

the Saint  
**Andrew**



Photo: Shewantha Rodrigo

The Lamentation of Christ – Colijn de Coter (Brussels c.1510-1515) Oil on Canvas  
Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam

*Here the artist zoomed in on the faces of the dead Christ and his grieving disciples. The painting is thus both intimate and confrontational. This made it easier for believers to identify with Christ's suffering and the Virgin's sorry. The man on the right holding the nails from the cross is Nicodemus. It could also be the portrait of the person who commissioned the painting.*

**Church of Scotland – Presbyterian**

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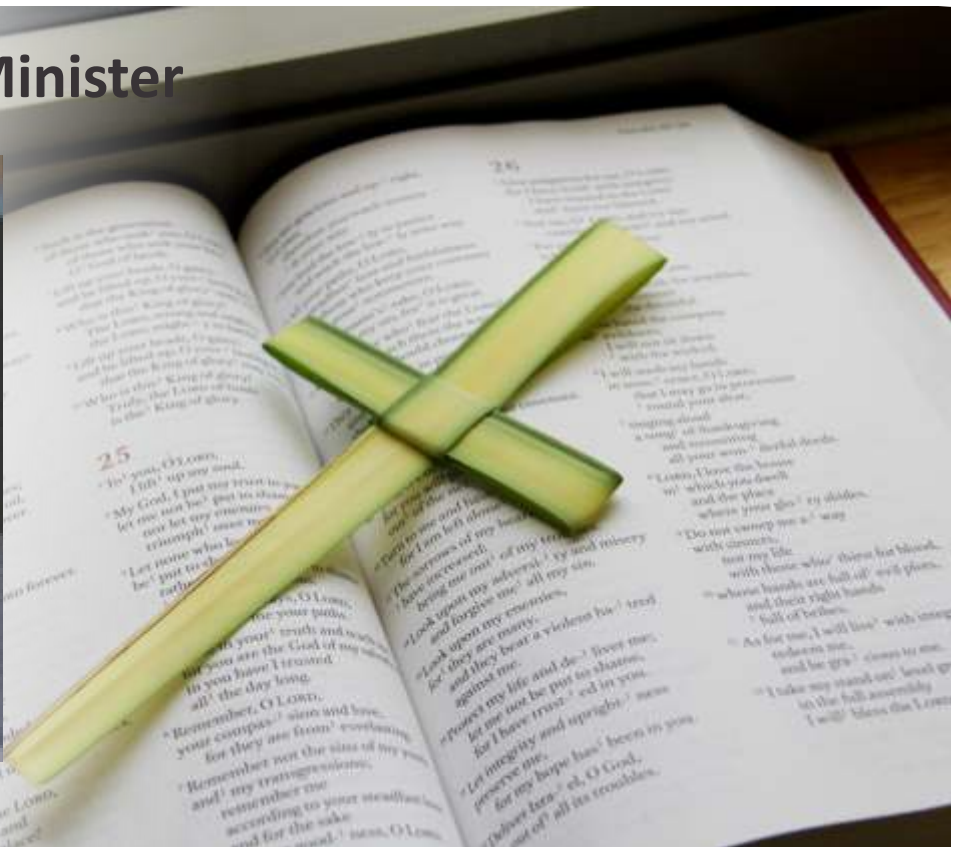


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# Letter from the Minister



Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, Easter will be upon us. And I will be with you in Colombo!

I am looking forward to spending two weeks with you at St Andrew's Scots Kirk over the Easter period. During my visit, I hope to meet many of you, whether at one of our worship services from Palm Sunday through Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, or on another occasion. During my time in Colombo, I will be working closely with the Elders who form the Kirk Session, conducting some Elder Training and Safeguarding Training, and also working with three young people in the congregation who are on their way to confirmation as members of Christ's Body, the Church; and I look forward to visiting our congregational projects, notably the Thrift Shop, Helping Hands, Netherlee Cottage and Ward 8 at Mulleriyawa Hospital. I will also look to spend some time having one-to-one meetings with members of the congregation.

Easter Sunday promises to be a real day of celebration, as we anticipate two Baptisms (one baby and one young adult), as well as Confirmation and Holy Communion. It is of course the day we remember Christ's resurrection. I can't promise the service will be short but it will be a very happy occasion!

I want to take this opportunity to thank, most sincerely, the local Clergy who provide worship leadership at St Andrew's Scots Kirk on a regular basis. Part of the reason for the timing of my visit to Colombo is to help provide worship cover over the busy Easter period, especially Holy Week. But, without the help and support of our local friends from other denominations, it would be very difficult to keep the worship life of St Andrew's Church alive. My sincere thanks to all of them!

St Andrew's Scots Kirk, led by its dedicated Session Clerk and Elders - to whom I also pay special tribute - is making good progress towards the point where the congregation will, I hope and pray, be granted permission by the International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland to start the process of looking for a new long-term Minister. I am optimistic that this permission will be granted in the next few months. The process of finding that Minister might take some time - perhaps as long as one year. But, with God's help, St Andrew's will have its "own" Minister again soon.

In the meantime, I wish you all a Happy and Joyous Easter. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

Blessings,  
**Revd Jim Sharp**  
Interim Moderator



# The International Presbytery Meeting, Lisbon

## 9 to 11 March 2018

The Rev. Derek Lawson, Minister of the Rotterdam Church was installed as Presbytery Moderator, taking over from Rev. Ewen Maclean.

Derek is a solicitor turned minister and is also the Deputy Clerk of the Presbytery. He is a good communicator with an eye for detail and an infectious sense of humour.

All churches in the Presbytery were represented at the meeting and the announcement early in the proceedings that the congregation in Trinidad had decided to leave the Church of Scotland and become an independent church was received with much sadness.

The venue for the meeting was Hotel Baia in Cascais. Cascais is a coastal town and a municipality in Portugal, 30 kilometres west of Lisbon. It is a cosmopolitan suburb of the Portuguese capital and one of the richest municipalities in Portugal. The former fishing village gained fame as a resort for Portugal's royal family in the late 19th century and early 20th century. At present, it is a popular vacation spot for both Portuguese and foreign tourists.

Due to Portugal's neutrality in World War II and the town's elegance and royal past, Cascais became home to many of the exiled royal families of Europe, including those of Spain (House of Bourbon), Italy (House of Savoy), Hungary and Bulgaria.



*The New Presbytery Moderator Rev. Derek Lawson*



*Interior of the Lisbon Church*

## Meeting notes

The usual format of sub-committee meetings on Friday morning and the Business committee on Friday afternoon was followed.

At the Finance sub-committee meeting, the main topic of discussion was the new Mission & Renewal (M&R) contribution each congregation is expected to pay from 2017 to the parent church in Scotland.

The amount expected from each congregation is significantly higher than before and, although it is computed on the same basis as the congregations in Scotland, there was widespread concern about its affordability.

At the end of the meeting I was welcomed as the new convener of the Finance sub-committee with an expectation that the M&R matter would be resolved soon. So no pressure on me!

The main Presbytery meeting started at 1800 hrs on Friday and continued until Saturday afternoon.

Saturday's session began with a Communion service and a lusty singing of hymns. We had keyboard accompaniment but it was not really audible as there were such good voices.

Our interim moderator, Rev. Jim Sharp, gave a positive report on the Colombo congregation and indicated that his next visit in March 2018 and the Local Church Review in June would pave the way for permission being granted to our congregation to call a new minister.

As moderator, Derek ran the meeting with clockwork



**View of Cascais Beach**



***The ever familiar Norman Hutcheson***

precision and even finished in time to allow presbyters to watch the Scotland vs. Ireland rugby match. Sadly, for most of my Scottish colleagues, it was not Scotland's day!

During the four days I spent in Cascais, I found a great choice of fish options on the menus I sampled. I had the pleasure of savoring varieties such as Golden Bream, Sea Bass, Salmon, Cuttlefish and Garoupa, seasoned simply with sea-salt and grilled.

The host church laid on a formal dinner on Saturday night. The current locum of the host congregation is the familiar Norman Hutcheson. Norman and Elizabeth were in good spirits and wanted me to convey their love and best wishes to the congregation in Colombo.

There was a surprise though: led by the keyboard skills of the Lisbon church's organist Hilario and the melodious voice of Session Clerk Nina O'Donnell, the group broke into singing a range of songs representing Scotland and other places overseas where the IP has congregations.

It was a lovely occasion. Many of us joined in the singing and it is my hope to introduce a song representing Sri Lanka on the next occasion. I was thinking of the Hymn for Ceylon or it's Sinhala version Danno Budunge. If anyone has a better idea, please let me know!

## **Chandan de Silva**

Session Clerk and Presbytery Elder



# Easter Hymn



## Up from the Grave He Arose – Robert Lowry

Robert Lowry, an American Professor of Literature, Baptist Minister and hymn composer, always felt that his talents lay in his sermons and not his hymns. "Music, with me has been a side issue," he said once, confessing, "I would rather preach a gospel sermon to an appreciative audience than write a hymn. I have always looked upon myself as a preacher and felt a sort of depreciation when I began to be known more as a composer."

Born in Philadelphia in 1826, he became a Baptist when he was 17 and entered the University of Lewisburg (now Bucknell University) to study Theology, with every intention of fulfilling his career ambition of becoming a pastor. Not too long after, he became the Minister in West Chester and for 45 years thereafter, pastored five churches in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey and was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity serving as its second national President.

But look back at his collection of hymns and it was surely as a hymnwriter that he should take a bow. He collaborated with Annie Hawks at the Hanson Place Baptist Church and Fanny J Crosby at the Sixth Avenue Bible Baptist Church for a number of hymns.

He died in 1899 leaving behind a legacy of unbridled feeling for his Lord and Master, seen harmoniously orchestrated in tuneful lyrics that include, Shall We Gather at the River, Christ Arose, Nothing but the Blood of Jesus, All the Way My Savior Leads Me, We're Marching to Zion and I Need Thee Every Hour.

While the stories behind his hymns are all intriguing, Robert in particular remembers how Up from the Grave He Arose came to be. He remembers enjoying his devotions one evening when he was impressed by the words of the Angel at Christ's empty tomb. "He is not here, but is risen!" said the celestial being to the frightened women who came creeping to the tomb. The tune he composed begins in a rather subdued form to erupt into a joyful chorus that few cannot be moved by.

*Low in the grave He lay,  
Jesus, my Savior,  
Waiting the coming day,  
Jesus, my Lord!*

*Refrain:*

*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! He arose!  
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

*Vainly they watch His bed,  
Jesus, my Savior;  
Vainly they seal the dead,  
Jesus, my Lord!  
Refrain:*

*Death cannot keep his Prey,  
Jesus, my Savior;  
He tore the bars away,  
Jesus, my Lord!  
Refrain:*

# HE IS RISEN

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION

# Voice of Praise truly praise

Passion Sunday was truly given a triumphant lift as Voice of Praise directed by St. Andrews' Scots Kirk's Music Director Denham Pereira rose their voices with some melodious harmony that truly praised the Lord and His works. The choir came together to lead worship through song celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a fitting tribute to a collective of enthusiastic young people who have been very present in the Church on various Sundays as well as other special days, singing lustily with their hearts and souls.

Beginning the service with an a'capella anthem by David Adam and later harmoniously rendering Psalm 119, they concluded the service with the blessing set to the music of John Rutter. Members of the choir also joined in with the readings and led each congregational hymn with infectious passion that had the congregation very uplifted and feeling blessed.

It was also a day they remembered two members of the choir who had deceased since their coming together, Mel Gunasekara and Nilanka Fernando.



# All about crosses.....



Photos: Diverse designs of crosses found in museums and churches in Utrecht

**1** Christians were not the first to use the cross as a religious symbol. Ancient Egyptians used it in the form called Ankh which is also known as key of life, the key of the Nile or crux ansata.

**2** The cross is the emblem of the Aryan pantheon and the primitive Aryan civilization.

**3** Archeologically, swastika-shaped ornaments have been found in ancient India and remains widely used in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism.

**4** The cross as a Christian symbol came into use as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the marking of a cross upon the forehead and the chest was regarded as a talisman against the powers of demons.

**5** In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Constantine the Great adopted the cross as the symbol of his banner.

**6** There are numerous forms of the cross and amongst the most popular are the Christians' cross, the Crucifix, St. Peter's Cross and St. Andrew's cross.

**7** The cross is regarded as the mystic representation of lightning or of the god of the tempest.

**8** One Christian denomination that does not accept the use of the cross as a symbol of Christianity is the Jehovah's Witness.

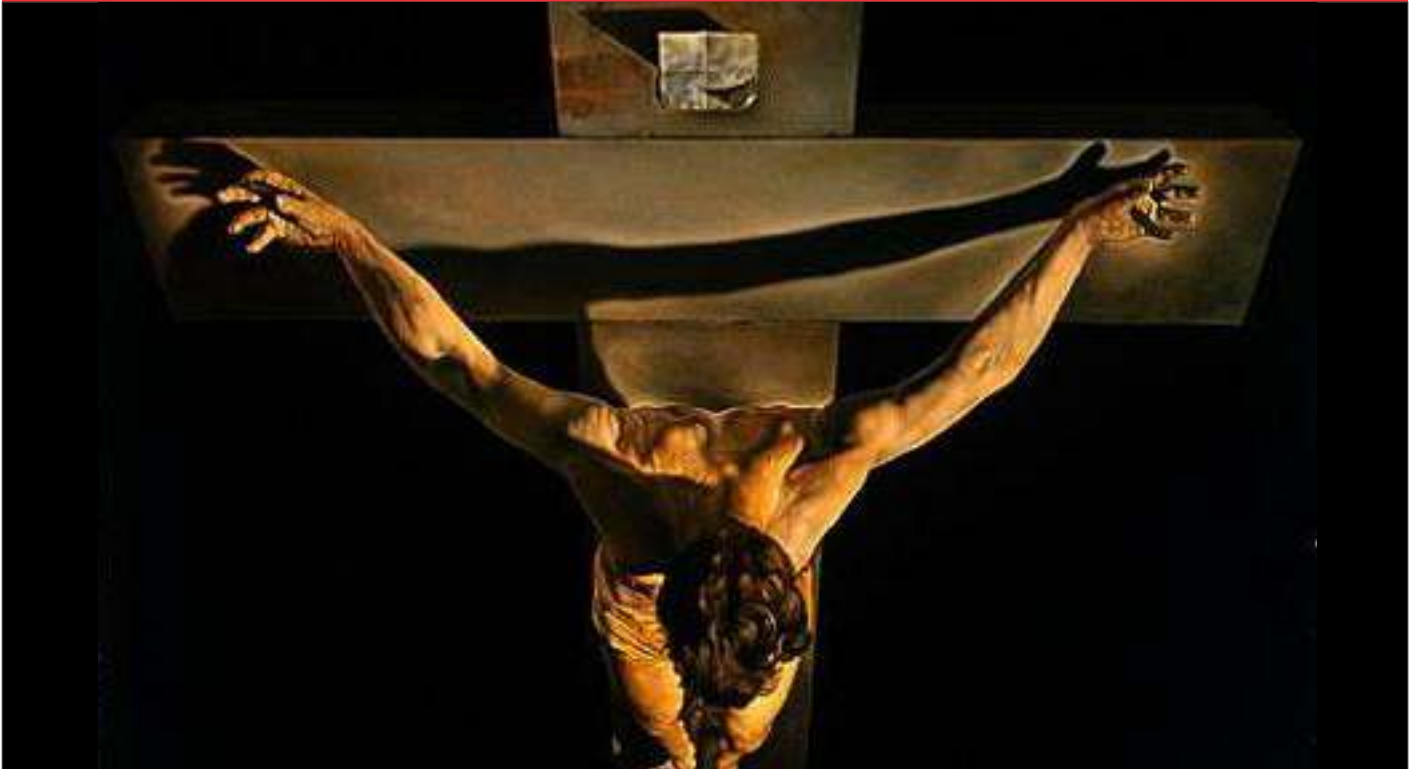
**9** The world's highest cross is the one located in Valle de los Caídos. This gigantic cross, with a height of 150-meter and can be seen as far as 32 km, is located near Madrid, Spain.

**10** One of the biggest crosses in the world is the Millennium Cross in Skopje, Macedonia at 66 meters in height.





# Delving into crucifixions



The practice of crucifying originated in Persia with Alexander the Great then introducing it to Egypt and Carthage. It is from the latter that the Romans learned of the practice and perfected it to guarantee a slow and tortuous death, maximising a human being's pain and suffering.

**Scourging and flogging:** This preceded the crucifixion. Scourging was meted out by a long leather thong, studded with sharpened pieces of lead, iron balls and sharpened sheep bone, designed to tear a man's back to ribbons or his eyes out. The pain inflicted was so bad that victims, if they ever emerged alive from the flogging, went stark raving mad. The severe scourging inflicted on Jesus probably left Him in a pre-shock state, with the physical and mental abuse, lack of food, water and sleep contributing to his weakened state.

**Mocking:** Slapping, spitting, stripping and taunting was commonplace for those being crucified. But for Jesus, all this was magnified as the Romans mocked him as 'King of the Jews'. They mockingly placed a robe on Him, a crown of thorns on His head and placed a wooden stick as a sceptre in His right hand which they used to repeatedly hit Him on His head.

**The Crossbeam:** History details that Jesus may have carried only the crossbeam (patibulum) and not the whole cross as it is difficult for a man to carry the entire weight of the cross. The crossbeam alone weight

between 75 to 125 lbs. Even the crossbeam would have been too much of a weight for Jesus, given His weakened state due to lack of sleep for 36 hours and so much scourging that even the bones on His back were bared.

**The Cross:** Early crucifixions in Persia had the victim tied to a tree or impaled on an upright post with feet not touching the ground. The cross as we now know it characterises this upright post (stipes) and the horizontal crossbar (patibulum). Historians state that Jesus' cross was probably in the shape of a capital T.

**The Titulus:** The criminal's charge was written on a board called the Titulus and either hung around the victim's neck or carried by a soldier at the front of the procession. For Jesus, the charge was written Hebrew, Latin and Greek so that all could read it. The board was then affixed to the cross above the victim's head. The route to the site of the crucifixion was also the longest possible so that as many as possible should see the criminal and be warned not to contemplate a similar crime.

**Golgotha:** The crucifixion site was purposely outside the city wall for hygienic reasons. The criminal was usually naked and carried the cross from the flogging post to the crucifixion site. Jesus carried His cross about a kilometre through narrow crowded streets of stone, from Pilate's Praetorium to Golgotha. When the

weakened Jesus collapsed under the weight of the crossbeam, He may have had a contusion of the heart, predisposing His heart to rupture.

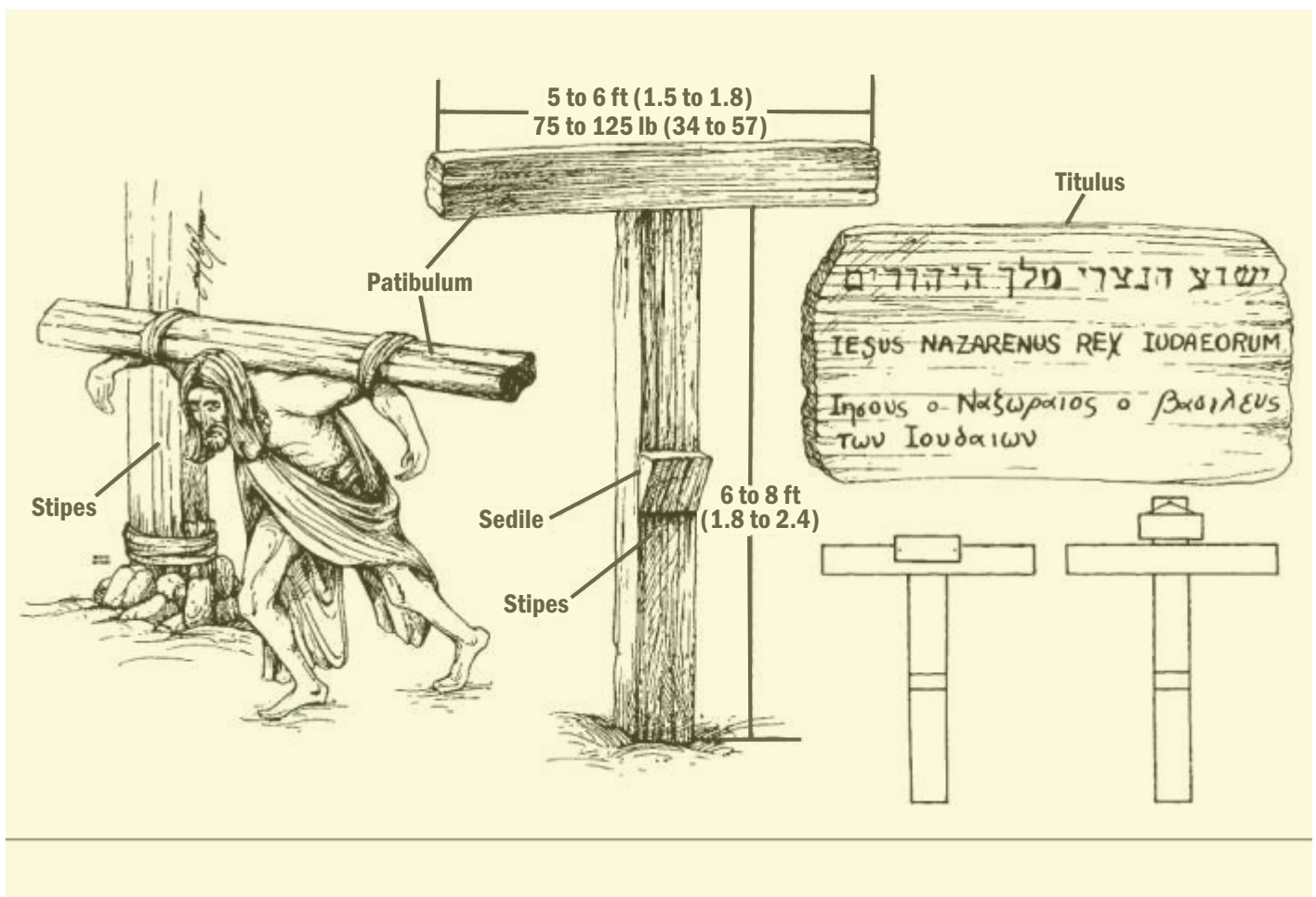
**Wrist nailing:** Historical Roman accounts state that nails were driven between the small bones of the wrist and not the palm. The Patibulum was put on the ground, the victim laid on it and a nail about 5-7 inches long was driven into the wrist. The nails sever the median nerve resulting in dislocation of the wrists and paralysis of the hand. While victims would normally curse, swear, shriek and spit at their executioners when nails were being driven, Jesus never once said a word.

**Nailing the feet:** When the upright post was used for crucifixions, Romans simply kept the post permanently in the ground given that they carried out crucifixions en masse. But on the crossbeam, which was generally not more than 7 to 9 feet, soldiers would hoist the legs of the victim onto the wood by bending the knees and press the sole flat against the stipes, drive the nail precisely through the second and third metatarsal bones,

bring the other sole into place and driven the nail fully in. Sometimes, the executioner would smash the victim's legs to prevent the dying man pushing himself up on the nail for some relief. However, Jesus' legs were not smashed as He was so badly beaten that He died within a short time.

**Time of death:** The average time of suffering before death by crucifixion could be between two and four days. When Jesus died within three hours, it surprised even Pontius Pilate. A scientific explanation to this could be that Jesus died of cardiac rupture or His death could have been hastened simply by His state of exhaustion due to the severe scourging and resultant blood loss and pre-shock state.

**Confirmation of Death:** To release the body to the victim's family, the victim had to be dead and this was done by the piercing the side of the body with a spear. Again, historical evidence suggests that Jesus was dead before His side was pierced.



# A Church on our Travels

## The English Reformed Church, Amsterdam



Sitting quietly in a centuries old leafy courtyard in Begijnhof, one of the oldest parts of Amsterdam, The English Reformed Church dates back to Catholic roots in the 15th century. However, historical tomes ink the tower as one of the oldest remaining parts of the church, from back in 1390. The sanctuary of the Church burned down in one of the big fires in Amsterdam and was rebuilt in 1492.

During the Reformation, in 1607, the city of Amsterdam gave the Church to the English-speaking protestants living in Amsterdam and it has been an English-language Presbyterian church since and now part of the Church of Scotland.

In the mid-1600s, the Church had an additional area constructed and two large renovations were done later in modern times; in the 1970s a new foundation inside the sanctuary was built and much structural work leading up to the 400th anniversary of the church in 2006/7 was done. The anniversary celebrations were attended by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip of Britain and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

With the Netherlands having birthed and played host to a number of celebrated architects, sculptors and artists over centuries seen in the various churches and cathedrals dotting the city, the English Reformed Church too became a canvas for some of these celebrated artists to show off their works. The new pulpit which came into being in the 19th century, was designed by Dutch artist Piet Mondriaan, one of the greatest artists

of the century who later gained fame for pioneering abstract art with a signature vocabulary of geometric elements. The brass lectern atop the pulpit is from the late 17th century, a gift from King William and Queen Mary of England.



*The beautiful pipe organ*



**Interior of the Lisbon Church**

The stained glass window, the only one in the Church dates to the 1920s. It was donated by an American Publisher of Dutch descent who wanted to commemorate the Pilgrims' time in Amsterdam. It depicts the Pilgrim Fathers praying before boarding the ship for the New World. The scene of the Pilgrims praying is loosely based on a painting in the State House in Boston.

Shewantha, Sashan and I were privileged to be given a guided tour of this church by Thijs and Susan Polstra, the Treasurer of the Presbytery and Church Officer of this church respectively. Similar to St. Andrew's Scots Kirk, their congregation too is diverse, with people from



**Mondriaan's signature on the pulpit**

around 30 countries attending Sunday worship, evidenced in the multi-language welcome notices on the door. With an official membership of 400, the Church sees about 200 people attend each week, while midweek activities from Bible Study to a small Taizé-style service in the evening, or a Ladies' Fellowship or Men's Group get-together keep the Church engaged with her congregation. Once a month, an active 20s/30s group has lunch after the service and children are kept occupied during Sunday Service with babies having a creche to go to and Sunday School classes conducted for young children and teenagers

- **Savithri Rodrigo**



**The pulpit sculpted by Piet Mondriaan with the brass lectern presented by King William and Queen Mary**



**The stained glass window depicting the Pilgrims**

# INTERESTING

## Easter Customs



The happiest Christian holiday in the calendar marking the resurrection of Christ forms the fundamental aspect of Christian theology and its association with salvation. The celebration however has some pagan origins. It was typically a celebration of fertility associated with the Germanic goddess Eostre from which the holiday gets its name. Some cultures celebrate the resurrection of Tammuz another pagan God with the holiday called Ishtar. The Easter bunny stems from this folkloric tradition where the rabbits' ability to procreate made them a symbol of fertility

### Each country celebrates Easter differently.


- Italy has reenactments of the Easter story in public squares.
- Cyprus has bonfires in schoolyards and churches.
- Germany places eggs in trees and calls them Easter Egg Trees, similar to the Christmas Tree.
- The Czech Republic and Slovakia have several; males of a family lightheartedly spank females with a homemade whip decorated with ribbons, a ritual believed to bring good health over the year. The men may also dump cold water on them.
- The UK will roll eggs downhill and perform the Pace Egg play.
- Jamaicans eat a spiced bun that contains raisins and cheese.
- Scandinavian countries like Norway will celebrate the holiday skiing or relaxing in cabins in the mountain, while children will dress up in costumes and go door to door for candy or flowers. Fish, salmon or any other type, forms a primary part of the feast.
- In Greece, after midnight mass on Holy Saturday, people would eat Magiritsa (a soup of


animal liver, lungs and intestines which is apparently delicious). On Easter Sunday, the family gathers, roasts a lamb, sing and dance and hit each other's red eggs. Tsoureki is a sweet bread decorated with a red egg, to be eaten on Easter Sunday.


- Australia will have the Easter Bilby deliver eggs rather than the Easter bunny.
- In Haux, France, an omelette big enough to feed 1,000 is made and served.



*The tsoureki with the red egg*

 In the island of Corfu Greece, pots of water are tossed out of windows following the Venetian tradition of breaking pots in celebration, and kolompines, cakes in the shape of doves are baked and eaten.

 For Russian Easter, a pushka is made of curds and shaped into truncated pyramids, symbolising the Holy Sepulchre.

 Guyana makes it an inter-religious holiday by flying kites and inviting all religions to participate.

And then there are the red eggs! Eggs are a symbol of life and birth. Red eggs were used in celebrations in China from the 5<sup>th</sup> century and in Egypt from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the red egg became the symbol of Christ's resurrection and in the Middle Ages, dyed red eggs, in memory of Christ's blood, were given as gifts for Easter. The dying is done on Maundy Thursday which is also called Red Thursday.



**Easter in Eastern Europe**



**The Russian Pushka**

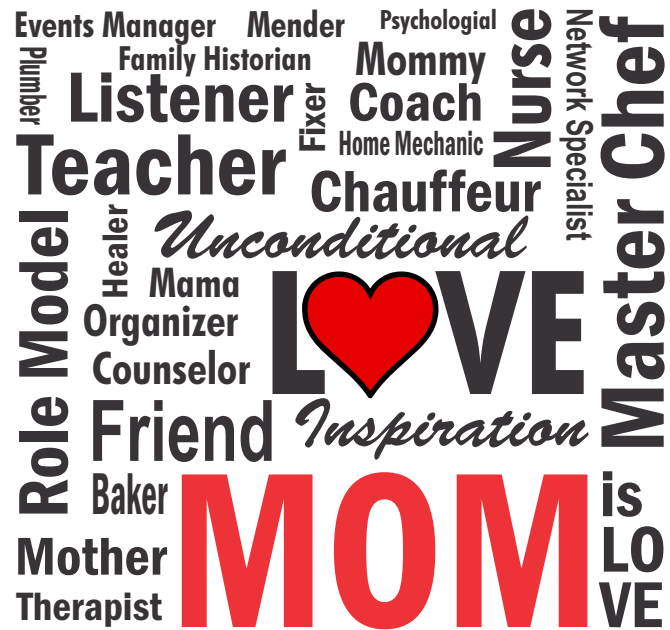


***In Greece the cracking of the eggs happens on Easter Sunday and is a much loved moment particularly by younger members of the family.***

# The origins of Mothering Sunday

This year, Mothering Sunday fell on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March as it's traditionally on the fourth Sunday of Lent and the visiting Pastor, Ramesh Schaffter piqued the congregation's interest during his sermon, tracing back to some age-old stories and how Mothering Sunday actually began.

Centuries ago, from the age of ten, children left their homes as they were sent out to work. They worked primarily as domestics or apprentices and hardly had any time off to visit their mother or the family. Seeing their families became a near impossibility. It was



considered important therefore for people to return to their homes and the Mother Church became central to this. So, each year, in the middle of Lent, family members greeted each other joyously, having been away from home working the year round, visiting the Mother Church on this day which was colloquially known as, 'Going a-mothering.'

Children would pick wildflowers on the pathways as they walked back home along country lanes or a fruit (simnel) cake from the manor they worked in, to gift to their mothers who would be waiting eagerly for their arrival. The gifts were blessed in the church and then joyfully presented to the mothers.

However, it may have been Rhea, the Mother of the Gods or Magna Mater of Ancient Greece who could have prompted the celebrations which began around 6BC. Three centuries later, the Romans adopted the celebrations for their Mother Goddess Cybele in a festival called Hilaria. The reason for picking this particular day in March was due to it being at the time of the Vernal Equinox, the first day which had a longer night, marking the end of a cold gloomy winter and the beginning of sunshine in spring.

Subsequently, these celebrations were converted into Christianity when the Roman Empire dominated most of Europe, making the festival more Christian. It replaced pagan customs to honour Mother Mary and the Mother Church, and the date was Christianized to relate directly to Lent.



# Some famous mothers from the Bible....



During this time of Lent, while we all focus on the story of the cross, it is also the time when mothers around the world are remembered for their infinite devotion, love and sacrifice – extraordinary women who put their families above self, most often doing the impossible. The Bible is replete with Godly mothers, those whose faith remained unwavering even in the absolute adversity and suffering, women who loved their children unconditionally and believed infinitely that God will always be their refuge. Here are some of them:

## Mary - the mother who is blessed among women

Chosen from among the world's women to give birth to Jesus, she eventually paid an extremely high price of witnessing her innocent son being crucified for the sins of the world.

She powerlessly watched, with a heart that had broken into a million pieces as her son was mocked, beaten and murdered.



*Elizabeth greets Mary with joy as she hears of their blessed news*

## Elizabeth - The mother who believed

The barren and old Elizabeth who on the Lord's word, bore a son, who would pave the way for Jesus' coming, baptising his Holy cousin in the waters of the Jordan. This mother's faith, which gave this child life, saw him pay for it with his life - imprisoned and beheaded at the whim of another mother.



*Hannah hands over her little boy Samuel to the Priest Eli*

## Hannah - The mother who kept her promise

Marrying a man who loved her but had another wife who bore him children, the barren Hannah's lamentations to the Lord finally bore fruit in the name of Samuel. Ever faithful, throughout her prayers, she promised God that she would give her son to the Lord. Hannah knew God was faithful and was faithful in return.



### **Samson's mother - The mother who followed the rules**

Yet another barren woman in the Bible but one whom God found favour. She however had to follow God's rules which she did unwaveringly; not drink wine, eat anything unclean or cut her son's hair because he would be dedicated to God. It was Samson who defeated the Philistines. Samson followed his mother, who followed God.

### **Hagar - The mother who endured**

An Egyptian slave, Hagar became Abraham's second wife but Sarah his first, illtreated her when she became pregnant. Running away, an angel asked her to return and when the time came, name her son Ishmael. Mother and son were banished later and travelled through the desert, facing much hardship fearing they would die. Through her suffering she remained faithful to God, gaining blessings for her son and herself.

### **Jochebed - The mother with a plan**

A Levite woman, Jochebed hid her baby in a basket and sent him down the Nile when the King of Egypt was slaughtering baby boys. She didn't want to drown him herself nor allow the King to murder her child and

instead, got her daughter Miriam to watch the basket, with plans for the Pharaoh's daughter to take pity on the babe. As God works, Jochebed did look after her son as his wet nurse. Some mothers may break some rules, but if it's in accordance to God's plan, only blessings will emerge.

### **Sarah - The mother who waited**

The Lord promised Sarah and Abraham children but even after fifteen years there was no sign of it and it was another ten years before the promise was fulfilled. As any human would, Sarah did doubt God occasionally, but God moves even without complete faith. Her patience was rewarded. Sarah delivered a son, Isaac. Mothers are amazing women, and Sarah is a testament to how patient they can be.

### **Naomi - The mother-in-law**

Naomi did the unconventional. She requested her widowed daughters in law to look for new husbands. Orpah did but Ruth stayed on. Ruth learned faith from Naomi and was blessed with a new marriage and a son, who as we know was David's grandfather, one of the Bible's most famous kings. Mothers tell us what they think would be best for us, but are open to letting us live how we feel we must.



*Jochebed places Moses in the Nile*

# A missive from the Van Brocklins

We bade adieu to Gary and Marlene Van Brocklin, who have been worshipping at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk for about four years. Very dear friends of St. Andrew's, Gary would always step in to take Sunday Service and both were active members of the congregation. They were in Sri Lanka as the Presbyterian World Mission's Regional Liaisons for South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal). Gary is from Honolulu Hawaii and Marlene from Merced California and are now reunited with their daughter Annelies and granddaughter Liliana in California. Below is a letter of appreciation they send to the congregation post their departure from Sri Lanka.

## Dear Friends at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk,

We send warm greetings from California. We enjoyed our four years among you there in Colombo and we will miss your friendly company. We think fondly of your lovely island with the marvellous mix of languages and ethnic groups and the (mostly) peaceful way that folks get along. We are praying for you during this difficult time of the unfortunate incidents in Kandy.



During our four years in Colombo we were able to visit many historically Presbyterian schools, clinics, seminaries and congregations in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. We supervised our mission co-workers in those places. Now we will be based in California and will make several trips a year to South Asia, but will be able to accomplish many things through email and Skype. The good news is that we look forward to visiting Sri Lanka as part of our continuing work. Hence, we might have left, but we hope to see you again.

Here in California we have been delighted to be reunited with our daughter, son-in-law and our darling granddaughter Liliana. We have also been able to visit



with our siblings and their families. Last week we attended a Lutefisk Fest at my brother's home. His wife is of Norwegian background and we joined her side of the family to celebrate their Norwegian heritage. Yesterday my sister and brother-in-law helped us move into our new home. There is lots to organize but we are happy to get settled into our native land after many years in various parts of the globe.

We are distressed to hear of the violence that has taken place since our departure. We appreciated the statement which the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka issued. Know that we are praying for the peace of your lovely island.

May God bless you richly during this Lenten season.  
With Fondness,

**Gary and Marlene**



# Meeting up with the Polstras

Susan and Thijs Polstra met up with the Shewantha, Savithri and their son Sashan while they were vacationing in Amsterdam, hosting them to dinner for some authentic Dutch cuisine at Haesje Claes. The ornate tils and wood panelling of this beautiful restaurant spread over six quaint houses served some mouth-watering Dutch cuisine, well complimenting the amazing company of Susan, who's the Church Officer of the English Reformed Church and Thijs, the Treasurer of the Presbytery. What a coincidence it was to learn that Susan had spent some of her teenage years in Sri Lanka and at Jason Court, Dehiwala no doubt, which is in close proximity to where the Rodrigos now reside in Dehiwala.



# Netherlee News



Our hard working residents at Netherlee Cottage saved enough money from the sales of all their craft work to take a trip to Kandy. The residents would like to thank all friends of the Netherlee Cottage who helped to make this possible.

The morning was spent at the Temple of the Tooth. This was a very special visit for our residents as the majority of them are Buddhist.



In the afternoon, they mixed with the many visitors at the Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya and took a tour around the Gardens in a buggy with an excellent guide.



In January, two new ladies joined Netherlee Cottage from the Mulleriyawa Hospital for training and rehabilitation. They are now being monitored for progress and we continue to work with and make progress with the longer established members at the Cottage.

Netherlee Cottage is very grateful for the help and support from Netherlee Church in Glasgow and in particular for the donation from the Common Good Fund which enabled presenting the non-working ladies with some pocket money.



Date		Service	Preacher	Time
<b>Holy Week</b>				
March	25 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	Dr Dhanan Senathirajah	9.30am
	29 <sup>th</sup>	Maundy Thursday	Rev. Jim Sharp	6.00pm
	30 <sup>th</sup>	Good Friday	Rev. Jim Sharp with music led by Voice of Praise	6.00pm
April	01 <sup>st</sup>	Easter Sunday*	Rev. Jim Sharp	9.30am
	08 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Service		9.30am
	15 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Service		9.30am
	22 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Service		9.30am
	29 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Service		9.30am

\*As is tradition, St. Andrew's Scots Kirk will have its Easter brunch immediately after the service, with contributions made by members of the congregation. There will also be an Easter Egg Hunt organized by the Youth Group and Sunday School for all the children who attend service.

The Bible Study led by Ramesh Schaffter is held every fortnight at the Manse. The next Bible Study will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March.



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**Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee.**