

The Torch



March 2018

www.riccartonparishchurch.co.uk

The Minister's Message

A Letter from the Manse

Dear Friends,

I recently came across a quote which I found interesting. In their book *Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me)*, social psychologists Carol Tavis and Elliot Aronson describe how a fixation on our own righteousness can choke the life out of love. They write:

“The vast majority of couples who drift apart do so slowly, over time, in a snowballing pattern of blame and self-justification. Each partner focuses on what the other one is doing wrong, while justifying his or her own preferences, attitudes, and ways of doing things. ... From our standpoint, therefore, misunderstandings, conflicts, personality differences, and even angry quarrels are not the assassins of love; self-justification is.”

Although that particular quote is written in the context of marriage or other close personal relationships the same principle applies to many of our wider relationships, not just in the home but in the work place, sports clubs, political parties, and various other contexts. Sadly sometimes we even see it happening in the church.

“From our standpoint, therefore, misunderstandings, conflicts, personality differences, and even angry quarrels are not the assassins of love; self-justification is.” That last sentence from the quote sends out a challenge to every one of us to reflect on our own attitudes and behaviour. No doubt it's far easier to see how it applies to other people than it applies to us, but none of us are exempt.

The Apostle James had some very similar insights to these contemporary psychologists when he wrote in chapter 4 of his epistle: “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires which battle within you? ... You quarrel and fight... When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives...

“Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded. Grieve,

mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up.”

At this time of Lent Christians have traditionally reflected on Jesus fasting in the wilderness and being tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1-13) At the heart of all the temptations was the attempt to put himself first and seek his own glory, advancement or comfort. Those are temptations which we all face. If we are not aware of that, then it is much easier to be taken in.

I don't know for sure, but I suspect that James had this incident in mind when he told his readers, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Much of what he has to say may seem rather negative. You might not like me writing in these terms and I suspect that the original readers would have felt the same way. However James does turn it round with a more positive note: “Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up.”

Next month we will be celebrating Easter. However there can be no resurrection without a death. The victory which Christ won for us and the new life which he made available cannot be grasped unless we first understand and accept how completely lost we are without him. Once we have put our trust in him as our only means of salvation that is not the end of the story. Allowing him to transform us into his likeness is an ongoing process. We're not restricted to doing that during Lent, but it does give us an opportunity to reflect on how we need to change our attitudes and behaviour to become more like him.

May each of us find a deeper peace and joy at this time as we seek to learn obedience to his ways.

Colin A. Strong

Holy Week and Easter Services

This year the joint Holy Week Services will be held in Riccarton at 7.00 p.m. each evening from Monday 25th – Friday 30th March.

A different minister will conduct worship each evening with Colin leading the Maundy Thursday Communion Service.

Good Friday Vigil

12.00 noon – 3.00 p.m. in the New Laigh Kirk.

As usual this will be divided into 20 minute meditation slots. You are free to come and go as you are able.

Early Morning Service

8.00 a.m at the top of Craigie Hill on Easter Sunday.

Family Easter Celebration Service at 11.30 a.m. in the Church.

Fenwick Are Also Hosting the following Events:

Holy Week Reflections

Upper Room on Tuesday 27th and Wednesday 28th March
at 7.30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Communion Service

Church at 7.30 p.m. on 29th March.

Good Friday Meditation

Church Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Easter Son-Rise Service

6.30 a.m. at Netherraith followed by Easter breakfast.

Change to Communion Practice

The way we administer Communion has already changed considerably from the traditional form adopted by the Church of Scotland. At one time the practice was for those participating to come and sit round the table to receive Communion. They would then move to allow others to partake. When the practice of elders serving the elements to those in the pews began, the pews had to be covered with white cloths to make them an extension of the Communion Table. This was still the practice in the congregation where I became a member in 1974. I suspect very few people understood the significance of the white cloths. I certainly didn't! Over a period of time the white cloths were abandoned. (Although in some places they are still used.)

The issue Communion was initially raised at the Kirk Session meeting in October. It was felt that it was as some elders were not as steady on their legs as they once were it would be worth looking at different ways of administering the sacrament. It was discussed more fully at the January meeting.

It was agreed not to introduce changes for the February Communion as we wanted to inform and explain to the congregation, but we can try a different way at the April Communion.

We will have smaller tables at the front of the church with the elements. Elders will sit in the front pews. I would use elements on the Communion Table for consecration, and then elders serving could come and take the elements from the small tables. Members who wish to take communion will come out to receive it from the elders. (In some ways this is closer to the original Church of Scotland tradition than the way we have adopted in recent years.) Elders will serve anyone who is unable to come forward.

We will be stopping the practice of Communion Dress for elders. It is felt by some that we are far too formal. Most congregations dropped Communion Dress in the 1960's or 70's. It has always struck me as inconsistent that we have moved on from the minister wearing outdated clerical dress but still have the elders wearing black ties.

Colin A Strong

Michael McMillan

Christian singer Michael McMillan and his band will be in concert at Stewarton John Knox on Thursday 15th March and Kilmarnock Baptist Church on Sunday 25th March. You can find out more about Michael at http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/articles/music/Michael_McMillan__The_Scottish_songsmith_with_a_heart_for_the_homeless/53679/p1/

Trustee/ Congregational Meeting

The Trustees met on Monday 12th February and T Linton presented the Annual Statement of Accounts which were fully explained, discussed and approved ready for audit. They will be presented to the Congregation at the Annual Stated Meeting on Sunday 11th. March at close of Church service.

A short Board meeting followed.

The next Board Meeting will be Annual Stated Meeting on 11th. March at close of service

The next Business meeting will be Monday 23rd. April 7.30pm in Church.

Eleanor McCallum

Clerk to the Board (pro-tem)

Suggestions and Answers

This is a summary of all the suggestions received up till 7th January and presented to the Kirk Session on 16th January.

1. Contact Riccarton residents who attend other churches with a request that they might consider coming to Riccarton Church.
2. Wear wrist bands with Christian messages on them. Involve our young people in making them.
3. Each church group could organise a service maybe once a year.
4. Have a Christian library in church.
5. Involve members of local Christian Motorcycle Association in our church.
6. Have sermons that would link in with Bible Study group topics.
7. Have a second caring group which might focus on regular worshippers who go missing for a few weeks.
8. Get regular attenders to choose topics for parables for the club/pub.
9. Have involvement with Bowhouse Prison.
10. Have younger people to shadow those doing church tasks with a view to passing on that duty eventually.
11. Suggestion about how we should prepare for events where we expect new people in church: what happens when in the service and what is expected of worshippers.
12. Decant into church hall when numbers are small.

After some discussion, the following decisions/ solutions
were put forward:

1. Not wise.
2. Possibility here. One elder will take this further.
3. This could be organised through the liaison elders.
4. Insert this idea in Torch and hope for a volunteer. Any takers contact Session Clerk.
5. Already involved in the pub/club evenings.
6. Minister's responsibility.
7. Each worshipper should be doing this anyway.
8. We are ever hopeful!
9. Might invite chaplain to speak in Church.
10. Great idea but where are the young folk?
11. Minister will take this on board.
12. Needs further discussion.

If anyone reading this feels they could help to put some of these suggestions into practice, please contact Minister or Session Clerk.

Elsbeth MacTaggart, elder.

KIRK SESSION

RICCARTON PARISH CHURCH Tuesday 30th January which day Kirk Session met and was constituted with prayer Rev C A Strong. Moderator.

Attestation of Statistics for the year ending 31st December 2017 were presented by Session Statistics Clerk on behalf of W Connor Role Keeper were approved as correct on the motion of T Linton seconded by E McCallum.

Number on Roll 31 st December 2016	233
Admitted by Profession of Faith	4
Admitted by Certificate	0
Admitted by Resolution of Kirk Session	1
Removed by Death	8
Removed by Certificate	5
Holding Register	0
Number on Roll at 31 st December 2017	225
Nett loss of	8
Total No of Baptisms	6
No of Adult Baptisms	2
No of Weddings	1
No of Funerals	17
Elders	24
Board Members	6 (not elders)
Involved in the life of the congregation	
Children 17 and under	56
18+ and not on communion roll	50
Children receiving Communion	

Youth Elder D Kirkpatrick reported on the Year of Young People 2018 - Church of Scotland YOYP many events are planned during the year. He highlighted the Toolkit for Churches which gives a number of ideas of things to do also the website. This would be circulated to Elders.

Guild Conveners Gloria Barnes reported that both she and Ann Gilmour would be standing down as Joint Guild Conveners after 13

years in the post at the end of this sessions AGM of the Guild. This might mean that if no one came forward to be Convener the Guild would have to close after 112 years. Moderator thanked Gloria and Ann for their service to the Church and the Guild over these years.

Liaison Elders A Dunachie reported when she had visited the toddler group she was met with a very warm and noisy welcome. On the morning she had visited there were 20 children in attendance ranging in ages from 7 weeks to 4 years. They are very well catered for with toys to suit each different age group. There is a structured arts and crafts time in the morning and a little bit of structured play. The accompanying adults and parents enjoy a wee bit of a break with a cup of tea or coffee. On the whole they are a very relaxed, welcoming and noisy. It was great to be there.

J Bircham reported on his visits to a number of listeners who receive the church services. The response was very positive various requests for hymns were made which have been passed on to the Minister. Services at Craigie Nursing Home continue on a monthly basis and the team include three lady members of the church and John Sharp who plays the accordion or keyboard.

How we do Communion Moderator circulated a document "Thoughts on Communion" The issue of Communion was raised at the Kirk Session meeting in October. It was felt that it was as some elders were not as steady on their legs as they once were it would be worth looking at different ways of administering the sacrament. Various questions and comments were expressed. These would be tried as an experiment at the April Communion.

Suggestion Box E MacTaggart reported there had been twelve suggestions received from 22/10/17 to 07/01/18. These would be published in March Torch.

Holy Week Moderator informed Session that Riccarton Church would be hosting Holy Week services this year from Monday 26th to Friday 30th March at 7.00pm Moderator will be taking the Maundy Service on Thursday 29th March.

James Barnes
Session Clerk

Thank You Letters

From Jane Ferguson

Thanks for all the lovely cards, flowers phone calls and visits I have received after my operation. Nice to be remembered and much appreciated.



From Jim and Betty Robson

Thank you to Colin, Kirk Session, Congregational Board and all in the congregation who sent cards, flowers and presents on the occasion of our Golden Wedding Anniversary. We were overwhelmed by your good wishes.

Thanking you all for sharing in our very special day. God Bless you All.

Christmas Card Delivery

Sorry this 'thank you' is late but it is nevertheless sincere. Thank you to all who helped deliver the Christmas Cards in the Parish. (in terrible weather too) your help is appreciated.

Thanks also to Netta Pearson who has delivered the Torch for many years and is no longer so able. I know your visits will be missed by your district, Netta.

Take care and thanks again.

Could you take a Torch to someone near you? If so, please get in touch with me. Thanks.

Ann Gilmour

Tel 520541

Church of Scotland Guild.

The Syllabus for the next few weeks is as follows:-

March:

6th: Annual General Meeting & Bring & Buy.

20th: Closing Social:- Entertainment by Musical Group "Good Question"



We are grateful to everyone for the support we have received during the session, and extend a warm invitation to join us at our Closing Social

Marion Linton.
On behalf of the Guild.

Guild of Friendship

The syllabus for the next few weeks is as follows:-

MARCH

8th Tartan Ladies
15th St Meddans Entertainment Group
22nd PC Craig Marshall Crime Prevention Officer
29th Closing Social - The Revellers

90th Birthday

Belated congratulations and good wishes to our Church Officer Bill Kyle who celebrated his 90th birthday on the 23rd February. Well Done Bill.



Duty Group for Offering

MARCH

Convener Group 1-Tom Linton

Ian Aitken

Alex Hamilton

Shona Hamilton

Marion Linton

Jackie Wallace

APRIL

Convener Group 2-Gloria Barnes

Jim Barnes

Jane Ferguson

Welcome Teams

MARCH

Tom Linton

Ian Aitken

Jackie Wallace

Alan Cairns

APRIL

Bill McCready

Eleanor McCallum

Rose Thomson

Alan Cairns

Tea Rota

MARCH

4/11 Marion Linton

Margaret McCluskey

Ann Baird

18/25 Beth McGhee

Jackie Wallace

Lorna McColgan

APRIL

1/8 Carol-Anne McKelvie

Rose Forbes

Mairi Kirkpatrick

Flower Rota

God's answers are wiser than our prayers

MARCH

4th

Anonymous

11th

Rosemary Ferguson

18th

Ina Alexander

25th

Betty Kirkpatrick

APRIL

1st

Moira Aitken

Flower Transport

MARCH

4th Mrs Ann Gilmour

11th Mr Alex Barlow

18th Mrs M Aitken

25th Mrs J Ferguson

APRIL

1st Mr S McKenzie

Creche Rota

MARCH

4 th	Laura Strong	Andrea Dunachie
11 th	Edith Jamieson	Margaret McCluskey
18 th	Davina Condron	Elizabeth Kerr
25 th	Beth McGhee	Elsbeth Bennion

APRIL

1 st	Laura Strong	Andrea Dunachie
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Sound System

MARCH

4 th	Eleanor McCallum	11 th	Denham Kirkpatrick
18 th	Jim Robson	25 th	Bill McCready

APRIL

1 st	Eleanor McCallum	8 th	Denham Kirkpatrick
15 th	Jim Robson	22 nd	Bill McCready
29 th	Eleanor McCallum		

From the Editor

Material for April Torch should be given to Mrs Betty Robson, 8 Bressay Place NOT LATER THAN Sunday 18th March Betty Robson (Editor)
01563 532248

