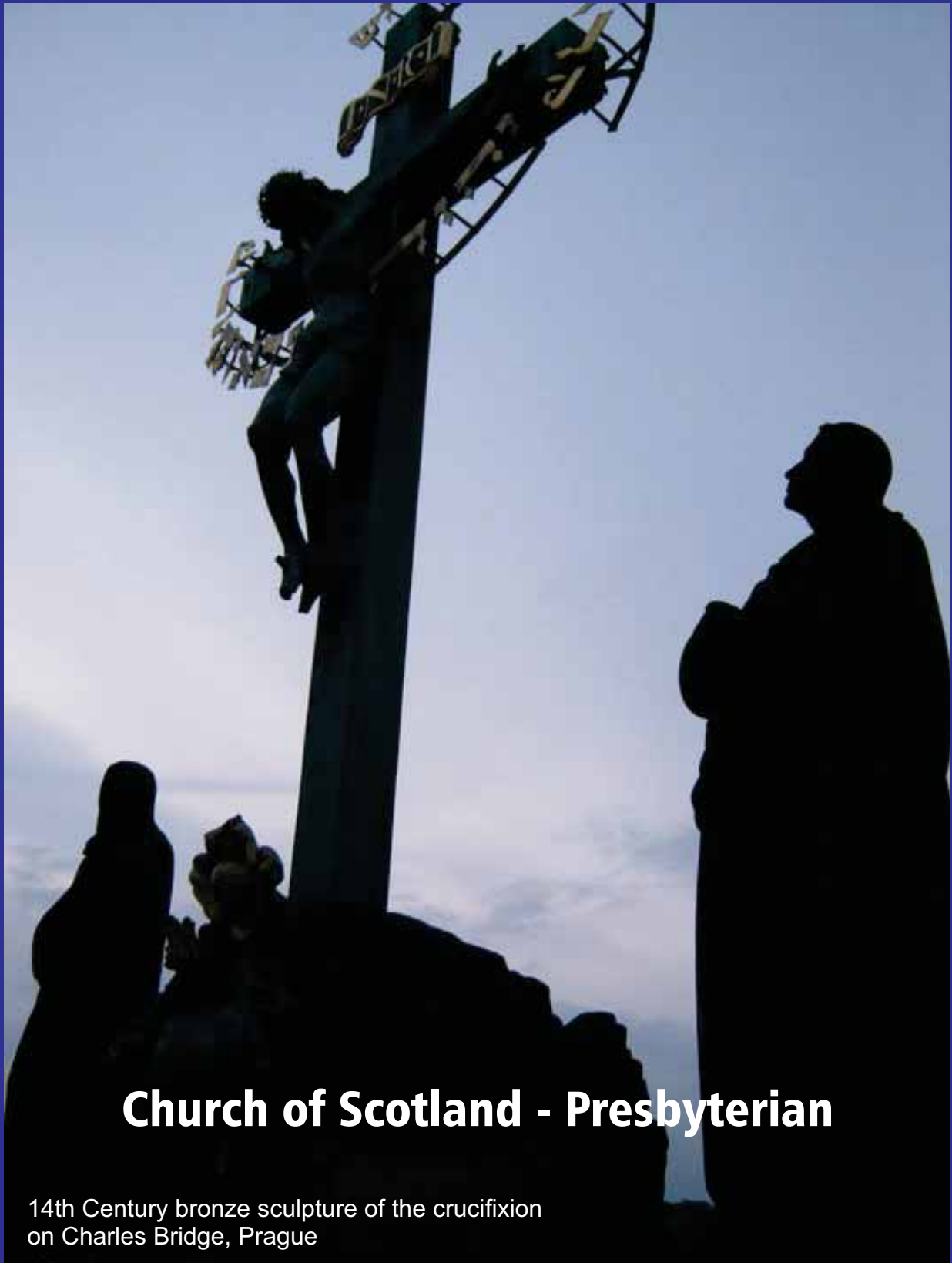


ISSUE NO : 07

the Saint Andrew



Church of Scotland - Presbyterian

14th Century bronze sculpture of the crucifixion
on Charles Bridge, Prague

Photo-Savithri Rodrigo

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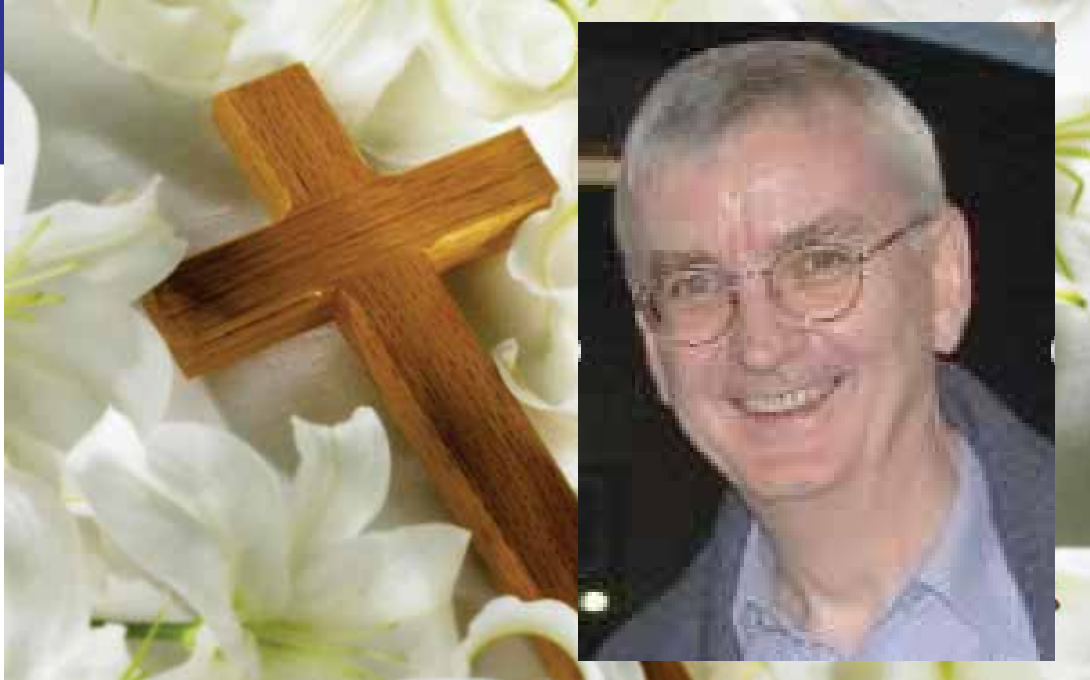
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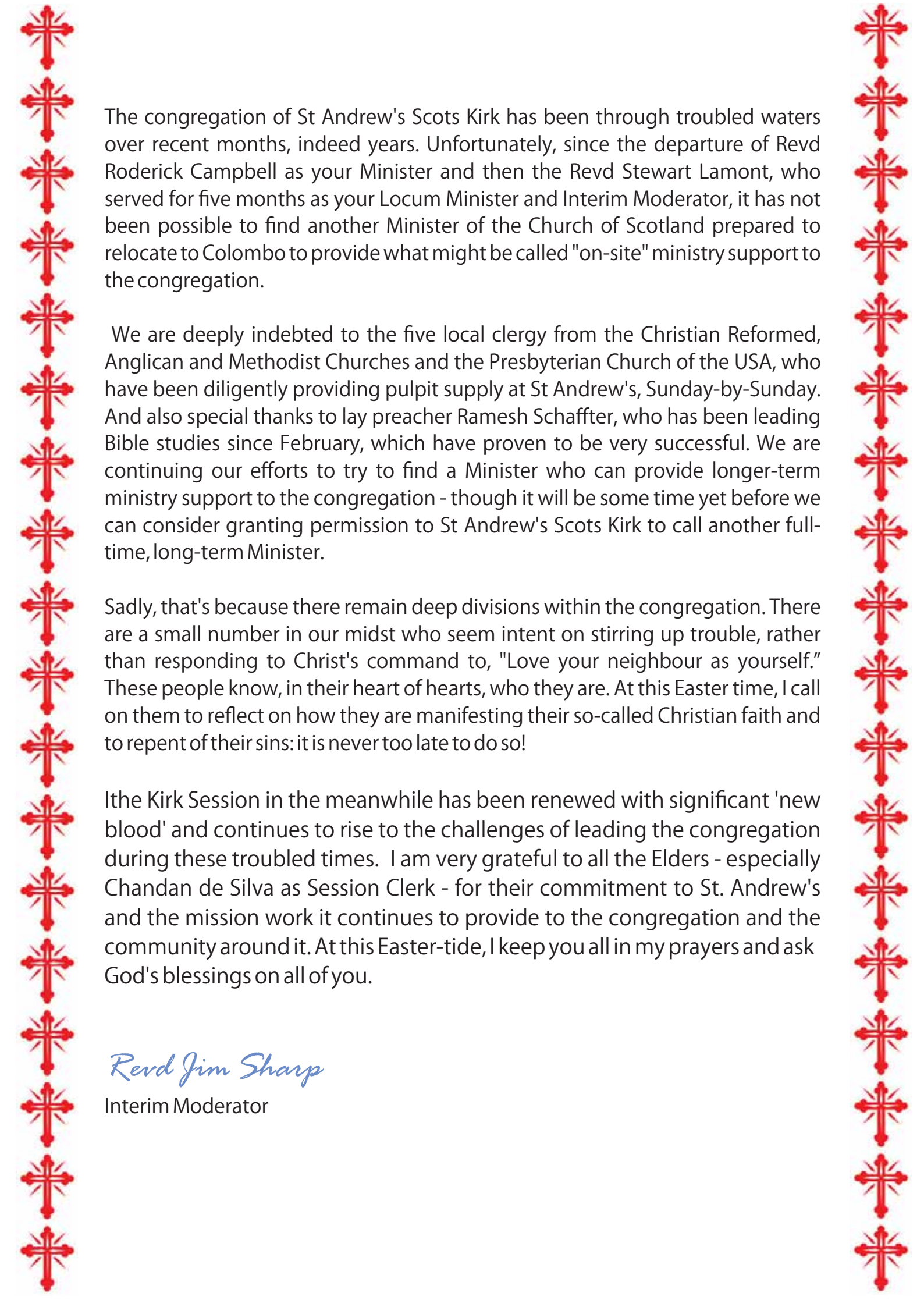
Dear friends at St Andrew's Scots Kirk,

As we approach Easter, we are reminded of the sacrifice that Christ paid to atone for our sins - and we give thanks to him for that ultimate act of salvation.

Easter comes as the culmination of the season of Lent. Those of us who have grown up in the Presbyterian tradition perhaps do not place as much emphasis on Lent as do Christians from other denominations. Personally, I find that rather sad - for I think Lent offers us many opportunities for repentance and renewal that we miss.

Lent is traditionally described as lasting for forty days, in commemoration of the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, before beginning his public ministry and during which he endured temptation by Satan.

We are all sinners, constantly tempted by Satan. As I reminded the Kirk Session recently, during one of its regular monthly meetings which I moderate from my home in Geneva by Skype, Judas is perhaps the one we remember most keenly as we approach the Easter narrative. And we all need, continuously, to examine ourselves, our thoughts and our actions (or inactions) and reflect on how we conduct our lives as we profess (pretend?) to be a follower of Christ.



The congregation of St Andrew's Scots Kirk has been through troubled waters over recent months, indeed years. Unfortunately, since the departure of Revd Roderick Campbell as your Minister and then the Revd Stewart Lamont, who served for five months as your Locum Minister and Interim Moderator, it has not been possible to find another Minister of the Church of Scotland prepared to relocate to Colombo to provide what might be called "on-site" ministry support to the congregation.

We are deeply indebted to the five local clergy from the Christian Reformed, Anglican and Methodist Churches and the Presbyterian Church of the USA, who have been diligently providing pulpit supply at St Andrew's, Sunday-by-Sunday. And also special thanks to lay preacher Ramesh Schaffter, who has been leading Bible studies since February, which have proven to be very successful. We are continuing our efforts to try to find a Minister who can provide longer-term ministry support to the congregation - though it will be some time yet before we can consider granting permission to St Andrew's Scots Kirk to call another full-time, long-term Minister.

Sadly, that's because there remain deep divisions within the congregation. There are a small number in our midst who seem intent on stirring up trouble, rather than responding to Christ's command to, "Love your neighbour as yourself." These people know, in their heart of hearts, who they are. At this Easter time, I call on them to reflect on how they are manifesting their so-called Christian faith and to repent of their sins: it is never too late to do so!

The Kirk Session in the meanwhile has been renewed with significant 'new blood' and continues to rise to the challenges of leading the congregation during these troubled times. I am very grateful to all the Elders - especially Chandan de Silva as Session Clerk - for their commitment to St. Andrew's and the mission work it continues to provide to the congregation and the community around it. At this Easter-tide, I keep you all in my prayers and ask God's blessings on all of you.

Revd Jim Sharp

Interim Moderator



What is **so good** about **Good Friday?**

By Ramesh Schaffter

I recently received a special offer from an airline; it was a 'Buy one - get one free' offer. How wonderful! You buy one ticket and your companion gets to tag along absolutely free. It doesn't get much better than that.....or does it?

A key date in the Lenten season and the entire liturgical calendar for those who follow one is Good Friday. How can a day when an innocent man is tortured, humiliated, spat upon and finally crucified, all this before a bloodthirsty mob, be termed good?

Go back before to the Garden of Gethsemane and you find Jesus, knowing what was in the store, praying earnestly, saying, "O My Father , if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39 NKJV). Shortly thereafter, he is betrayed by one of his own, arrested and in captivity, until on Friday the event of the day continues to unfold!

God's plan of redemption unfolded that day. For hundreds of years the Holy Scriptures had spoken of this day, whether in the prophets' pronouncements or the customs and rituals of the Jews which pointed to this day. But they missed it. God's plan was to reconcile man back to him. Man who had been separated from God because of sin, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23 NKJV) was condemned to die because, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23 NKJV)

It is a Gift of God that unfolded that day.

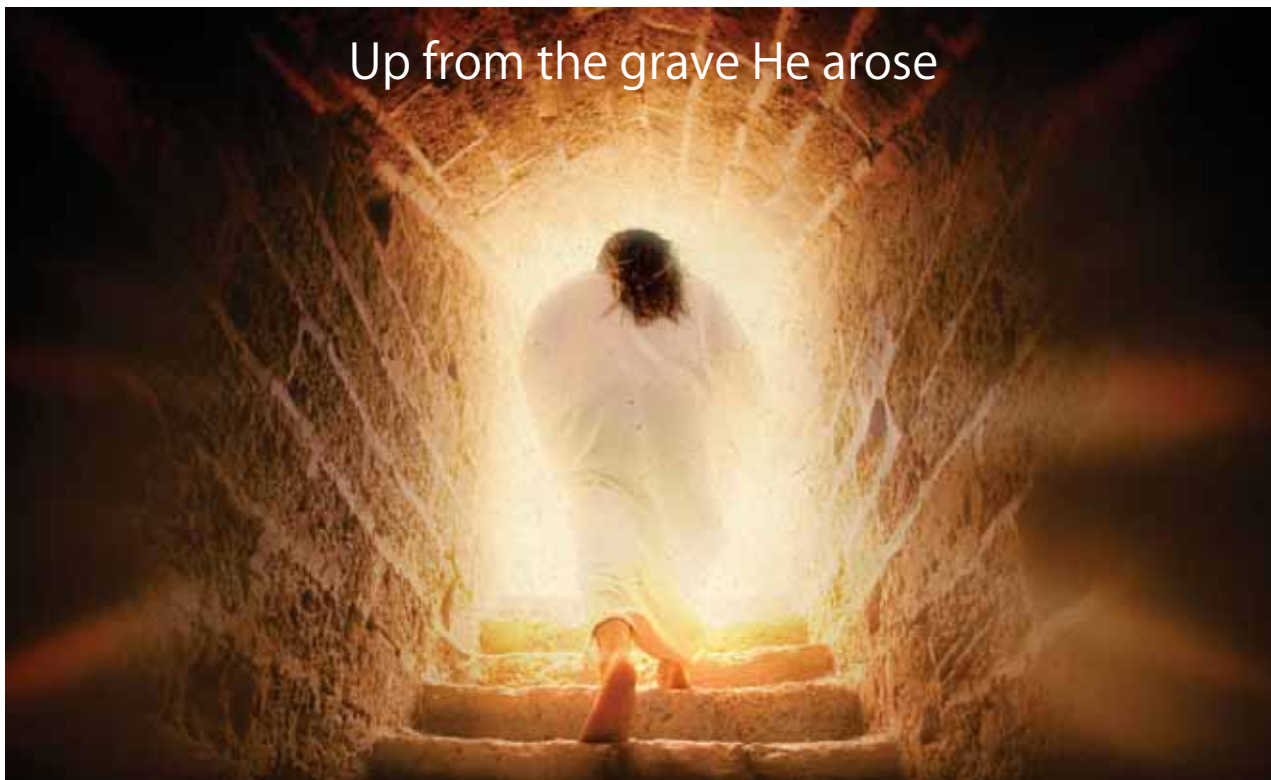
The say there is no such thing as a free lunch, someone's got to pay. And God in his mercy devised a plan where Jesus paid the price John the Baptist identified him when he said " Behold ! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world !" (John 1.29 NKJV). Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who paid the price for your sin, and the sin of the entire world. Jesus had to die that day, Jesus had to shed every drop of his blood and Jesus had to pay the price just so that we could live. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son , that whoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3.16 NKJV).

So is Good Friday good? It is better than good. It is a free ticket to God's presence without even buying the first one. No 'Buy one - get one free offer' here. Just an open invitation to come as you are. Already paid for on Good Friday. The Jews of the day missed it. We must not!





A hymn for Easter



Up from the grave He arose

Written by Philadelphia born author and hymn composer, Baptist preacher and educator Robert Lowry wrote this hymn seated at a little pump organ in the parlour of his home. He was reflecting on the resurrection as written in Luke 24:6-8 and with great spontaneity, simply poured forth the music and words to give expression to the thoughts that had been uppermost in his mind.

The hymn, which has many names, 'Low in the Grave He lay', 'Christ Arose' and 'He is not here, but risen', was composed 1874 at a time when Lowry was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. It first appeared in Brightest and Best collection of hymns in 1875 and later included in Sacred Songs and Solos by music evangelist Ira D Sankey, which was the start of its popularity. The hymn was quick to be published in a number of 19th century British and American hymnals.

Like many gospel songs, the three stanzas have the commonality of saying the same things differently, while there is immense contrast between the stanzas and refrain. This textual musical contrast is very evident in the straightforward stanzas which march along but open out to a very grand rhythmic refrain with much pomp.

Lowry who served in churches in Pennsylvania, New York City and New Jersey, studied theology at the University of Lewisburg, teaching literature once he graduated. It was during his ministry in Brooklyn that he began working on his gospel songs, the most famous being 'Nothing but the blood of Jesus' and 'Shall we gather at the river?' and also composing the music for 'Marching to Zion' and 'I need thee every hour'.

Hymnologist Kenneth Osbeck notes that, "Lowry was recognized as a most capable minister of the gospel, possessing keen insight and administrative ability. He became known as a thorough Bible scholar and a brilliant and captivating orator; few preachers of his day had greater ability to paint word pictures and to inspire a congregation. Music and a knowledge of hymnology were his favorite studies, but always as an avocation."

"Up from the Grave He Arose"

Robert Lowry



*Low in the grave he lay,
Jesus my Savior,
waiting the coming day,
Jesus my Lord!*

*Up from the grave he arose
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark
domain,
and he lives forever with his saints
to reign.
He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

*Vainly they watch his bed—
Jesus, my Saviour;
Vainly they seal the dead—
Jesus, my Lord.*

*Death cannot keep his prey—
Jesus, my Saviour;
He tore the bars away—
Jesus, my Lord.*

International Presbytery Meeting - Rotterdam

9 to 12 March 2017



The choir comprising Africans settled in the city

Held in Rotterdam, a city in South Holland, within the Rhine - Meuse - Scheldt the riverside setting delta at the North Sea in the Netherlands with a history dating to 1270 when a dam was constructed in the Rotte river by people settled around it for safety, it was indeed beautiful surrounds for the International Presbytery Meeting held in March. In 1340 Rotterdam was granted city rights by the Count of Holland and slowly grew into a major logistic and economic centre. Today, it is home to Europe's largest port, the tenth largest in the world, with a population of 633,471, ranking second in the Netherlands, just behind Amsterdam and prides itself on its multi-ethnic multi-cultural fabric, with a handful of Scots living there today.

Erasmus University, riverside setting, lively cultural life and its maritime heritage is what typifies Rotterdam. The near-complete destruction of Rotterdam's city centre during World War II (known as the Rotterdam Blitz) resulted in a varied architectural landscape including sky-scrapers, which are an uncommon sight in other Dutch cities. Recently Rotterdam was listed eighth in The Rough Guide Top 10 Cities to Visit, fifth in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2016 and voted 2015 European City of the Year by the Academy of Urbanism.

The host church too had its share of history which reverts to 1643 and remarkably has a complete record of members since then. The original church was destroyed in the Rotterdam Blitz and the current buildings are from 1952. Interestingly, the congregation reflects the diversity that Rotterdam prides itself on with one third each being Dutch and Afro Caribbean and the balance one third encompassing an extraordinary thirty nationalities. The average weekly congregation is about 120 people.

Rev. Derek Lawson is the minister and has been there for the past year. Prior to his arrival the Church went through two years with a vacancy.

The Education and Training committee discussed a range of topics including:

1. The challenges faced by an individual who is training to become an ordained local minister
2. Elder training
3. Adult education
4. Teenage material
5. Youth Presbytery

An idea to kick off a presbytery wide bible study was discussed for implementation in Advent this year.

The business of the presbytery began with the installation of a new Moderator – Rev. Ewen Maclean. The meeting agenda of twenty-nine items was worked through very efficiently and the meeting ended the next afternoon, as scheduled.



The newly installed Moderator Rev. Ewen Maclean speaking with the children

One matter of concern was the report by the Stewardship and Finance Committee on Edinburgh, who reported that numbers attending services were declining alarmingly and significant numbers of vacancies existed. The interplay between declining numbers of ministers and income generated was a major concern and issue. The International Presbytery contributes only to Mission & Renewal (M&R) with the contribution being 21% of the total income of the Church of Scotland. A new basis for charging M&R comes into effect in 2017 and will be phased in over a five year period.



Doug Frith, Session Clerk of Bermuda posing in front of a mosaic wall, which is a district characteristic of the Church building

On Saturday evening the presbyters met for a formal dinner over a glass of wine, which was an enjoyable way to conclude days of intense discussions. The formal proceedings ended on Sunday with a service, followed by a finger buffet, organized by the host church.

Chandan de Silva

Session Clerk and Presbytery Elder

PS. If anyone in the congregation is interested in finding out more of the discussions at the International Presbytery, please feel free to contact me.

Events at St. Andrew's



Firdause Wadia enriches a Lenten Sunday

Our Lenten service of a Sunday was enriched with the classical baritone of Firdause Wadia who added lustre to the service of March 19th, doing immense justice with a repertoire that included works from Handel's Messiah, Mendelssohn's Elijah and two spirituals. Post the call to worship, he began with Lord God of Abraham, the aria from the oratorio Elijah, which depicts events in the life of the prophet Elijah.

Born in India and beginning his musical studies at the very young age of 4, Firdause effortlessly moved into There is a Balm in Gilead, a traditional US African American spiritual taken directly from the book of Jeremiah Chapter 8:22. Deep River was the other spiritual hailing from similar origins and has been called perhaps the best known and best loved spiritual, and was also featured in the 1929 film Show Boat. Prior to the final congregational hymn, Firdause, whose vocal prowess extends to complex musical works of Handel's Messiah and Brahms's Requiem, took The Trumpet Shall Sound from the latter with the final message of Easter, the hope of resurrection engraved in all its grand magnificence.

Thank you Janice Quek



The congregation of St. Andrew's showed its appreciation to Janice Quek for her conscientious commitment in compiling the Order of Service each Sunday since early last year.

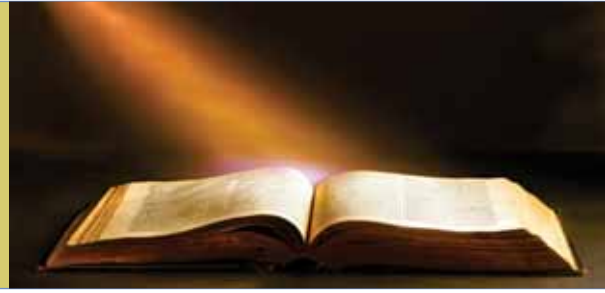
Elder Jill Macdonald gifted a keepsake to Janice, accompanied by Session Clerk Chandan De Silva, wishing Janice and her family well on their move back to Singapore.

Studying St. James at the Bible Study

For the last two months, on every other Monday evening, up to 18 members of the Congregation met in the Manse for Bible study. This was led by Ramesh Schaffter where the letter of James was discussed. Ramesh is a lay preacher and has been contributing to the Pulpit supply at St Andrew's Scots Kirk for many months for which we are extremely grateful.

The serious discussion was often preceded by the hearty consumption of wadai and any birthdays of the Bible Study group are also celebrated.

Ramesh led the Group in study with many examples from his personal experiences, helping us understand the Biblical text and relate the words to daily lives. From the feedback received, the members of the group



have grown to learn caution themselves, encouraging each other to have 'Good conversation' and to be guided in dealing with people – "It is often not what you say, but how you say it."

The discussion also reflected on doing 'Good works', 'It's not enough to say you are a Christian, but you must show it', 'Taming the Tongue', being 'Friends with the World' and 'Do Not Judge People and Do Not Boast', and the 'The Power of Prayer'".



**Happy
Birthday!**

**Kumar's Birthday
being celebrated at the
Bible Study Group**



**Fr Michael Lapsley grabs
at the heartstrings**



Inspiring to say the least, at the invitation of the National Christian Council, Fr Michael Lapsley was back at the pulpit of St. Andrew's of a Sunday

sharing with the congregation his life's experiences and what drove him to continue his conversations with God, despite going through a most horrific experience of his life.

A man who felt very strongly about the cause of the black South African, he joined the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, which tides the world saw change after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. However, fate had other things in store for Lapsley.

Born in New Zealand, this award winning South African Anglican Priest and Social Justice Activist arrived in Durban as an undergraduate in 1973 and became chaplain to students at universities speaking on behalf of schoolchildren who were shot, detained and tortured.

His outspokenness saw him expelled from the country, after which he went to live in Lesotho, where he became a member of the African National Congress. After he moved to Zimbabwe in 1982, three months after the release of Nelson Mandela, a well placed letter bomb had

ose both his hands and the sight in one eye, in addition to being seriously burnt.

A resounding statement during his sermon was 'Forgiveness' which resonated well with the theme of Lent. "God never told me not to open the letter. But he told me what to do after I lost use of both my hands and my eye," he said, asking the congregation if they would forgive someone who has wronged them fully and from the heart or simply pay lip service to forgiveness. "I still don't know who sent that bomb and I don't know what I would do if I found out who it was."

The Vice President of the South Africa Council of Churches, Lapsley was accorded the Public Peace Prize - Laureate 2016, Global Peace and Reconciliation Internationally-Reputed Peacemaker.



Congregational meeting 26th March 2017

I would like to begin by addressing the question, "When can we expect a new minister?", which is on the minds of many of you.



To call a new minister we need to receive permission from the International Presbytery. The Presbytery hasn't given us permission to do so because of the interference in our Church's matters by the Department of Christian Affairs and the Department of Immigration.

In September 2016, Rev. Jim Sharp received a letter from the Director of Christian Religious Affairs – Mr. A Gunawardene – asking St. Andrew's Church to comply with a directive issued by the Controller of Borders and Visas pertaining to Eric and Gillian Mailler. The directive stated that they should refrain from engaging in any activities at Netherlee Cottage and committee works at the Church. The directive asserted that to do so would violate the conditions of their "Dream Home Visa".



In January 2017, a second letter from Mr. Gunawardene addressed to Rev. Jim Sharp was received by the Church, where he stated that he had seen and reviewed the minutes of the Kirk Session meetings and believed that Rev. Sharp and the Session had acted in blatant disregard with the directive described above, by ordaining Mrs. Mailler to the eldership and allowing her to serve on the Kirk Session.

We believe the former Session Clerk, Ms. Shamara Heart, and two former Kirk Session members – Paddy Gridley and Gloriana Razeek - instigated the above actions by the State. We further believe that their actions are driven by a petty personal grudge against Mr. and Mrs. Mailler.



This Church is an international church and views threat against two of its international members as a threat against itself. It deeply resents the intrusion by the two state departments in the affairs of the Church, which is unprecedented, and the Presbytery will not allow the Kirk Session to call a new minister unless and until the directive is revoked and the State ceases to interfere in the Church's matters.

Congregation, Worship and Christian Education

Despite not having a minister, the congregational numbers have remained steady at around 65 each week and the Kirk Session has ensured that Sunday worship has continued without interruption. The Session Clerk has been able to call upon a handful of ministers from different denominations to take services.

With Easter week coming up in April and with our regular ministers busy in their own churches, we have been fortunate to have the services of Rev. Bill Davnie, who is a Minister from the Presbyterian Church of the USA. His daughter works at the US Consulate in Colombo and he offered his services to us as he was planning to visit his daughter and her family.

We now have a congregational choir, which practices under the guidance of the Director of Music Denham Pereira every Saturday, and

this has allowed us, as a congregation, to expand our repertoire of hymns.

We began a bible study under the guidance of lay preacher Ramesh Schaffter and the first study was on the book of James (More of this is found elsewhere in this Newsletter). Sadly for us, Ramesh Schaffter has decided to take an annual sabbatical starting 1st April which means we must look for someone else to take the next study.

The numbers of children in Sunday School and Youth Group remain small and this is an area the Session will move its attention to, by considering initiatives to attract more young people.

A Pastoral group made up of 6 to 8 elders has just been formed and the names of the elders will be put up on the notice board shortly. If anyone would like support in the form of prayer or a visit, please contact one of the elders in the group.

Church property

A new Johannus organ was installed in November 2016 replacing a nearly twelve-year-old Johannus. The old organ and the speakers were not functioning to their optimum due to the salt in the air given the Church's proximity to the sea and also some leaks in the Church roof. The church roof has been completely repaired with waterproofing; the Church walls have been repainted; the electrical wiring made safe and fans and pews repaired. In addition the air conditioning in the Manse has been attended to and a curtain installed in the KS meeting room to keep the AC effective. The KS is grateful to the International Presbytery for approving and remitting funds for these repairs.

New Elders

The elders ordained in October 2016 have enthusiastically taken up roles in the administration of the Church as well as in worship. However, while the foregoing is true for four of the five elders, it sadly doesn't apply to Gillian Mailler who is restricted from serving the Church as described earlier.

Mission projects

The monthly visits to Ward 8 Mulleriyawa Mental hospital have been regular, providing the ladies with a special lunch, provisions and toiletries. Work has been undertaken to clean the ward of bed bugs and provide new sheets.

News of Netherlee Cottage can be found later in this Newsletter.

The Helping Hands initiative to provide weekly financial support to the needy in the area of the Church has continued focusing on women and children. Although this initiative faced a shortage of funds, the bazaar in November as well as a recent donor provided a much-needed boost of funds.



Kirk Session (KS)



The Kirk Session has discussed the issues, which led to the premature ending of the previous ministry and agreed to adopt certain norms of communication and conflict resolution to avoid similar problems in the future. The disclosure of the leaked minutes to the Department of Christian Affairs rocked the KS and led to the resignation of two members, who were responsible for the leaking.

The Session is now moving forward cautiously under the moderation of Rev. Jim Sharp and I am pleased to report it is doing so in a harmonious and united manner.

Chandan de Silva
Session Clerk

Post script:

The congregational meeting on Sunday 26th March was marred by the unexpected intrusion of three members of the Department of Immigration, who were found recording the proceedings of the meeting surreptitiously. They informed us that they had been instructed to do so (and the instruction originated from the Department of Christian Affairs) and it is very clear that the former Session Clerk, Shamara Herat orchestrated this unprecedented and unacceptable action.

Further, it was clear from the questions Shamara Herat asked at the meeting and her tone of questioning, that her intentions were to find fault with the way the Church is being administered and to cause disruption to the peaceful life of our Church, as a way of justifying her actions in involving the State in the Church's matters.

As pointed out by one of the attendees at the meeting, if there are people who do not like the way the Church is run whilst a large majority of the congregation does, then the right and proper thing to do would be to find another church instead of acting like a 'Dog in the manger'.

Was Jesus' crucifixion the only one?

It certainly wasn't the first and definitely won't be the last, judging by the fact that Amnesty International reports that Saudi Arabia still uses it as part of its criminal punishment process, with the only difference being that the victim is first beheaded before being crucified.

Crucifixion in ancient times was as much of a communal punishment as it was state sponsored terrorism, a dire warning to runaway slaves, potential rebels and vociferous revolutionaries that this could happen to them. It was not only used by the Romans but before that by the Carthaginians, Persians, Assyrians, Scythians and even the Judeans. But whichever way one looked at it, it was a shameful death.

When Jesus was crucified, the criminalistic reasons for being crucified had dissipated and such a punishment was only for those who dared to dream of freedom. In other words, those crucified were heroes and more so, if Pontius Pilate, probably the most notorious hooligan in the Roman empire gave his 'blessing', then undoubtedly the crucified man was a hero.

The punishment therefore stamped an indelible band of courage as the reason for the man's death was something within a much larger picture that inspired a following.

Golgotha was already infamous for its crucifixions and it's no wonder it was called Skull Hill. It is believed to be just outside the northeast gate of the city and really was nothing as imposing as stories make it out to be. But what is notable is that it gained its notoriety to very fittingly be called Skull Hill because of the inordinate number of bones and skulls that lay around the site.



These were the remains of those crucified; those who were never allowed to have a proper burial as the soldiers simply left the mutilated bodies to be feasted upon by jackals. The place reeks of death and at any given time, there are upright beams permanently embedded in the rock. While generally it was just a few crossbeams, if there was a riot, there will be hundreds of such crossbeams eagerly awaiting their victims.

Death was slow. Rasping breaths and failing muscles which could take days sometimes. Soldiers, who most thought were mercenaries, seemed to enjoy being inhumanly brutal. Most often iron nails were used but the nailers, experimented or played games. They sometimes just let the victim hang on the crossbeam tied with a rope, at other times they just nailed the hands only or maybe both hands and feet.

They sometimes changed the positions of the nailing; legs on either side of the crossbeam or one over the other and sometimes an added footrest which just prolonged the agony. It was believed, that if the condemned man was flogged first (like Jesus was), the man was lucky because the flogging would weaken him and he would die faster. The ultimate here was that death must come faster, something that the victim's loved ones prayed for over and over again.

The thrusting of the spear on the side would generally be done to quicken death but that too, only if the corrupt soldiers were paid. (Tales are told of Joseph of Arimathea paying the soldiers to quicken Jesus' death having seen the immense suffering, humiliation and ultimate degradation that Jesus was going through. He also bribed the soldiers to allow him to have the body which doesn't happen in normal circumstances as the jackals around are the general beneficiaries).

Another act of 'mercy' was that soldiers would club a victim's knees and shinbones so that with legs being unable to support body weight, death was faster. On the other hand, it could just be that the psychopathic soldiers were just trying to entertain themselves, doing all this out of sheer boredom.

The crucifixion is now a symbol; a symbol of God's son dying for our sins. But do the realities of the crucifixion ever come into focus? The systems of justice that only favoured the favoured, where no fair trials were ever concluded, where merciless tortuous deaths were a commonality and that, except for the victim's family, everyone else went about their business? The fact that Jesus underwent every dynamic of a condemned criminal is never quite comprehended.

A trial without a defence, being spat on and scourged along the longest route from the Praetorium to Golgotha carrying his patibulum on his back, half dead by the time they hammered those long iron nails into flesh and bone and half blind with blood trailing into his eyes due to his crown of thorns, having the cross roughly pulled upwards to stand to its full height with his naked body held on just by three iron nails which by any account is excruciatingly agonising, rasping and grasping, thirsty and nauseous, surrounded by the stench of death and bones of the past, this is what makes it real!



Meet Our Elders

Sam De Saram

A mother of three boys aged 11, 10 and 8, Sam De Saram undoubtedly has her hands full but yet, chills out baking (on occasion the congregation enjoys her melt in the mouth brownies under the porch), reading and looking after her three dogs. An enthusiastic teacher at the Sunday School, she began worshipping at St. Andrew's about 15 years ago, when she joined her mum who was a regular in the congregation and saw the goodness of Rev John Purves who was Minister. A baptised Presbyterian, she enjoys her time at St. Andrew's given that it has always been welcoming to those of any denomination.



What has been most challenging in your life?

Learning to be more patient and accepting, managing my time and learning to let go of things sometimes, are high on my list right now.

Besides baking and reading, how do you chill out?

We love relaxing at home with family and friends.

What is your favourite food?

Chocolate! Isn't it everyone's?

What are the three things you can't do without?

Sunglasses, my phone and ...did I say sunglasses? (My eyes are sensitive to light!)

What is your pet peeve?

Intolerance

Who is your role model?

All parents who have raised and are raising happy well balanced God-fearing children and make it look effortless. It is not an easy job and I take strength from daily prayer.

Meet our Congregation

Stanley Gooneratne

Stanley Gooneratne describes himself as disciplined with a penchant for orderliness. He's a people person who enjoys travel, is interested in architectural and historic places, while appreciating classical music, art and traditions.



Married to Rupika with two sons, one of who is already married and looking forward to the day when they will add another daughter in law to their midst, Stanley's eldest child, a daughter, died when she was six.

A very united close knit family, the Number 29 has a special place in Stanley's heart; his wife, daughter and he are all born on the 29th of the month, the room number of the hotel they spent their honeymoon in was 29 and his membership number at their retreat in Nuwara Eliya is also 29. Coincidences do happen!

What's been your most memorable moment?

"My son's wedding and my visit to Gilwell Park in Chingford, Essex UK, which is considered the most important scouting site in the world where every scout aspires to achieve his Wood Badge. I sat under the famous Gilwell oak tree. The place is full of interesting gifts related to the world of scouting including a Maori Gatewat presented by New Zealand in 1951 and the Gidney Cabin, a memorial to the first Camp Chief, Francis Gidney in 1929. The Buffalo Lawn also got its name due the replica of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Silver Buffalo Award presented by them in 1926."

How do you chillout in Sri Lanka?

"I'm a handy man. I like repairing things, painting portraits and cooking."

Meet our Congregation

Stanley Gooneratne

What has been most challenging in your life?

"The day we lost our daughter, an incident that brought us closer to God. Rupika had given me a Cross pen during our courting days, which got lost during my daughter's funeral at the cemetery. The pen was eventually found and returned to me, which I take as a sign that my daughter is also safe."

What is your favourite food ?

"Jak fruit curry with Pol Sambol and dried fish curry. As a hotelier, I have had the opportunity to sample great food and as a couple, we enjoy cooking at home."

What compelled you to worship at St Andrew's?

"We feel peace at St Andrew's which allows us to pay more attention to our surroundings and the service. We enjoy how the service is conducted and appreciate that although we do not have a Minister, the Elders ensure that the Church proceeds without any hindrance. I also like the architecture of the Church. All this makes me want to contribute to the worship and congregation."



A Church on our Travels Inveraray, Argyllshire, Scotland



Inveraray Church was built in approximately 1800 for, what was then referred to as the new town of Inveraray, on the highest ground in the middle of the roadway. The traffic was always planned to drive around it. The ancient Royal Burgh of Inveraray is located 60 miles north west of Glasgow by Loch Fyne in an area of Scotland's spectacular natural beauty. The ruggedness of the highland scenery serves as a spectacular backdrop for the sheltered tidal Loch.

Inveraray is the ancestral seat of the Duke of Argyll, Chief of the Clan Campbell whose family have resided in Inveraray since the early 15th century. The pulpit in the Church was built high up to be on eye level with the Gallery so that the Duke, Duchess and their friends can sit in the Gallery and look comfortably towards the Minister. The pulpit was made by local estate workers copying an Italian style from Pisa.



There used to be an elegant spire but it was taken down during the World War II, as it was feared it would collapse from the vibration caused by the heavy troop movements on the road. The intention was to reinstall it after the War, but it could not be found and is thought to have been ground down to be used for the making of new roads in the area.

Two Churches were built under one roof; the south end was for the Gaelic speaking community and the north end for the English community or the low land Scots and the merchants. Gaelic is a language in the Celtic group, native to Scotland and it was spoken mostly by the Highlanders.

It is still spoken in parts of the western isles of Scotland and the present Government ask that all school children learn the language. The Gaelic speaking Church became disused over time. It was eventually converted to the Church Hall in 1957, a very active area of the English speaking Church now.

This Church is now the home of Rev Dr Roderick Campbell and Sue Campbell who served at St Andrew's Scots Kirk Colombo from May 2014 to November 2015.



Netherlee News



Seelawathi who broke her femur in May last year is making good progress. She is now walking without support and continues to learn to do things for herself again.

Our House Mother, Jayanthe retired at the end of December. We now have a new lady who is under training at the Cottage.

The Netherlee Team have had a tough time dealing with a problem of bugs at the Cottage. The Ladies were evacuated and three of them stayed at the house of our house mother, Modini and the others went to stay at the hospital. We wish to put on record how grateful the team are to Modini for giving our ladies a home during this period. The Cottage was treated several times for bugs until we were sure that the problem was solved permanently. We now have a strict maintenance procedure to steam clean the Cottage and its fittings regularly. The ladies returned to the Cottage from Modini's house in December as did the ladies from the hospital awhile later, once we had settled in our new staff member.

The Ladies enjoyed a visit to the beach recently. They got wet in the sea, played ball on the beach and had lunch in a local restaurant.

-The Netherlee Team



Upcoming Services at St Andrew's Scots Kirk

April 2017

- 13th Maundy Thursday - 6.30 pm**
14th Good Friday - 6.30 pm
16th Easter Sunday - 9.30 am
23rd Sunday - 9.30 am
30th Sunday - 9.30 am

May 2017

- 7th Communion Sunday - 9.30 am**
14th Sunday - 9.30 am
21st Sunday - 9.30 am
28th Sunday - 9.30 am



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