

Waymarks for the Journey

Recently, whilst reflecting on the insights of Ray Simpson in his book "Waymarks for the Journey" I was struck by the challenging way he set out four key aspirations for us to develop in our lives, aspirations we find modelled and sourced in the life of Jesus.



A free spirit: whilst tuned in to the higher calling of God, the Father, Jesus was not going to be bound or tied to the demands and expectations of the world around him. In John 5:19 he declares "...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing." His freedom came from focusing on the call and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

And our goal on our journey of faith: to fly as he did, to be free from the PULL and DRIVE of things outwardly and inwardly which tie us down.



A wise mind: with the crowds forever pressing in on Jesus and in the midst of them, his 'critics', having the right response to their trip-up questions was always vital. A wise mind is what we see he had when, for example, a boisterous crowd cast before him a woman caught in adultery in John, Chapter 8. Demanding he affirm the rule of the law which determined that she be stoned, he quietly posed

a question, "Let any one of you who is without sin, be the first to throw a stone at her." One by one, the eldest first, they slipped away.

And our goal on our journey of faith: to develop the mind of Christ. A wise mind, measured, insightful, informed. Biblical in its roots, spirit shaped and edited (!). Expanding in its scope and selective in its revelations.

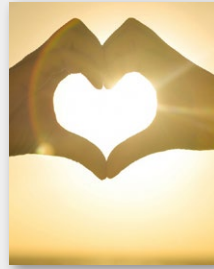
PRAYER

As Christians we believe in the power of prayer but we often find it hard to know what to say and when to say it. This month let's think about one aspect of prayer:

Listening prayer: Find a comfy seat, sit down and relax. Try to clear your mind of all the worries and concerns you have and listen for the voice of God speaking to you.

I hear you ask, "How do I stop myself falling asleep?" Sometimes it helps to focus on something, perhaps a lighted candle, or a flower. You might want to open your Bible and read a passage and listen for God speaking to you through that passage.

There is no right or wrong way, we each pray in a different way, but God is still listening.



A beautiful attitude: time and again it was Jesus who stopped the flowing crowd to engage with someone unable to come to him direct. Blind, lame, outcast or ostracised – it mattered not, for his attitude was such that 'people mattered'. Take blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46. The crowd were fed up with him trying to get Jesus' attention but despite the view of the crowd, Jesus simply said, "call him". In that moment a beautiful attitude is revealed.

And our goal on our journey of faith: to see his attitude grow in us, an attitude that's open, consistent, "other" focused, empty of edge, life giving – like sunshine!



A serving heart: The shock for the disciples when Jesus reveals his servant heart. In John 13 he shows them the way to live out the faith – as servants. They had arrived together after, no doubt, yet another busy, dusty, day. With the eyes, heart, hands and feet of the servant, Jesus begins to

wash their feet – this, despite their protestations!
And our goal on our journey of faith: to have eyes that see the need, a heart which opens to what we see, hands that help and serve and give, and feet that help us to move from self to other.

Life, as we will discover, is full of opportunities to develop:

A free spirit
A wise mind
A beautiful attitude and
A serving heart.

Enjoy the challenge.
Blessings, David

Pilgrimage to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, April-May 2017

Organised by the Church of Scotland Department of World Mission Middle East Secretary, Kenny Roger, our recent pilgrimage was at times inspiring and at times disturbing. Prior to leaving we had a preparation day in 121 and were given a suggested reading list prior to departure.

On our travels we visited many sites referred to in the Bible from the place of Annunciation in Nazareth, through locations where Jesus is believed to have called the disciples and preached the Sermon on the Mount, to Capernaum where He carried out much of his ministry, and Jerusalem, where the Via Dolorosa leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre - the area where Jesus is believed to have been crucified. We shared communion together in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The well known sites were very busy but our group of twenty-nine, including our leader Very Rev Andrew MacLellan and his wife Irene, was usually able to find a quiet place to read the Bible texts relating to the area, sing a hymn and quietly reflect.

In the course of the pilgrimage we were able to visit several organisations, supported by the Church of Scotland, which give employment to Palestinian people who are considerably restricted by the Israeli government. Towards the end of our visit we met a Palestinian Christian farmer whose family land, owned officially since 1916, is constantly threatened by Israeli settlers. He refuses to be intimidated by them. The family motto is 'We refuse to be enemies'.

When we stayed in Bethlehem we observed the frustration of Palestinians going to work in Jerusalem, rising in the very early hours of the morning to join a massive queue, approx. 4000 each day, waiting to go through 'The Jerusalem Wall' metal turnstile checkpoint. Because of our presence as observers at 4.30am the queue moved smoothly. Occasionally the Israeli soldiers close the checkpoint for no apparent reason for up to two hours or more.

Allies, Britain and France in 1917 agreed to allow the Jewish nation to have its own land within Palestine. In 1948 the State of Israel was created after the forced expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians. A conflict of possession has continued from that time.

We have had much to reflect on since arriving home.

Tom and Gwenneth Williamson



Why "Try Praying"?

At the end of May, as part of the Try Praying Project 2017, those attending our Sunday Morning Services in Queensferry were given a copy of the Try Praying booklet. This is a simple seven day "starter guide" designed mainly for folk who are "not religious" and those who "don't do" church!

And folk were encouraged to pass it on to someone it might help. Great claims are sometimes made about prayer. Archbishop William Temple once said, "When I pray coincidences happen, and when I cease to pray they don't!" Martin Luther even called it "the mightiest of all weapons that created natures can wield"!

But is there any evidence?

In a strictly controlled experiment in New York a scientific team at Columbia University discovered to their surprise that a group of people receiving IVF treatment - who had people praying for them without their knowledge - had a 50% pregnancy rate, while those who had no-one praying for them had a 26% pregnancy rate. The groups were matched in every other way and 200 people took part in the experiment.

The prayer group were given pictures of the prospective mothers but the women being prayed for didn't even know of the prayer group's existence.

The results were published in the Journal of Reproductive Medicine and the researchers confessed:

"We could have ignored the findings but that would not help to advance the field. We are putting the results out there to provoke discussion and see if anything can be learned from it. We would like to understand the biological phenomena that led to this almost doubling of the pregnancy rate."

The search for "the biological phenomena" is, of course, legitimate.....but maybe, just maybe, those who TRY PRAYING aren't as stupid as they are sometimes made out to be!

Why try praying? Why not!!



Girls' Brigade

What were you doing on 15th March 1982? Is it a date you remember or were you even born? That night has significance for Queensferry, as it was the first meeting of our local Girls' Brigade Company, which has been going strong ever since! Not sure what Girls' Brigade (or GB as we usually call it!) is?? Girls' Brigade is a worldwide Christian organisation for girls which is nearly 125 years old. Our aim hasn't changed - to help and encourage girls to a Christian commitment - but the way we do this is fun and up to date for the 21st century. We have a busy and thriving local group and we would love you to join us! For a taste of what we are up to why not look at our Twitter feed [@QFBrigaders](#)

On a Girls' Brigade night we meet together in Queensferry Parish Church halls as Explorers (P1-3), Juniors (P4 - 7) and Brigaders (S1 upward). The girls take part in activities such as games, crafts and drama all based on our 4 part programme as well as special events, trips and competitions and of course not forgetting our annual camp for Juniors and Brigaders! This year for example

we had our weekend away near North Berwick, held a treasure hunt around the Ferry, took part in a Twitter competition, learnt about cooking on a budget, made cards and crafts... The list is endless!

Our numbers are growing and we would love to welcome new girls of all ages, but before we can do this we need new adult helpers. So - could this be for you? The Girls' Brigade offers full training for all leaders (which is now predominantly online) making it easy for you to get up to speed with all that's going on in Girls' Brigade. You would be joining a small but dedicated team of leaders who would support you. Drop us an email 46edinburgh@googlemail.com



QPC Hosts Cyclists on their Bike Pilgrimage

Robert de Berry, a retired Church of England vicar, organises a charity fundraising cycle approximately every 5 years. This year, for his 75th birthday, he and fourteen other brave souls planned a sponsored bike ride for Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Release International. Their 750 mile route began in Cape Wrath on 17th May, continues its journey through the Hope Valley in the Peak District and is due to finish on 16th June in Peacehaven on the East Sussex coast. They hope to raise £50,000.

Churches along the route have offered accommodation and on 25th May the cyclists arrived in Queensferry. Thanks go to a number of QPC families who provided overnight accommodation for tired bodies. That Friday evening, the cyclists hosted an information sharing gathering in our Church Centre. Using video, his

own experience and other materials, Robert told stories of Christians being persecuted for their faith in countries around the world, whether for political, ethnic or religious reasons. It was particularly moving to hear of a church leader in Egypt rejecting hate and responding instead with grace and love towards those who have participated in violence and destruction - amazing grace indeed! There was an opportunity to pray for specific situations and persecuted Christian individuals as well as to pray for the cyclists themselves. The next morning, Saturday 26th May, they set off on the next leg of their pilgrimage in which their next stop would be Biggar Parish Church.



KIDZ CORNER

Guardians of Ancora - Treasure Seekers

Last year more than 50 folk set off on a quest to the City of Ancora. This year our summer holiday club returns to Ancora - but to a different part of the city, with some new quests and treasures. Like many favourite holiday locations, when we go back this year there will be something refreshingly familiar, but also something refreshingly new!

We'll be heading off to Ancora each morning from 31st July to 4th August. If you'd like to join us on this year's quest ... well, you need to be primary school age, and you also need to get your parent or carer to register you! Lots more information and registration forms are available on the church website: www.qpcweb.org We look forward to seeing you!

Meanwhile - why not get ahead of the game ... by playing the game! Go to <http://guardiansofancora.com/> where there's a downloadable app. But remember you need your parent's permission before you download it.

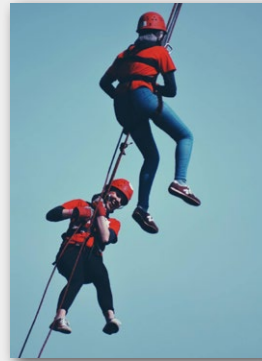


Ruth and Katie's Abseil for the Sick Kids Hospital

Mike Ross tends to be found behind the drums on a Sunday morning and his wife Mel is either leading singing, or the kid's church activities (or both) on a Sunday morning. Their eldest daughter Katie has also been known to play drums and keyboards (for the summer holiday club), sing (in the junior choir for 4 years) and help with kids church. When Katie was 13, she had major spinal surgery at Sick Kids in Edinburgh. She wanted to raise money to support the amazing team who cared for her, so Katie and her good friend Ruth, who attends St Paul's and St George's Church in central Edinburgh, decided to abseil from the Forth Rail Bridge. Happily they found they could do this just after their 16th birthdays and finishing their Nat 5 exams. The generosity of many family members and friends, as well as lovely folks from QPC meant that they have been able to give Sick Kids nearly £1400.

Mel is an Occupational Therapist in Sick Kids and knows first hand that every penny raised is well spent. Katie and Ruth hope that some of what they raised can be used for new equipment for others having spinal surgery. Mel's friend Fiona McLaren has been doing amazing work raising funds for accessible swings in memory of her daughter Sofia and the first one of these is planned for installation in the new hospital for Children at Little France. It is hoped the funds raised by Katie and Ruth will also add to the outdoor play equipment to make the experience for children visiting the hospital as positive as possible. Fiona would be delighted if anyone wanted to contribute to Sofia's Swings through searching for "Fiona McLaren" or on JustGiving.

Katie and Ruth's fundraising abseil took place on Sunday 28th May, the same day as the outgoing Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev Dr Russell Barr, along with a couple of colleagues from 121 George Street, similarly donned the safety gear to abseil the 150 feet from the Bridge. Dr Barr and Co were supporting the work of the Children and Family Services of CrossReach, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland.



Further to Rev Graham Leitch's Why "Try Praying?" article inside, did you know that 20 million adults in the UK pray? And 1 in 3 believe God answers prayer. Try Praying is for those who don't do church. It's the work of a traffic planner, a shop manager, a writer, a designer, an entrepreneur, a civil engineer and others. You can hear stories of those who have used the Try Praying booklet here www.trypraying.co.uk

Church and Parish Register

Baptisms (Infant)

30th Apr James Aitken Cameron Barrington, Kirkliston Road, SQ

Baptisms (Adult)

30th Apr Rachel Jane Barrington, Kirkliston Road, SQ

Deaths

19th Mar Jack Wright, Rosebery Avenue, SQ

5th May James Rodger, Inchcolm Terrace, SQ

18th May Tom Chmylowskyj, Ochil Court, SQ

Weekly Worship Services

Sunday 10:00am – 11:00am Family Service

11:30am – 12:30pm A more traditional worship service

Thursday 9:30am – 10:00am A reflective service with a Celtic tradition of responses.

The Youth Fellowship meets every Sunday evening from 7:30pm – 9pm

Website and Facebook

If you have something that you would wish to share on the church Facebook page or Website, please send an email to communications@qpcweb.org

Next issue

The next issue of the magazine will be available from Sunday **3rd September 2017**. Any items for inclusion should be given to the editor at magazine@qpcweb.org by **Saturday 12th August**. Please send any pictures as separate attachments.