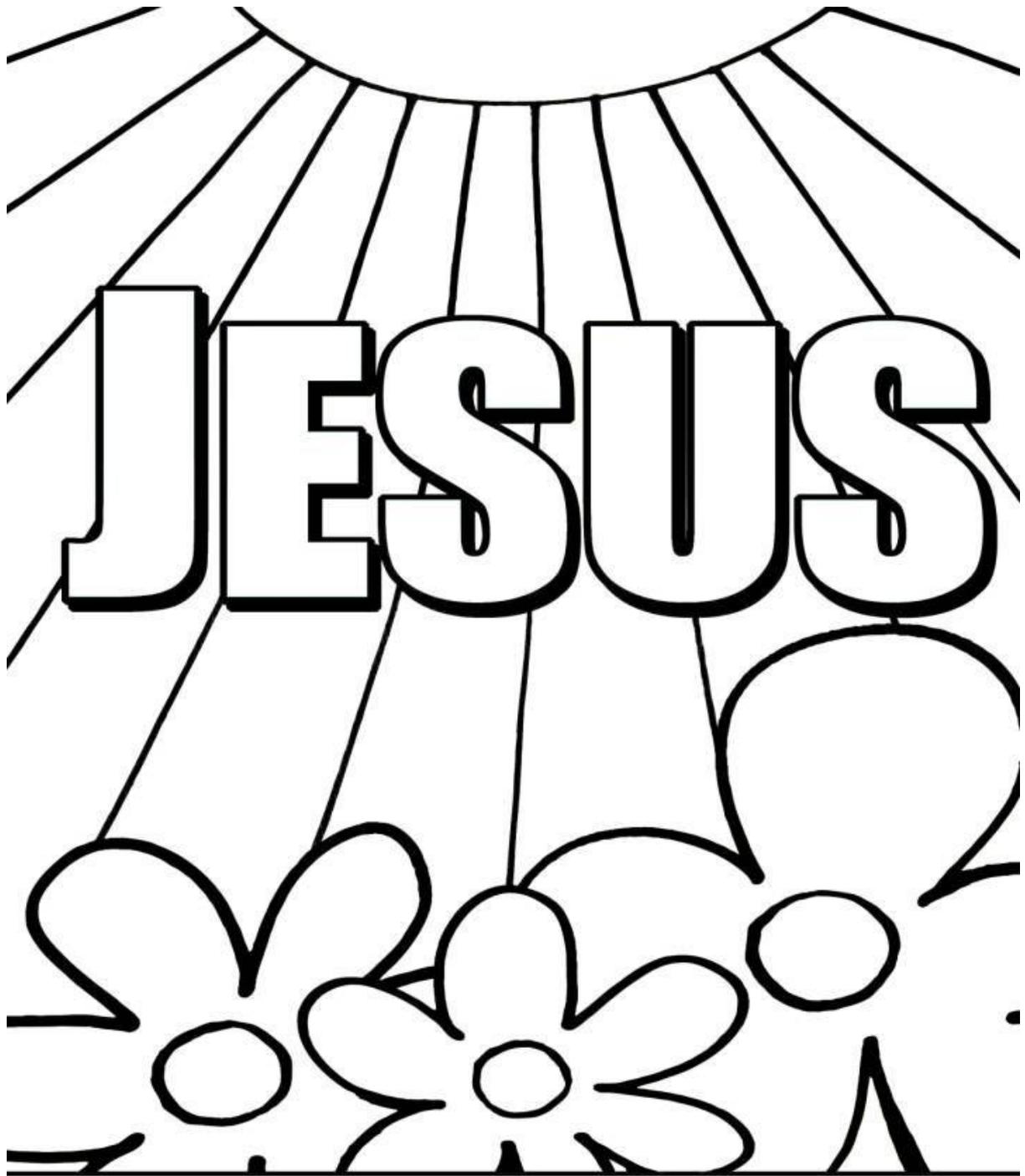
## A-Maze-ing Bible Growth

### #6 A SEED TO A TREE

While salvation is an important decision you make with God's help, it is only the start. The Bible talks often about the importance of *growth*, which is how many of our rewards will come to us both here and in heaven. The good news is that *God causes the growth!* All we have to do is follow. Follow your growth from a seed to a tree in the maze:



**1 Corinthians 3:6-9** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ... Each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.



Jesus is the Light of the World!

John 20. 11-18     Mary in the Garden.

There are certain ways that we tell stories, repeating certain phrases. If you think of the way we tell the story of Goldilocks, then the theme of 'too hard, too soft, just right,' for the chair and the bed, or 'too hot, too cold, just right' for the porridge, that theme runs throughout the story. In fact, it wouldn't be the same story without that.

In fairy tales, we accept this without thinking about it, we are too used to it to think about it much, but when it comes to biblical stories, well, that's different isn't it? I mean, it is the bible.

But that doesn't mean that all the rules of story-telling disappear, and in this story, this peculiarly beautiful story, there are lots of little threads to hold the storyline together. Firstly, there are events going on both inside the tomb and outside the tomb. Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but she doesn't cross that threshold. When she saw that the stone had been rolled away, she ran for Peter and John, the other disciple who is not named here in this telling of the events. When they reached the tomb, Peter went inside and noted the cloths lying on the floor and on the ledge. That's another of these story threads. Jesus' grave clothes, in which they had wrapped him when he was taken down from the cross, are lying discarded on the floor, he no longer needs grave clothes for he is alive. And, as if to reinforce this point, when Mary Magdalene finally looked inside the tomb, she saw angels, dressed in snowy white cloth, one sitting where his head had lain, and another where they had placed his feet. The last of these story threads refers to Mary herself. Still grieving from the shattering events of the Friday when Jesus had been executed, she can't make sense of what she sees and, at first, thought that someone had stolen the body. She was crying outside the tomb, still outside, when the angels asked her, 'Woman why are you crying?' and when she meets a man she thinks is the gardener, he repeats exactly the same question, 'Woman, why are you crying?'

And then, the whole construction of the story is pierced by a single word. He says her name. He calls to her specifically, and to no-one else. 'Mary', and in that word she recognises the resurrected Jesus. He isn't the same. We have talked before, more than once in this church, about the formality of Jesus, the Lord of Life, who returns to us after the resurrection. Each of the resurrection stories tells us that in some way his disciples didn't recognise him, until some gesture, some characteristic word or action, reveals him.

That isn't, as you might suppose, because he is a ghost ( the bible goes to some lengths to clear that misunderstanding) or because of the manner of his death, but because of the manner of his life. He has overcome death for us, and is now someone totally other who offers to us, in the calling of our

name, the promise of resurrected life, of another life, that he, himself, is there to give.

Like Mary, we have never crossed the threshold of that tomb, we have never been there, we are still among the living. But I sometimes feel that the empty tomb is misunderstood by us, and that we should weave this story into the stories of filled tombs. The filled ones on the ocean bed, the final resting place for the many who set off in leaky, rusting vessels in hopes of a better life; the filled ones under the rubble of cities, towns and villages, torn apart by the shifting plates of the earth's crust; the filled ones when floods come, or when the rain ceases and nothing grows; the filled ones of the people caught in civil wars or cross border skirmishes; the filled ones, of those who never get a chance to live.

'Woman, why are you crying'? I am crying for these. And so are many of you, if you allow yourself think about it, though we often try not to because it is too painful to bear. Even on happy occasions like today, there is always the shadow of loss, because we all know that life is bittersweet and it involves parting.

But the Lord of Life, this Jesus, is still calling us by name, as he was when we were little, and we heard him so much more clearly, when we hadn't drowned him out with the din of our own concerns. If you listen in the stillness, you may hear him.

And what he calls us to, or for, is a promise, an everlasting promise, that we were made for life and for living, and that death will never be the last word on us. That it is only a threshold, which our spirits will one day cross, as we have crossed other thresholds as part of our passage through life. We will cross from outside, and from weeping for losses, to inside, and leave all the discarded things we no longer need on the stone floor, and put on all the dazzle of the white cloth for dressing the angels, and walk into the bright morning of the garden. Of course, I would say that wouldn't I?

There was one of those trending articles this week, one of those things that go viral on Facebook, some of you may have seen it. It showed a visiting team of scientists offering a fox some leftover bread, bacon and sausage. The fox, picked up the first piece of bread, then put some bacon on top of it, then another piece of bread until it had made itself a triple-decker sandwich. It was totally brilliant. But what made it even more brilliant, was that the scientists were visiting Chernobyl, the scene of one of the most catastrophic nuclear disasters ever, and the place of all the ghost villages, covered in grey ash, where everyone had to be evacuated. There were leaves on the trees, and this beautiful, lithe, young fox, clever enough to make a triple-decker

sandwich. Even in the bleakest of places and circumstances, there is life and growth and renewal and flowering.

‘Go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father, and their Father, my God and their God’

We were made for life and for living.

Let us Pray.

Dear Lord,

It is hard to keep faith with you when the world is so troubled. It seems to be beyond us – we can be certain only of the emptiness of loss, and have long since ceased to hope.

Renew in us the hope that lives. Renew your church to give hope to others, and meet us as we walk through life, Lord of Life, and never let us lose our sense of you beside us. Amen.

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