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NEWSLETTER

Easter



GILNAHIRK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Thanks to all those who contributed articles and items for this edition. Articles for the Summer Newsletter should be with the Newsletter Committee or the Church Office Secretary not later than Sunday 12th May. Items received after 12th May will not be included until the following issue. **Please observe this deadline.**

The Newsletter Committee:

Judith Morrow (Convenor)	Mark Blundell	Roberta Patterson
Thelma Jackson	Margaret Campbell	Martin Childs
Audrey Smallwood	Brian Campbell	Rachel Toland
Kay Price	Geraldine Whyte	

Dear friends,

Easter is a wonderful opportunity for us to pause and reflect on the amazing grace and power of God demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

As the women disciples approach the garden tomb on the first Easter morning in order to anoint the body of Jesus with the spices they had prepared, they discover the stone rolled away from the entrance and there is no sign of his corpse. Confused and concerned, they then encounter two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning and respond by prostrating themselves in fear. However, words of reassurance come from these two angelic characters:

‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”’ *(Luke 24: 5-7)*

Aren't those incredible words of hope and encouragement for us today? The death of Jesus was the fulfilment of the purposes and plans of God for our salvation but death could not hold him and so his body was no longer lying in the tomb.

‘He is not here, he has risen!’ Praise God!

And because he has risen, he is here! He is here in the hearts and minds right now of all those who have committed themselves to him in faith and obedience in response to his grace. He is here right now in our joys and in our sorrows, in the blessings of this life and in its challenges and trials. He is here. He is with you, for you and in you right now if you are a follower of Christ.

Why not spend some time simply resting in the joy and peace that flows from this truth? Why not determine to celebrate this Easter with God's people in worship and fellowship? Why not re-commit yourself to following Jesus faithfully and serving him wholeheartedly in the days ahead - not out of a sense of duty but out of a deep appreciation of all that he has done for you and who he is, the Lord of life and the only one who can offer us life eternal through the finished work of his death and resurrection?

God bless,
Stephen

CHURCH DIARY

March

- Sunday 24th 11.00am Palm Sunday Communion
4.30pm Gilnahirk & Braniel Churches Palm Sunday Prayer Walk starting at Braniel Community Church and finishing with refreshments around 6.00pm at Gilnahirk Baptist Church
7.00pm United Gilnahirk & Braniel Churches Palm Sunday Evening Service in Gilnahirk Baptist Church
- Wednesday 27th 7.00pm United Gilnahirk & Braniel Churches Holy Week Service in Braniel Church
- Thursday 28th 7.00pm United Gilnahirk & Braniel Churches Holy Week Service in St Dorothea's
OR 7.45pm United Gilnahirk & Braniel Churches Holy Week Service in Braniel Community Church
- Friday 29th 8.00pm Good Friday Service in Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church
- Sunday 31st 11.00am All Age Easter Celebration

April

- Sunday 7th 7.00pm Evening Worship in the Church
- Monday 8th 6.00pm Clean up of the Church Grounds and Graveyard
- Monday 15th 7.45pm Meeting of the Congregational Committee
- Sunday 21st 7.00pm Café Church in the Styé Brae Upper Hall
- Saturday 27th 7.00pm Spring Variety Concert
- Sunday 28th Annual Congregational Meeting after morning worship

May

- Sunday 5th 7.00pm Café Church in the Styé Brae Upper Hall
- Saturday 11th 10.00am Spring Plant Sale & Craft Fair
- Sunday 12th 11.00am Christian Aid Week Service
- Sunday 19th 11.00am Pentecost
7.00pm Café Church in the Styé Brae Upper Hall

100th Birthday Congratulations!

Congratulations to Gretta Larmour on reaching her 100th birthday in February.

Gretta received many beautiful cards and kind messages from her friends in GPC.



Rt Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney (Moderator of the General Assembly), Rev Roy Mackay and Rev Stephen Moore visited Gretta to convey the prayerful best wishes of the congregation of Gilnahirk and the wider Presbyterian Church in Ireland family.



Young Gilnahirk Updates

Kids Church

Kids Church and Toddler Church have been enjoying their time together each week in the JB Hall. In January we read three different Psalms, learning about how God is with us, is faithful, and loves us forever. At the moment we are learning about God's big promises and how these are displayed in the lives of Joseph, Moses, David, Jonah and Esther. Many of our children are involved with the Uniformed Organisations and this theme also helped us to understand more about the promises being made at the Thinking Day Service in February. Through games, activities, story time, craft, song and prayer, we are growing in our relationship with God and with one another. It really is great fun!

Roots

On Sunday mornings we have been doing the Alpha Youth Course, which teaches on the basics of Christianity in a really fun and interesting way, with lots of safe space to ask honest questions. We have been enjoying great discussion time and look forward to continuing the course into next term.

Roots Artwork

You may have noticed our colourful boards in church over Christmas and New Year. Paul Gray kindly helped our young people to create this beautiful artwork focused on the theme of Jesus being the light of the world. Plans are in place to create more boards, this time with an Easter theme. Thank you so much to Paul for volunteering your time and talents.

Messy Church

Our monthly Messy Church gatherings this term are focused around the theme of 'Do Great Things for God' helping us to think about how our extraordinary God can do great things through ordinary people just like us. In January we learned about Corrie Ten Boom and how her Christian faith led her to do great things during WWII to help others, and how she relied on Scripture and her trust in God to strengthen her through incredibly difficult times.



Since Corrie Ten Boom was Dutch, the young people from Roots treated us all to freshly made Dutch pancakes for snack time - you may or may not be surprised to know they were absolutely delicious ... so much so that they hope to make them again (for profit!) at the next available GPC stall holders' event ...

Our next Messy Church meets on Sunday 17 March, when we will be exploring St Patrick doing great things for God.

Poem by Corrie Ten Boom

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colours
He weaveth steadily.
Oft' times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.
Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned
He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.

The Big Splash

Kirk Session Youth Team hosted 'The Big Splash' event in February - a brilliant afternoon for young families at Lisburn LeisurePlex which included a waterpark session and time afterwards to mix over food and cake. Great memories made all round for children, teens, mums, dads, aunties, uncles and grandparents and leaders!

Youth Club

GPC Youth Club continues to meet fortnightly on a Saturday evening with on average 50-60 local young people in Year 8+ attending. So far this term we have enjoyed Pizza Night, a (highly competitive) Table Tennis tournament, and a Badminton evening, along with all the usual fun and activities! During our "Thought Spot" time we have thought about our past, present and future, what we are consuming, mental health, and being careful with our words - exploring what the Bible says about these themes. We are often looking for extra help on the Leader's Rota - if you are interested in hearing more please contact Laura.

Local Schools Ministry

It is a privilege for the staff team to be regularly involved in schools ministry at Gilnahirk Primary School, often in partnership with other local churches and with Scripture Union NI.

This term Laura teamed up with Jax McCallum (SUNI East Belfast Schools Worker) and Drew Steele (Pastor of Gilnahirk Baptist Church) to deliver a series of RE Lessons with both P5 classes.



The series is called “Amazing Jesus” and is a fantastic resource produced by SUNI which explores three miracles of Jesus - Feeding the Five Thousand, Calming the Storm and Blind Bartimaeus. The lessons are very interactive and engaging, and both classes were brilliant at participating. Thank you to the staff and pupils for welcoming us so warmly.

We were also very much involved in a new initiative facilitated by Scripture Union NI - a Prayer Space for P5-7 pupils from Gilnahirk Primary School. This was set up in St Dorothea’s and leaders of churches from Gilnahirk, Braniel and Tullycarnet along with Rachel Tweedie and Jax McCallum from SUNI shared in overseeing the children exploring various aspects of prayer in a creative and interactive way.

During the course of a week in January, the leaders of the Gilnahirk and Braniel churches led a daily Assembly in Our Lady & St Patrick's College Knock for every year group. We also made a number of class visits after the Assemblies to engage with the pupils.

We really appreciated being able to share the importance of the Bible in our lives and faith journeys with staff and pupils alike.

The positive feedback we receive from the school is always very encouraging and we look forward to all Year 9 classes visiting Gilnahirk Baptist and Gilnahirk Presbyterian Churches as part of their RE curriculum after Easter.



Pictured above: Drew Steele (Gilnahirk Baptist), Jax McCallum (Scripture Union NI), Ken McGrath (St Dorothea's) and Laura.

*Pictured right:
members of the
PAIS Team (on
placement with
Braniel Community
Church), Mariann
and Stephen.*

*Pictured below:
Deborah McLaughlin
(Principal), Stephen,
Laura and John
McCloskey (Head
of RE).*



Happy 70th Birthday to the Scout Group

March 2024 marks the 70th Anniversary of the 30th Belfast Scout Group at Gilnahirk Presbyterian with a Cub Scout Pack having been first registered on 1st March 1954. We celebrated the milestone



in style with a visit to Clip n Climb, indoor campfire and games followed by a sleepover in the Styne Brae for the Beavers and Cubs on Friday 1st March. The next morning, the Cubs were up bright and early to help serve a Big Breakfast, including Akela's infamous French toast, to parents, grandparents and members of the congregation.

Highlight of our celebrations was a parade from Gilnahirk Park, up the Gilnahirk Road to Church for a 3pm Service of Thanksgiving for 70 Years of Scouting at Gilnahirk on Sunday 3rd March. The Church was filled to capacity, and we were delighted to be joined by many former members and leaders, and friends from neighbouring Scout Groups.

The Service took the theme of serving others, with the Beavers and Squirrels leading us in a chorus, Cubs performing a sketch based on a modern interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan, and Scouts and Explorers leading the prayers and readings. Following a short skit about the origin of the Good Turn, everyone was encouraged to tie a knot to remind them to do a good turn for someone before the end of the day.

Afterwards in the Jack Britton Hall, we were all treated to birthday cake and refreshments and dedicated an ornamental Squirrel in memory of former Leader, Kate Taylor, to be placed in the Garden of Remembrance. Congratulations to 8 of our Explorer Scouts who have completed their Young Leader training and were presented with their awards by our District Commissioner and to those Leaders who received long service certificates: Gareth Thompson (10 years), Carlos Barr, Alison Moss and Alison Noble (5 years).



Many thanks to Rev Stephen Moore, Rev Mariann Gilicze and our Youth and Family Worker, Laura Hutcheson-Magee, for leading our Thanksgiving Service in such a meaningful way, to our organist Alf Casement and members of the Band, and to 30th old boy, Stephen Jackson, who piped us up the road in spectacular fashion (ably assisted by two young local pipers, Matthew and David).

As we give thanks for 70 years of Scouting at Gilnahirk and look to the future, it is only fitting that we remember with gratitude those who have journeyed with us along that road and been part of our story, but are no longer with us today, including the late John McCay, Dr Donald Brownlie and Audrey Beggs. Thank you to Kirk Session and the members of the congregation and local community for your support through the years and as you continue along that journey with us and as we look ahead with eager anticipation to the activities and camps planned for later this year, and into the future.

David Bell

FACT OR FICTION?

Roy Mackay

Election fever is in the air. The US primaries are occurring and speculation continues about the date of the next general election in the UK.

In the realm of international politics, the question is being asked how far a foreign country can use modern technology and media to influence the voting behaviour in another nation? Can we be sure that what we read is fact rather than 'fake news'.

When we come to the account of the Resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament, it is sometimes argued that what we read is how the early church interpreted the disappearance of Jesus' body. Some have further suggested that we cannot be sure that the Resurrection account is "factually accurate" but is rather based on conjecture.

If we turn to Luke's account of the Resurrection, we need to remember that Luke was both a medical doctor and an historian. Facts mattered to him. Getting to the truth about things with clear evidence was important to his writings. Luke's professional training in both disciplines taught him to discern what was true or false?

In the opening verses of Luke's account of the Gospel, he writes the following:

"Since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good to me to write an orderly account ... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." (Luke 24v3-4)

Luke concludes his writing about Jesus by detailing some events around the Resurrection. In chapter 24, he tells us about two followers of Jesus walking on the road to Emmaus. They are downhearted and confused, not understanding what had happened since Jesus had been crucified. Luke tells us that Jesus came alongside them and walked with them. However, they did not realize who he was and they talked to him about their confusion.

We might have expected Jesus to have said to them, “How foolish you are and slow to believe” – but he did not. Instead, we read that he said to them,

“How foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken.**” (Lk 24v25)

Luke records that Jesus then took them through the evidence in the Old Testament scriptures to prove what had happened.

Our certainty about the bodily resurrection of Jesus rests not only on the witnesses of the time but also upon the testimony of God in scripture written long before the event.

Therefore, we can present the good news of the Resurrection of Jesus as something that has really happened.

I trust you will have a happy and ‘blessed’ Easter as we proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus. Perhaps, the fourth Gospel writer, John, should have the last word. He writes at the end of his account of the Gospel in chapter 20v21:

“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”



“Being Transformed”



At our annual Presbyterian Women’s Service on Sunday 3rd March at 11am we were pleased to have several PW members and Committee present along with our invited speaker Mrs Ellen Hillen, PW Home Vice-President (2022-24), who brought greetings from her home congregation which is St Columba’s Presbyterian Church, Old Warren, Lisburn. The service was led by Hilary Gowdy and several members of PW took part in the prayers and readings.

Ellen’s address was based on the theme for this year, 'Being Transformed' from Romans 12v2: 'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will'. Ellen reminded us that transformation is given from God and achieved with the support of family, friends, church family and most importantly prayer. She also spoke of our three Special Projects and the importance of PW support at home and abroad, which is transforming generational lives through:

- a) **Reach Mentoring** - a Mentoring programme for young people between 9-18 years in schools in Armagh, Down and Craigavon.
- b) **Biblical Counselling Ireland** - a counselling organisation based in churches in Dublin.
- c) **SAT-7** - our Overseas project supporting a broadcast media for women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The Choir sang the anthem “Let there be peace” reflecting on our troubled world. After the service refreshments were served in the Styne Brae Centre when we had an opportunity to meet Ellen.

Wishing you all a very **HAPPY EASTER**

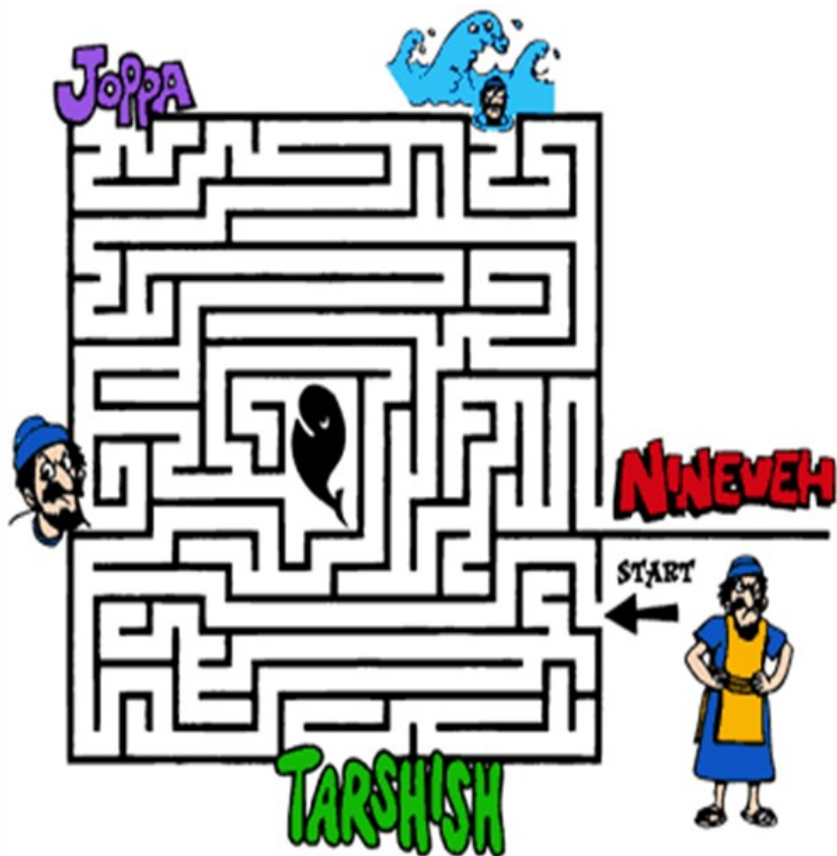


Oh No, Jonah!

Jonah Changes
His Mind

—Jonah 1-3

God gave Jonah a job to do, but Jonah didn't want to do it. When Jonah tried to run away to Tarshish, he got into trouble. Help Jonah find his way to Joppa and then on to Nineveh so he can do what God asked him to do.



ESTHER



Esther is being crowned queen: how many differences can you spot between the two pictures?

I found 12 – see if you can spot more



Saint Patrick

Copyright © www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

Colour in and cut out to make a book-mark
or hang up in your window on 17th March



What has Easter got to do with AI?

There has been much chatter about AI (*Artificial Intelligence*) lately. It's the next big thing everyone is talking about. The mysterious future of AI has become a topic that is hard to ignore, even for those who are usually uninterested in technology. If you are like me, you might find it hard to keep up with the increasing speed of AI development, promising to dramatically improve human life and solve previously unsolvable issues, in medical sciences and beyond. Every day brings something new in this field, and most days, we seem to face more questions than answers.

The most helpful book I have read on the topic is by John C. Lennox, entitled '2084, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity'. The book was published four years ago, so many included scientific and technological references would now be considered outdated. Still, Lennox's ethical and theological considerations are thorough and still highly relevant.

The title '2084' is a play on Orwell's famous novel '1984', which is the first clue about the author's goal to show us a bigger picture and to help us consider AI in its broader context with all the potentially undesired consequences. The greatest highlight of the book for me is when Lennox explains the difference between AI (*Artificial Intelligence*) and AGI (*Artificial General Intelligence*), between a non-personal, non-creative, pattern-reading algorithm and something much greater that is all about upgrading humans and solving the mortality problem.

The pursuit of developing AGI is the 'Homo Deus' ("Homo" meaning man or human and "Deus" meaning God) project, which is also the title of a book by Yuval Harari, author and philosopher. It's all about humans creating a greater intelligence than themselves, making it possible to transfer the human mind onto silicone, and somehow, some day achieving immortality. I hope you have become sufficiently curious to read the whole book. For now, I would like to give you my key takeaways from the book about how Christians should respond to the 'Homo Deus' project.

1. One of the root questions when it comes to AI and AGI is this: 'What makes us truly humans?' The Bible has much to say about this matter, so Christians should seek become more informed, equipped and confident to address this question.
2. The church is called and well-equipped to address the growing sense of fear about machines taking over human tasks, leaving many without a job. Technological improvements have been affecting workplaces for a long time, forcing people to adopt. It's reasonable to expect that even the rapidly developing AI will leave room for creative, compassionate and empathetic leaders who know how to create trust, build teams, inspire service and communicate effectively. The church has the means and the capacity to invest in the next generations and help children and young people to become more resilient and prepared to face future challenges.
3. We are called to live model lives for the benefit of society. While Christians might be tempted to disengage, withdraw or push back, we are called to prayerfully and carefully engage, serve and support technical inventions and the positive side of AI that promotes life and is beneficial for all.

But what does all this have to do with Easter?

While the world is busy trying to figure out how humans can become gods, we should always stay focussed on the Gospel and stick to the message of God becoming human in Jesus Christ. God becoming human is the central event in history, and it will remain so regardless of all the developments humans can ever achieve through AI or AGI. The 'Homo Deus' project is rooted in **PRIDE** and the desire to become better, upgraded 'transhumans'. The goal is to become like God, powerful and immortal.

Paul points us to the real 'Homo Deus' in Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus Christ and his **HUMILITY**, *“who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!”*

At Easter, we remember and celebrate the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who did not insist on being treated like royalty but emptied himself. He took on the form of a servant, lived life with quiet modesty, prayed without ceasing, cleansed and healed the sick with a touch, raised the dead with the call of his voice, restored families, erased debts, washed his disciples' feet, and when the day came, he laid down his life for us all. The 'Homo Deus' project through AGI might be able to extend human life expectancy one day dramatically but it will never be able to give us what we truly need. The true 'Homo Deus', Jesus Christ, offers us hope, forgiveness, peace, and purpose. He gives us unlimited access to God and an inseparable union with him right now and eternal life and joy in his presence forever.

There is a path for humans to a glorious, thriving life, not through technological advancement, but through humility, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ, who is the real hope of the world.

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

This is the good news of Easter.

Mariann Gilicze



Gilnahirk Ladies Group (the rebranded Ladies Tuesday Morning Group) is well into the programme of its second year. We have an eclectic mix of speakers following a cuppa and chat.

We meet once a month on a Monday afternoon (usually the last Monday) from 2.15pm to 3.45pm in the Styne Brae Centre.

On 25th March we look forward to Jill Kerry speaking to us about “The Work of the National Churches Trust”.

On 29th April we will have Wendy Smith with her Hypo dog.

Monday 20th May is our Annual Outing. We will go by coach from Gilnahirk to the Rabbit Hotel in Templepatrick for a three course lunch followed by a trip to Coleman’s Garden Centre (with 10% discount voucher).

Any lady is very welcome to join us at our Monday afternoon meetings and also our Annual Outing.

Please contact any member of the committee for further details: Carol Noble, Edna Caldwell, Jill Kerry or Suzanne Hanna.

Suzanne Hanna (Secretary)

Palm Sunday
PRAYER WALK
 SUNDAY, 24TH MARCH

STARTING FROM BRANIEL COMMUNITY CHURCH

WALK - 4.30PM
 REFRESHMENTS - 6PM
 WORSHIP SERVICE - 7PM
 FINISHING AT GILNAHIRK BAPTIST CHURCH

GILNAHIRK & BRANIEL CHURCHES

GOOD FRIDAY
Shivell

gpc GILNAHIRK

FRIDAY, 29TH MARCH, 8 PM

United Gilnahirk - Branziel
HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY
 24TH MARCH, 7 PM

WEDNESDAY
 27TH MARCH, 7 PM

THURSDAY
 28TH MARCH, 7 PM

THURSDAY
 28TH MARCH, 7.45 PM

faith in kids
 gpc GILNAHIRK

Easter
 ALL-AGE CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, 31ST MARCH, 11 AM

FIRST 15

Mariann Gilicze

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life." (Psalm 143:8)

What is the very first thing you do every morning before putting your feet on the floor?

Perhaps you reach for your phone, check your emails, or look at your calendar and start planning your day. You might instantly get swept away by a flood of responsibilities and urgent appointments. If you can afford a slow morning, you might leisurely scroll through your social media apps, read the paper or turn on the TV.

What if you spent the first 15 minutes of each day seeking God in his Word? Yes, I mean the very first minutes, just as you open your eyes and before you do anything else.

What if God's voice was the first thing you heard every morning instead of self-centred thoughts, worries or other people's stories and opinions?

When you think about it, 15 minutes is not a long time at all.

It's just enough to empty the dishwasher and make yourself a cup of tea. It takes about 15 minutes to walk a mile at an average pace. Try making a phone call or scrolling through some Insta-stories and see how fast 15 minutes can go by.

Still, 15 minutes is all it takes to have our hearts warmed by God's presence in the morning and to get a sense of quiet steadiness in his words of wisdom and promises.

'Why the first fifteen'? - you may ask.

The Bible teaches us that there is something exceptional about giving God the first of anything, including our minutes. (Exodus 13:2, Numbers 15:20-21, Proverbs 3:9, Leviticus 23:9-10, Romans 11:16, Matthew 6:33)

John Bunyan, Puritan preacher and author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, wrote:

"He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day."

The opposite is also true. If we run to God first thing in the morning, we will be more aware of his presence later. After being awakened by God’s word, we enter our day differently. Our motions and movements will remain the same: we get up, shower, brush our teeth, make breakfast, sip coffee, do the school run, shop and meet friends, but our hearts, thoughts and expectations of the day will be completely different. Giving the very first thoughts of our refreshed, barely awake minds to God is a simple way to make sure that we will go about our day secure in the love of the Father, anchored to Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit instead of rushing on fueled by our own power.

I hope you will give it a try. What better start could there be to your day than to fill your first waking moments with the voice of the holy One who made you and loves you?

Our FIRST 15 Discipleship mini-series is designed to inspire and equip you to create a daily habit of connecting with God’s Word directly first thing in the morning.

SPENDING THE FIRST 15 MINUTES OF EACH DAY SEEKING GOD IN HIS WORD

FIRST 15

TUESDAYS	FRIDAYS
@ 8 PM	@ 11.30 AM
16th April 30th April 14th May 4th June	19th April 3rd May 17th May 7th June

GPC DISCIPLESHIP

In four sessions, we will discuss the difference between a devotional and Bible reading and learn about the benefits of seeking God directly in his Word.

We will also practise praying before and reading through a selected Bible passage, finding a key word or verse in the text and turning it into a ‘daily affirmation’.

Finally, we will think about the ‘Last 15’ minutes of our waking hours and what it might look like to finish our days well.

SPRING PLANT SALE & CRAFT FAIR

GILNAHIRK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SATURDAY 11th MAY
10AM - 12 NOON

**Buy your plants for the garden
or bring your own pots to be filled.
House plant stall and plant
rescue advice**

**Home made crafts and cakes
for sale**

**Tea and coffee
served with home made
shortbread and scones**



Autism in the Church

Awareness / Training Event
organised by East Belfast Presbytery



SATURDAY 27TH APRIL 2024

10.00 AM – 12.30 PM

REGISTRATION FROM 9.30AM



KNOCK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

53 KINGS ROAD, BELFAST BT5 6JH



East Belfast Presbytery is a Registered Charity in Northern Ireland: NIC 106435

Many Christians with autism do not feel included or their needs understood in our local congregations. Yet often with sensible adjustments to our buildings, our organisations, our worship and our congregational routines our churches can become places where those on the autism spectrum can feel understood, comfortable and welcome.

There will be presentations by those with experience of autism with low support needs and of autism with high support needs followed by a Q&A session.

Those on the autism spectrum, family members, friends, children's and youth ministry volunteers, organisation leaders, church office holders and ministers are invited to attend.

The event is free. Registration beforehand is not essential, but it would be helpful for catering purposes if you were able to let us know in advance that you plan to attend.

To register or for more information, please contact Rev Jim Campbell:



jandrcampbell@btinternet.com



02890 709113

Where our United Appeal Funds Go – Judith Morrow



In my last article about the often unknown work of the United Appeal Fund, I looked at the International Meeting Point. Unknown to me, the PW have been supporters for years and Shirley McGonigle spoke at their last meeting on 21st February. David Mark, one of our elders, has also taken a close interest in their work, especially their baby and children's charity shop at Carlisle Circus.

David told me “We had a bit of a clear out! With 5 grandchildren we had lots of kids’ clothes in good condition, cots, prams, toys and similar stuff. I really wanted to get these to a good cause and a friend Lynda Gould suggested IMP OP shop on Carlisle Circus.

I looked it up and it seemed ideal in the people it was supporting and then to my great surprise and delight I learned it was a Presbyterian Church in Ireland joint initiative. I think it could be a good group for us in Gilnahirk to support in a similar way as to how we support the Dundonald Food Bank.”

So David arrived over at the shop with all his contributions and spoke to Frances Jackson, the shop manager, who gave him this overview of their project.

“We opened the baby and children's charity shop four years ago. It is run by the International Meeting Point and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Urban Mission Trust North Belfast headed by Trevor Long (Clerk of North Belfast Presbytery).

Our local friends/customers of the shop have been faithfully calling into our shop sometimes every day or 3 times a week. We have friends/customers who come from Coleraine, Ballymoney, Ardglass, Dungannon, Armagh, Omagh, Toome, Bangor, Newtownards and further afield visitors on holiday from America, Australia, China, etc.

We have 20 volunteers, both men and women, from local churches and Asylum Seekers and refugees also volunteering, this helps with their English speaking. They are from Syria, Iraq, Africa, Eritrea, Egypt and Iran and we have a new volunteer from Kiev in the Ukraine.

God has been so faithful to us all in IMP OP SHOP by having a good team of volunteers, wonderful customers and our brothers and sisters in the churches around Northern Ireland who so graciously donate clothes, toys, equipment and knit us our beautiful cardigans, jumpers and blankets. etc for the shop. I want to thank everyone from all the congregations in Northern Ireland for their support with knitted donations and other items. The people in the local area also donate to the shop and again we are so thankful. At present we need toys and equipment strollers, walkers, stairgates etc. Clothes from 18 months to 15 years both boys and girls. Girls and boys shoes.

We offer pastoral care and prayer ministry to our friends who come into the shop. I have a few stories to share - this is one of them.

Two girls came in with babies in prams and we began our usual conversation – “are you from the area?” They were both living in the Salvation Army Thorndale Family Centre. One was from Ballymena, the other girl from Carrick. They were on 15 minute suicide watch with their 8 week old babies. Both girls were in their 20s. For one it was her 6th baby and the other girl’s 2nd child. They shared about abuse both physical and sexual, from their partners. I offered to pray with them and they said yes and both thanked me. The girl from Carrick said this seemed to have helped her a lot. I have seen them again in the shop and assured them I was still praying for them.

We do prayer ministry and pastoral care to the people who are off loading and sharing their lives with us. Problems, concerns, anxieties, health issues, addictions, etc.

Please pray for God’s hand upon each person that they may know his touch that he is by their side and protecting them at this time. Our motto is GOD LOVES YOU. We are there to show the love of Jesus to care and share with everyone we meet.”

David was very moved by his encounter and is very keen to let her know that Gilnahirk could maybe help. He says “We live in a very privileged place in this city. We don’t have that much visibility to some of the need and darkness in society - what can we do however limited?

We are proposing to be a hub for the OP shop, we will have a basket for good condition children's clothes (0-14ish years) and monthly we will get them to the shop. If anyone has equipment or toys they think would suit if they ring me I will collect and deliver to the shop”.

Frances was delighted with his suggestion which was approved by the Kirk Session. Frances' response was:

***“Here I am Lord, is it I Lord,
I have heard You calling in the night,
I will go Lord, if you need me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.”***

Blessings to each and everyone of you for your kind invitation to share our work in IMP OP SHOP North Belfast.

***Blessings
Frances***



So? Can you help? Ideas, prayers, items? Follow them on Facebook IMP OP SHOP and keep up with their news. Watch out for ways you can support! Contact David Mark 07768306782.



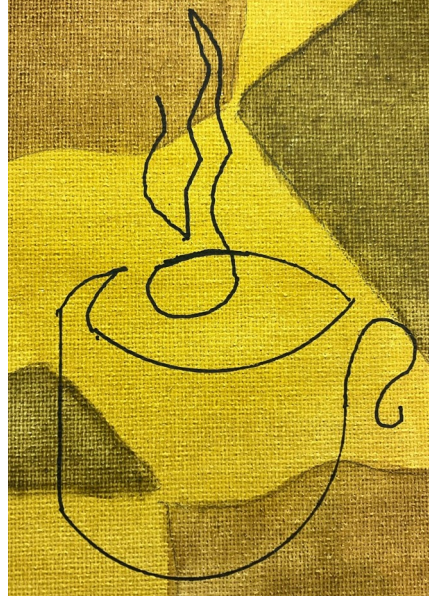
Monday Morning Drop In

Are you free
on a Monday morning?

Please pop in to the Stye Brae
for a cuppa and a scone
between 11am and 12 noon,
bring a friend
and plenty of chat!

All welcome.

Painting by Gary Kerr

A vibrant poster for a Spring Variety Concert. It features a large, multi-colored rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) curving across the bottom. The title "Spring Variety Concert" is written in a large, white, cursive font in the center. Surrounding the title are various musical notes and theater masks (purple and red). In the top left corner, there is a logo for "gpc GILNAHIRK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH". In the top right corner, the text "SAVE THE DATE!" is written in white on a purple background. At the bottom, the date and time "SATURDAY 27 APRIL 7PM" and the location "JACK BRITTON HALL" are listed, followed by "Ticket info to follow" in a cursive font.

gpc
GILNAHIRK
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

**Spring
Variety
Concert**

SATURDAY 27 APRIL 7PM
JACK BRITTON HALL
Ticket info to follow

Vestibule Reception Rota

<u>March</u>	11.00am	Barbara Anderson Michael Thompson Janitha Gray*
	7.00pm*	Patricia Gowdy Carol Anderson
<u>April</u>	11.00am	Richard Patterson Roberta Patterson Mark Blundell*
	7.00pm*	Carol Noble Jullie-May Noteman
<u>May</u>	11.00am	Paul Blundell Judith Morrow Rab Toland*
	7.00pm*	John Cummings David Corbett
<u>June</u>	11.00am	Gillian Hamill Jill Kerry Donald Eakin*
	7.00pm*	Andrew Kerr Trevor Gilliland

* Indicates reception duties at Stye Brae Centre, the security of premises and plate collection.

* Evening services will normally be on the 1st and the 3rd Sundays of the month.

* Those lifting the offering in the centre rows are to always stay with the Choir.



General reminder to all members on vestibule duty of the regulations regarding Fire/Health & Safety. Each member should ensure they know where all emergency fire exits and fire extinguishers are located and they will act as Fire Marshalls should it become necessary.

Members on duty should have the church doors open no later than 30 minutes before the commencement of each service.

[It is the responsibility of those rostered to arrange for Session/Committee deputies if unable to attend.](#)

SACRAMENTS

New Communicants

7th January Lara Petrushkina (on profession of faith)

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Marriages

7th December Hannah Cooke & Andrew Roberts

Deaths

9th January Maureen Ramsay

New members

Dr Robin Jackson
Jack Woods



The Presbyterian Children's Society greatly appreciates the generosity of Gilnahirk Presbyterian congregation for raising the wonderful collection of £2,705 in the year 2023. Each donation makes a real difference to the lives of Presbyterian families who are experiencing challenges.

Thank you again for your continuing support.



Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church exists to show the love of God in Christ Jesus, proclaim the Gospel and enable people to find its healing power, encourage members to worship and learn together and grow in faith, and apply the faith in practical concern and help to others.

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SERVICES
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& NEWS



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