

The church cross was placed in the grounds of St. Andrew's on the 21st of April 2020, in the midst of a full country lockdown on the first year anniversary of the April 2019 Easter bombing.

Church of Scotland – Presbyterian

For private circulation only



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Once upon a time ...

Many great stories begin this way; however, the Easter story is unlike any other. It is a once in time story. God appears in human form at that first Christmas. Then creates Easter by rising from the tomb. So, God accepts all the pain and limits of humanity. It is read by some as a fairy story, by others as far too negative, but for me stands as an authentic, dynamic and daring encounter between heaven and earth. How can we trust a God who had nothing to teach us about suffering in a year of acute global distress? Our God reigns because God faces vulnerability, pain and even death in Christ and triumphs. As the hymn writers put it, 'Our God reigns!' – overcomes limitations even death itself. 'Our God reigns for ever and ever.'

Each year I appreciate hearing the whole story afresh as if for the first time. Please try to read the Easter story or hear it afresh in church or online and let it speak to you after these twelve months of COVID19 - a year of terrible loss and pain on every continent.

Easter - a new path to a new destination...

Edmund Banyard is a fine writer and I like his poem about Easter - that day of days. It is entitled '**The Whisper**' and it helps me and I hope will encourage you too, to ponder and reflect on the encounter between heaven and earth on Easter Day.

There's a whisper in the darkness
There's a whisper in the night,
There's a whisper in the dawning
And it's growing with the light,
The man on the cross
Who was dead
Is risen, and he lives!

There's a whisper all around us,
There's a whisper on the breeze,

There's a whisper in the rushes,
There's a whisper in the trees,
The man on the cross
Who was dead
Is risen, and he lives!

There's a whisper that it is spreading
For the news has broken free,
Now the sound is growing louder
And its news for you and me
The man on the cross
Who was dead
Is risen, and he lives! HE LIVES!

Prayer

Risen Lord Jesus
all our hope and confidence is centred in you.
Through your life, death and resurrection,
You have blazed a trail through life's perplexities
and opened up a new path for all.
Travel with us as we journey;
lead us safely through pandemic and pain
to a new land of promise and peace with Christ Jesus.

Easter is a great gift - unwrap it carefully and slowly, cherish it, recalling God's love. Enjoy it every day you spend on planet earth.

Let us appreciate the season of Easter in 2021.

Blessings of peace on the global church family and on all Sri Lankans,

Revd Ian Y Gilmour





THROUGH THE LENS

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's NETHERLEE COTTAGE

We now only have three ladies at Netherlee Cottage as three more have been passed to live on their own at the Community House. We are working with the (NIMH) National Institute of Mental Health to add more ladies for rehabilitation training.

The ladies have been spoilt with gifts this Christmas including pizza from the neighbours.



One of our ladies underwent a cataract operation in December and has recovered very well. All three ladies have had their first virus vaccination, giving them confidence to socialise again.

The new Community House opened on 23rd February with six ladies in residence. The funds for the first year's rent was donated by the Claremont Trust in Edinburgh. The residents now inculcate the habit of saving each month with a specially assigned bank account, which will pay for the rent in subsequent years. They also collect funds to pay their utility bills and grocery expenses. The essence of this plan is to ensure that the project sustains itself. The start-up, planning and organisation of this project has been led by the team at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk and the lease for the property has been signed by St Andrew's. Ongoing help will be provided by the staff at Mulleriyawa Hospital. The Memorandum of Understanding and Standard Operating Procedures were agreed upon by SASK and NIMH to support the "Working Together" principal.





THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's HELPING HANDS

Even during the most restrictive times of the pandemic, our Helping Hands Team continued to help our beneficiaries, with monthly stipends distributed and always received with great gratitude.

Many of our beneficiaries have intimated to our Helping Hands Coordinator Joubert, about the challenges in making ends meet. We listen, visit and make recommendations. No one is forgotten. The project attends to the needs of 25 families who live in constant struggle.

We have assisted these families with dry rations, medical bills, electricity bills and schoolbooks for a few of the children. We were not able to hold the much enjoyed Christmas Party in December last year due to COVID restrictions, but helped with an extra bonus to each family for the season.

A special thank you for the continuous support of our Colombo donors and again to the Livingston Church that gave the project £300 in 2020.



THE LUNCH PROJECT

After 10 months of COVID related restrictions which meant that we were not able to serve lunch from March 2020, Shewantha Rodrigo bravely took the lead to commence the much-needed programme under the Public Health Inspector's guidelines and due permissions.





THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's

Shewantha, our Church Officer Kumar and the SASK staff set up the serving area according to the standards stipulated, ensuring the safety of the servers and the lunch participants. Lunch is now plated indoors and consumed outdoors.

Our regular lunch is much needed as many of those who attend have lost their jobs or have members of their families who have lost employment. Some work extra shifts to make ends meet and hence are unable to bring food from home as they are on the job for long periods. Getting a wholesome meal can become challenging. We are however seeing less of the elderly who live in adjacent communities due to COVID related restrictions. Some of regulars seem to have not returned to work but we are pleased to see the others and some new faces too. We are all keen to chat and to make up for lost time. Lives have changed hugely.



Our food suppliers Shabbir and Khuseima stepped up to the challenge and lunch arrives reliably and is of the same high quality. We have regular servers in Priscilla, Joubert, Moses and Kumar. We have had some generous donors who donate on a birthday or in memory of a loved one. We are hugely grateful to our regular donors; many of them have kept their monthly payments coming through in difficult times for all.



The Lunch Project is slowly returning to normal but a new normal. Thank you to all who contribute in so many ways.



THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's

The Quest for a Permanent Minister for SASK

The Nomination Committee have commenced a series of interviews to select a Permanent Minister for St Andrew's Scots Kirk and hope to make a decision later this year. The normal procedure is for the Committee to make their selection after interviewing each candidate and invite their chosen Minister to St Andrew's Scots Kirk to preach to the congregation. The congregation will cast their own vote on the service that morning.

The Church of Scotland have continued to evolve the regulations to support the Churches in the International Presbytery and the acclimatisation period to the Church of Scotland for a new Minister from outside of the Church of Scotland has been minimised and will be managed by the International Presbytery. This is a very helpful development which will minimise costs and time.



The Nomination Committee

SASK AGM

Reflective of pandemic times, the Annual General Meeting of St. Andrews was held in February 2021 with Rev. Ian Gilmour and Chandan De Silva joining the members of the church via zoom.



Treasurer of the Kirk Session, Elder Chris Parakrama presents the annual accounts



The Zoom assisted AGM being conducted



THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's

SUNDAYS AT ST. ANDREW'S

Our Sunday Worship Leaders



Rev. Melvin de Silva



Rev. Roshan Mendis



Pastor Abby Schaffter



Dr Dhanan Senathirajah



Viranga Wickramaratne

SASK Sunday School is back in action





THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's

SUNDAYS AT ST. ANDREW'S

Palm Sunday



Easter Day by Oscar Wilde

The silver trumpets rang across the Dome:
The people knelt upon the ground with awe:
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.

Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,
And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head:
In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.

My heart stole back across wide wastes of years
To One who wandered by a lonely sea,
And sought in vain for any place of rest:
'Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest.
I, only I, must wander wearily,
And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with tears.'



THROUGH THE LENS (cont ...)

Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's

Revd. Roshan Mendis blesses the children during Sunday worship, while social distancing



Neranja De Silva and his band of merry voices add harmony to Sunday Worship



Communion in COVID times



Celebrating Rev. Roshan Mendis' birthday at SASK



Eshantha de Andrado and friends sing the blessing to Rev. Mendis on his birthday



Father and daughter sing a duet in praise and thankfulness

Priscilla Lear takes the reading





How has COVID time been for you?

We find out from some of St. Andrew's friends around the world

From Canada

This year we have come to accept things we thought which at first we could not change, accepting hardship as the months went by. Our days have been marked by fear, and we usually fear what we don't understand.

When I first heard about this virus, I wondered how can one give that extra protection to oneself. Someone told me to wear copper bracelets because of its anti-virus qualities. Where can I get copper? Luckily, I had an electrician doing some work for me and he happily gave me some wire. I have been wearing my copper homemade bracelets since then.



I wanted to give this news to my daughter in Switzerland but she also had a home remedy, again for that extra protection. Her remedy was a tea made with apple vinegar, garlic, turmeric and a big onion.

My Colombo friends instead have been consuming Thambili or king coconut. We have a few productive trees on the premises of St. Andrew's Church, which is rather fortunate.

There are also those who make tea with roasted cumin seeds and drink that every time they return from stepping out.



Going back to the theme of fear, let me summarise a story I read.

There was a harmonious village where EMOTIONS lived. One day, FEAR knocked at the house where HAPPINESS lived and as the door opened, no one was happy anymore. Tears were in the eyes of all the inhabitants. As days went by, FEAR decided to knock at another door, but this time it was COURAGE that opened the door. FEAR crumbled in very small pieces until there was no more.

As the song goes, "WE SHALL OVERCOME". We are most grateful for the vaccines developed by scientists.

Anna Brochard



How has COVID time been for you? (cont...)

We find out from some of St. Andrew's friends around the world

From England

I have not been to Scots Kirk since November 2019 although the plan was to come in March 2020 with even my tickets booked. I was coming for my mother's birthday but how could I come for three weeks and spend two weeks in quarantine?

I have embraced my life in the UK and quickly became involved with the toddlers and elderly at the Salvation Army. Christmas 2019 was the first Christmas spent with my husband since 2012 and we were very happy. We attend the local Gospel Church and have made many friends. This was also my first winter ever in the UK and it was very cold and I had my first experience of hailstones. My birthday was held in the snow as friends are not allowed inside the house.

In February 2020 when I first heard about the Coronavirus, I didn't take it too seriously because it seemed to be affecting China. But by March, I realised its seriousness and I began watching the news three times a day for updates – hoping that things will change for the better. My husband, Glyn decided to isolate as he had a health condition and we were supported by



the volunteers in the village to bring us food and medicine. We were rather nervous and prayed each day for many hours for relief and help to be given to the frontliners and countries severely impacted. This pandemic brought us very close together.

We are frightened by the big numbers of deaths due to COVID19, but having taken our vaccines, look forward to a better future.

Having had much free time on my hands, I learned to walk for leisure. In Colombo, I travelled everywhere in a tuk-tuk but now I walk about 6 miles a day with my husband and friends, feeding the ducks in the park and spending time with nature. I occasionally prepare a curry for dinner but more often, I make lasagne or another western dish.

I look forward to returning to Colombo and St Andrew's when things get back to normal.

Maureen Gennard



How has COVID time been for you? (cont...)

We find out from some of St. Andrew's friends around the world

From Scotland

My wife Catherine and I had first-hand experience of the COVID virus in March 2020. It took a few weeks for us to recover but we did recover without any lasting effects.

We first visited St Andrew's Scots Kirk in the autumn of 2006. At that time, I was Minister of Netherlee Parish Church of Scotland in Glasgow and our congregations had a long association dating back to the days of Rev Andrew Bailey and his friend, Rev Stanley Mair of Netherlee Church.

The link had been preserved over the years via our Scout Groups and strengthened during the Ministry of Rev John Purves when the Netherlee congregation raised funds for the establishment of Netherlee Cottage. Catherine and I visited Netherlee Cottage one year after it opened. At that time St Andrew's was also helping people affected by the tsunami and our congregation was keen to support the various tsunami recovery projects organised by St Andrew's as well Netherlee Cottage and Mulleriyawa Hospital. Our second visit was in the summer of 2009, when we were accompanied by our youth minister, Amy Heit, and her husband Jamey. We visited the new Netherlee Cottage and old friendships in the congregation were renewed at that time. Four years later, in May 2013, we were pleased to host Kumar, Modini and Pastor Sampath when their visit to Scotland coincided with the meeting of the General Assembly in Edinburgh.

Since my retirement in July 2018, I have served as Locum Minister in two local congregations. Ministry, as for most of us, has involved delivering on-line services and this has also given us the ability to listen in to other services, including St Andrew's Scots Kirk from time to time. Since the pandemic struck us one year ago, we have been under strict travel restrictions, but



vaccinations are being administered throughout the population of the UK and we hope to have more freedom of movement as we move towards the summer months. Foreign travel is out of the question for us all at the moment and it looks like there will be severe restrictions for many months to come.

In the meantime, we are encouraged by the Ministry and fellowship of our friends within the wider church context and look forward to the time when we can all worship together again in our church buildings. There have been many unexpected blessings as we've learned to use modern technology for Ministry as well as for keeping in touch with family and friends.

We are so grateful for the years we shared in Ministry between our two congregations and we wish you all well as you move forward into a new post-coronavirus world.

Rev. Tom and Mrs Catherine Nelson





How has COVID time been for you? (cont...)

We find out from some of St. Andrew's friends around the world

From the Netherlands

It was in 1975 that I (Dik) sailed into the Port of Colombo on a Dutch freighter, on a shipping service from Europe to South East Asia which was also known as the 'Zoo Trip'; first meeting the camels on the road in Karachi, sharing the sidewalk with cows in Bombay and in Colombo, where elephants were still in use as draglines. While we lived in Colombo between 2008 and 2011, we saw the creation of the new port from our balcony of the Iceland Apartments opposite of the Galle Face hotel.

Sri Lanka has a special place in our hearts as one of the important events in our lives was the adoption of a boy from Kalutara in 1985. Around 2000, I came back to Colombo again for an assignment on the Kelanitissa Power Plant. However, we did not move to Sri Lanka as expats before 2008. During that period, Hermien accompanied me several times including in 2005, when the tsunami had wrought serious devastation to the country just a few months earlier. We travelled to Galle by bus and still remember the rail tracks twisting and pointing to the skies as if it was just spaghetti. The tremendous forces of the ocean were visible all along the coast. A few walls without doors or windows reminded us what had happened, just a short while ago.

After settling in Colombo in 2008, we came to St. Andrew's Scots Kirk where we met several other Dutch families, most of them working for a Dutch NGO. I had my job as engineer whereas Hermien got involved in social activities that were part of the church where she also met Maureen. They both got involved in many church activities to support many families and

people in need. After a while, Hermien launched a small foundation (HHH or Hermien's Helping Hands) to support more projects like children's homes and also an elderly home and a girls' home of the Salvation Army.

From Sri Lanka we moved to Bangalore and later to Bangkok. We even spent about six months in Lima, Peru and in all those places, Hermien continued to contribute to people in need with her HHH. In Peru, we visited the Union Church of Lima led by a Scottish pastor which we immediately liked not in the least due to his accent. After all, I am still a fully ordained Elder of the Scots Kirk.

As a result of the pandemic, we do not travel that much anymore. Hermien visited Sri Lanka almost two years ago for the last time. Since then, she remains in contact with people in Sri Lanka through Maureen who is currently living in the UK. When things return to normal once more, we will certainly visit Colombo and of course St. Andrew's.

But what does it really mean, returning to normal? Is it just getting rid of the pandemic and then picking up life where we left off? Or would it be helpful to reconsider what happened to the world and to us? The world was not really prepared for a complete standstill like this. Economically, a disaster but what might be worse is the increase in 'lost souls'.

The song, 'He's got the whole world in his hands' has been changed long ago into 'We've got the whole world in our hands'. With this pandemic which has continued for over a year, this definitely appears to be not quite true. Climate change is





How has COVID time been for you? (cont...)

We find out from some of St. Andrew's friends around the world

only partially a result of human interference and all the world's efforts to turn it around may all be in vain, which does not mean we should not do anything. After all, we are stewards of His creation, utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the Glory of God and the betterment of His creation. But it appears to me that we are only capable of destroying His creatures, both wilfully as unintentionally. COVID came around the corner and showed us that we are in control of absolutely nothing. And if we are out of control, we don't know where to turn to anymore and our souls get lost.

But, am I speaking for everyone here? I certainly hope not. For

those who made a change as Jesus asked from Nicodemus to open his heart to the Holy Spirit to receive a new life as being born again, the soul will definitely not get lost, but will find its eternal purpose being saved for the Kingdom of the Father; that being born again has been made possible on the cross where Jesus Christ took our punishment upon Him to pay for all our debts. Easter is on our doorstep and we are being asked again to consider, deep in our hearts, what Jesus did for us, to bow our heads and to receive His grace, without which we would all be 'lost souls'.

As Pensioners, we have not been too impacted by the rules and regulations stemming from the pandemic, but around us, people are getting stressed and depressed, especially young students who have been deprived of social contact since schools have been closed for one year now. No doubt there is a difference in the situations between the Netherlands and Sri Lanka. The physical (medical) suffering in Sri Lanka is probably worse than in the Western world whereas the damage between the ears might be worse in the west.

Hermien and I really hope to visit Sri Lanka again when travel resumes.

Hermien and Dik van der Linden



From the USA

On the thirteenth of March of 2020 we were in our car, packed up and headed to the highway entrance when we received the notice from our Presbyterian headquarters of a Travel Freeze. We had been going to visit a church six hours away where Gary was to preach and we had to turn around and go back home....where we stayed the rest of the year. We had a full schedule of traveling planned for 2020 and all the plans were scrapped. Now, no travel to Pakistan, no travel to Sri Lanka, no travel anywhere. Marlene had been able to visit Sri Lanka in October 2019 and delighted in seeing everyone at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk. That was to be our last international trip. The rest of the year was Zoom meeting after Zoom meeting.

We retired from the Presbyterian World Mission at the end of 2020 and are happily settled in Clovis, California. Our daughter, Annelies, and her husband and daughter live a mere eighteen minutes away. We have been in a COVID "bubble" with them and are privileged to have Liliana stay with us two days a week (so her mother can do her work with international students at Fresno State University). Monitoring her virtual Kindergarten has been a challenge, but we thoroughly enjoy our time with her. Four of our five siblings live within three hours and it is good to see them frequently after forty years of living in distant lands. Gary is pleased that the area golf courses are still open.



We are actively involved in a local Presbyterian congregation and we have continued worship, Bible study, and meetings on Zoom this past year. The urban congregation is active in outreach to a needy community.

This past week brought a much-needed rainstorm to our valley and we can see the snow in the Sierra Nevada mountains from our home. In Sequoia National Park.

Gary and Marlene Van Brocklin



As Holy Week approaches and we observe Good Friday reflecting on when, how and why Jesus died, the one thing that stands out in all this, is that one man suffered to save the world. And that suffering was truly much more than any human being could bear and for centuries, Christians the world over have relived those days, but yet the very act of that selfless giving, is something none of us can comprehend.

Thus, we live our lives, remembering Jesus' suffering and hope we can walk in the path he asked us to, to relive at least a little bit of that pain he underwent, whether it was from the humiliation, betrayal, scourging, nailing, piercing of thorns or being hung on a tree to die like a common criminal and the most humiliating, slow and painful death any human being had to undergo.



Below are some reflective thoughts that give us depth to that utterly miserable and gloomy – yet intensely optimistic chapter in Christian history.

Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.

– Napoleon Bonaparte

Stoning prophets and erecting churches to their memory afterwards has been the way of the world through the ages. Today we worship Christ, but the Christ in the flesh we crucified.

– Mahatma Gandhi

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime.

– Martin Luther

No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.

– William Penn

The Cross was the manifestation of Divine love without reserve or limit; but it was also the expression of man's unutterable malignity.

– Sir Robert Anderson

The word "Christianity" is already a misunderstanding – in reality there has been only one Christian, and he died on the Cross.

– Friedrich Nietzsche



Getting to know our congregation –

10 Qs for Priscilla Fumo Lear



One of the newer members of St. Andrew's is Priscilla Fumo Lear, who has since the day she began attending services become very active in church activities – she's a regular reader at Sunday worship and a reliable volunteer presence at the Thursday Lunch for the Needy project.

Born during a civil war in Maputo, Mozambique where she spent her growing up years, Priscilla speaks Portuguese (her first language), Rhonga (one of 43 languages spoken in Mozambique), English and some French and Kiswahili. Her father, a plumber had 16 children with three wives. Her mother was the only housewife.

What's your family like?

I have been married to Michael Lear for 21 years. I'm a mother of two; I have a son who is 24 and dreams of becoming a writer and an 18 year old daughter completing her first year in a Netherlands university. I also have two stepdaughters who live with their mother in Scotland. I have been an empty nester for the last five years due to Michael's work assignments taking him away from home and the children experiencing their first stages of adult life.

Being an expat, how many countries have you lived in?

Michael is a Civil Engineer, and because of his work we have been living as expats since 2006. We have made our home in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Botswana, and now Sri Lanka.

What brought you to Sri Lanka?

We moved to Sri Lanka for two and a half years in September 2020. Michael is part of Consultant Team supervising the construction of the Port Elevated Highway Project financed by the Asian Development Bank.

What has your career been like?

I've always been passionate about psychology, I dreamed of a career in law or psychology to help abused women. But at 24 I became an entrepreneur, selling industrial cleaning products and then a sales executive for about 10 years.

Have you been able to pursue your dream of continuing your studies?

While living in Ghana, I studied Sociology at Legon University, but when Michael's project in Ghana came to an end, and we had to relocate. A few years later, I became an online student at the Athabasca University in Alberta, Canada reading Sociology. My short-term goal is to take a psychology Diploma course locally and acquire more experience in psychology, because that is my passion.



What can't you live without?

I believe I can live without most things, expect peace of mind, mutual respect and the truth (no matter how ugly it is).

What do you miss about Mozambique?

What I miss most about Mozambique are the discreet looks. Many people in Colombo are not careful or diplomatic when it comes to staring at women. Whether it is with a good or bad intent, I'm yet to get use to the way I'm 'scanned' when walking around town.

What has kept you busy in Sri Lanka?

Regularly worshiping at St. Andrew's and joining the Rotary Club, the International Expats Association, a running group which meets four times a week at Independence Square, and yoga at least 3 times a week.

How do you R&R?

I love cooking, reading and interacting with people. Colombo has been one of the friendliest and kindest places I have lived. I love the safety on the streets of Colombo, and the seafood and coconut make me forget that I'm not home in Mozambique.

What's next for you?

I'm excited about learning Sinhalese.





The Story Behind the Hymn – The Old Rugged Cross

When George Bennard's father died, he left the young teenager with tremendous family responsibilities. He became a coal miner and later, for a number of years, his wife and he worked with the Salvation Army. As an itinerant Method preacher, Bennard had a favourite scripture verse, John 3:16 and often said he had a vision of a cross – a crude Roman instrument of death, stained with the blood of Christ.

On one occasion, while thinking of Christ's crucifixion, an original melody formed in his mind but no words came. He struggled to write some lyrics but all that emerged was, "I'll cherish the old rugged cross."

Much later, having returned home from several preaching engagements in Michigan, he felt he had a renewed meaning of the cross etched in his heart and mind. He took the manuscript, placed it on the kitchen table and rewrote the entire hymn with each word falling perfectly into place. Joyfully, he called to his wife and sang it to her. The manuscript was sent to Charles H Gabriel in Chicago who wrote the proper chords – but the strange thing was that when Gabriel returned the manuscript with the chords, he also penned a message to Bennard: "You will hear from this song!"

Now one of the most favourite hymns sung during Lent, the State of Michigan marks the site of Bennard's home where he wrote the song with a plaque that reads:

Birthplace of "Old Rugged Cross"

.... one of the world's best-loved hymns, was composed here in 1912.....

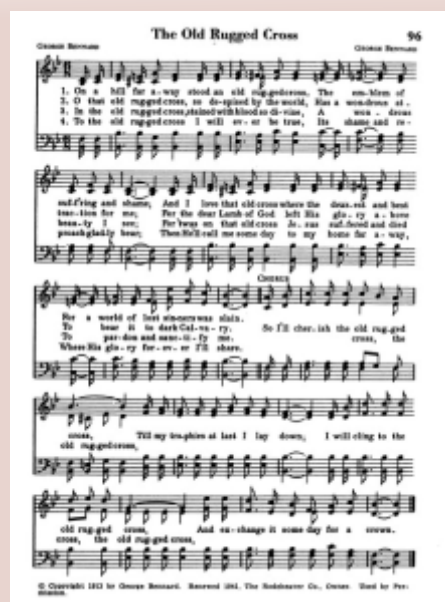
Bennard died in Michigan in 1958.



The plaque marking the site of Bennard's home



Rev. George Bennard and Mrs Bennard



*"On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of sufferin' and shame.
And I love that old cross
Where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.
"So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
'Till my trophies at last I lay down.
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown."*



Italy



On this day called Venerdì Santo – meaning Holy Friday, many Italians fast or eat a diet of only fish and observing the Catholic Church's day of mourning, all statues and crosses in churches are covered with purple or black cloth. The Pope will lead a solemn torchlight procession – the Way of the Cross, which is the 14 stations of the cross symbolizing a part of the Jesus' passion and death. The procession begins at the Colosseum and ends at Palatine Hill.

Central America



Streets in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala are lined with Alfombras (rug in Spanish) showing various Christian depictions, created using colorful sawdust.

Jerusalem



Jerusalem, where Jesus' crucifixion took place is a highly spiritual and ritualistic holiday for the city. People go on pilgrimage, many carrying crosses, retracing the steps taken by Jesus on His way to the cross. The route leads to Golgotha, also known as the Place of the Skull, where he was crucified. An evening funeral procession follows, reenacting the burial of Jesus.

Jamaica



Jamaicans crack an egg on Good Friday, separating its yolk from its white. Before sunrise, they will pour the egg white into a glass of water. As the sun's heat warms the glass, patterns will form from the egg. In the past, Jamaican elders believed the pattern revealed how you would die.

England



London's Trafalgar Square puts on a free open-air play, "The Passion of Jesus", performed by a combination of amateur and professional Christian actors who take their audience on a journey from Jesus' arrest to his resurrection on Easter. The cast comprises more than 100 performers as well as several animals. The show features a realistic portrayal of the crucifixion.

Germany



The annual Good Friday procession in Bensheim, Germany, is perhaps one of the biggest and most elaborate in the world. Every year on this holy day, families from the local Italian community put on a reenactment of the betrayal, sentencing, scourging and death of Jesus in a theatrical and elaborate performance.



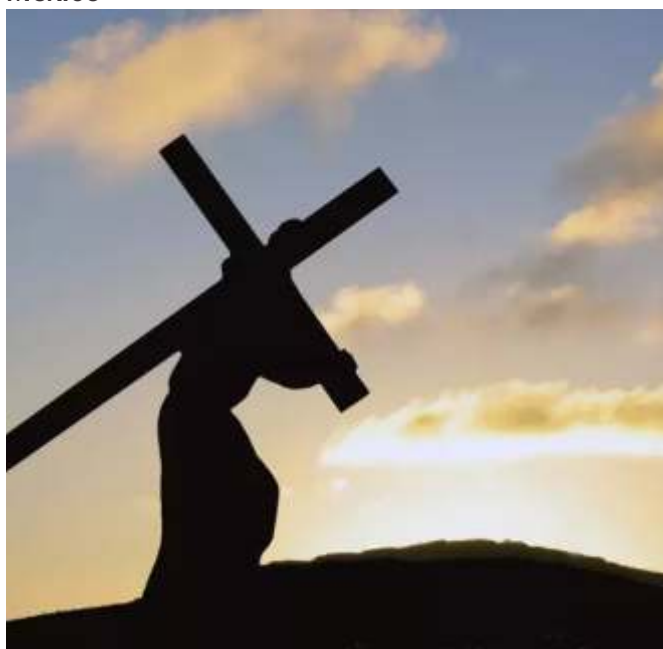
Good Friday Around the World (cont...)

Sri Lanka



In the little hamlet of Duwa in Negombo is enacted one of the greatest passion plays in Asia. It's a full day programme on Good Friday and could be one of the oldest and best known Catholic pageants in this part of the world, representing generation after generation of well-preserved traditions. Believed to have begun 400 years ago, legend has it that the original play was enacted only with statues but in 1948, Kalasoori Father Marceline Jayakody introduced a new script with human actors instead of statues with over 250 actors drawn from Duwa.

Mexico



In Iztapalapa, Mexico, 4,000 actors reenact Christ's walk to his death. One man, chosen for his character and strength, goes the extra mile by playing the role of Jesus. He wears a crown of thorns and is flogged in the streets, all while carrying a 200-pound cross.

Spain



Holy Week, or Semana Santa, is one of the biggest religious celebrations for Catholics in the world, and Spain is no exception. All across the country, brotherhoods of priests hold elaborate processions. Perhaps the most intense is in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, in which disciplinantes choose to self-flagellate as an act of faith.



Residents in Hiendelaencina, Spain wear period clothing and watch the re-enactment of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Malta



All of Holy Week is a major holiday in Malta, and the celebrations reach a peak on Good Friday. Processions take place in towns and villages all around the country. The story of Good Friday and Easter is told during these walks, adding additional meaning to the honored days.



What they say ...

... about the Christmas 2020 edition of The St. Andrew Newsletter & SASK Online Services



Thank you so much for the Newsletter. It is, as always, an interesting and informative read. Especially this year, it is so good to keep in touch and to hear what is going on at the other side of the world.

We were without services for much of the summer, because of COVID restrictions so I greatly appreciated being able to watch and listen to the Rev Ian. He always has something worthwhile to say.

My thanks once again and best wishes to all at St Andrews.

May McFadyean
Scotland

Thank you for this latest Newsletter and it is a great pleasure first thing on a Sunday morning to be able to link with SASK and also listen to Ian's message.

We are both really missing our visit to Sri Lanka but continue to keep in touch with all of our friends via WhatsApp; Messenger and mail.

Hoping you are all keeping safe and well

God bless

Shona
Scotland

Dear StAndrew's

Thank you for sending the latest St Andrew's newsletter - another interesting, varied, colourful and professional looking publication. Well done to the team once again. We sincerely hope that everyone has managed to stay away from this dreadful virus.

We have felt very blessed living in Argyll, with very few people affected and able to walk the dog, shop in Oban and visit friends in their gardens etc. We felt bold enough to drive down south, through the Channel Tunnel and down to the Loire to meet up with our French based family in their property down here in a small village. Within a couple of days of arriving here, we were astonished to hear that the whole of Scotland has been put into a Tier 4 area with this new strain of virus!

Love from
Roderick & Sue

Thank you! Today's sermon was heartfelt and resonated within me. So very beautifully conveyed. Thank you for sharing and my gratitude to Rev. Gilmour.

Peace and blessings to you and yours,

Yolanda Bolling Morley
Palm Springs, California



Dates for your diary

We are international, interdenominational, open to all

All are welcome.

Sunday morning service will continue each week at 9.30 am.

The Government restrictions concerning the number of attendees allowed for our Sunday morning services keep changing depending on the country situation. And hence, unprecedented changes may occur. Therefore, please do advise our Church officer Kumar on 0722125713 / 0779978870 if you plan to attend service, so we can manage everyone. Approximately 40 people join our services every Sunday.

April 1	Maundy Thursday	6.30 pm Service of Holy Communion Worship Leader: Revd. Melvin de Silva Organist: Neranjan de Silva
April 2	Good Friday	6.30 pm Worship Leader: Revd. Roshan Mendis Organist: Neranjan de Silva
April 4	Easter Sunday	9.30 am Service of Holy Communion - followed by Easter Brunch at around 10.45 am Worship Leader: Revd. Roshan Mendis Organist: Neranjan de Silva
April 11	Sunday Service	9.30 am Worship Leader: Viranga Wickramaratne Organist: Nuran Gomez

Mission work at Scots Kirk

Helping Hands - Financial support for those disadvantaged and living in the area of St Andrew's.
Contact Joubert +94777722736

Netherlee Cottage - Rehabilitation Centre for Mental Health issues.
Contact Gillian Mailler - email gillmailler@gmail.com

Lunch for the Needy - Held each Thursday from 11.45 am to 1.30 pm following strict COVID guidelines.
Volunteer servers are needed each week.
Contact Shalini - email swickramasuriya@hotmail.com

Mulleriyawa Hospital Ward 8 - Remains closed to visitors and therefore visits cannot be organised.
Contact Shanthini Ahangama - email shani_ahangama@hotmail.com.

The Church Hall

The following groups normally use our Church Hall but unfortunately are not allowed to meet or conduct any projects due to current health and safety regulations.

- The Thrift Shop & The Association of British Residents English Library – These facilities are currently closed and we are working to find a way to open them with social distancing in the future
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- 17th Colombo Netherlee Scout Troop

Our Church is used by

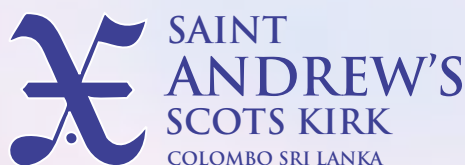
The Korean Church every Sunday morning at 11.30 am

The Four Square Church, which have regularly met each Sunday evening and Thursday lunch time after the first curfew in Colombo, have however halted these services until further notice.

SASK Contacts:

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