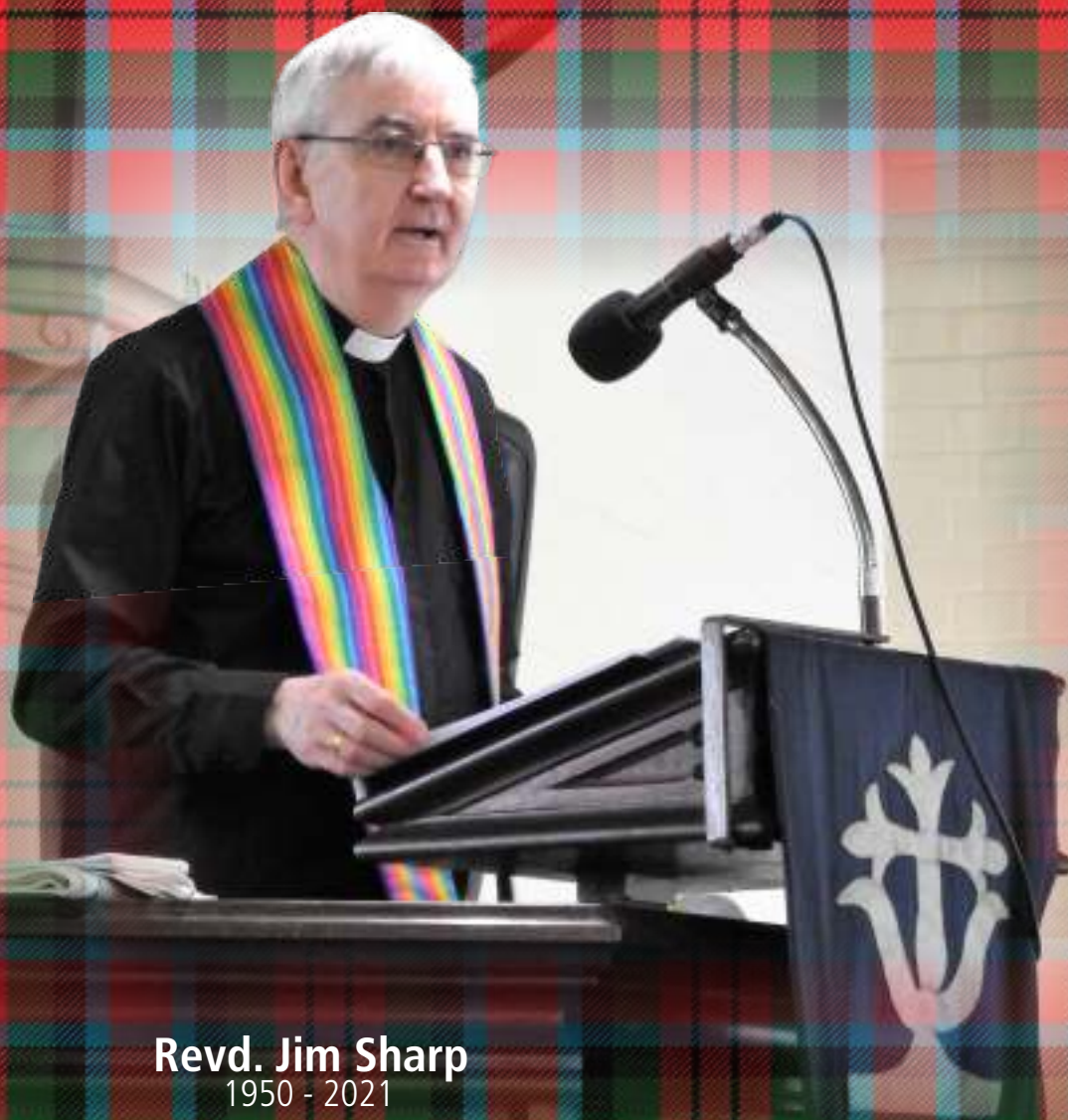


the Saint
Andrew



Revd. Jim Sharp
1950 - 2021

Church of Scotland – Presbyterian

For private circulation only



SAINT
ANDREW'S
SCOTS KIRK
COLOMBO SRI LANKA



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All are Welcome

Dear Friends,
Have you ever felt or been **excluded**?
It is not a good feeling.
Others are in and we are **out**:

*Out of the loop,
Out of the conversation,
Out of the inner group,
Outsiders*

Suddenly, we are not considered 'cool' enough or 'young' enough or 'with it' enough to be an insider. It happens in schools, there are always sub-groups, but also at places of work, sports clubs, in families, amongst neighbours, and in churches.

Jesus was not like this. He broke up groups within the disciples' team, challenged bad behaviour and wouldn't let one be above the others. When he fed the crowd of 5,000 souls he didn't ask about their education, income or past mistakes. He made everyone welcome, got them to sit down and revealed his words were backed by his deeds by feeding everyone so well that there were 12 baskets left over.

The small communion set I have for taking to members' houses was given to me by Rev Professor Duncan Forrester, a very splendid Scottish man. Professor Forrester had been a minister and missionary in India. He eventually became a leading academic at New College Encounter with God the training college for ministers in Edinburgh.

Rev Forrester would have taken the communion set to people when they were ill at home, or to a hospice, a hospital or a prison. He gave the set to me when he retired and I appreciated the gift but even more appreciated his thinking on the subject of communion.

Professor Forrester reflected on his Indian experience when he wrote in his book *Encounter with God*:

"A radically segmented society like Hindu India had multitudinous strict rules concerning who could eat what with whom, rules which preserved



Professor Duncan Forrester The Communion Set gifted to me

the segmentation of the social by ensuring that people from castes far apart in the social hierarchy could never meet as friends around one table."

It was clear that he didn't think this was a good idea. He continues his argument:

"What really shocked the religious people of his time was not that Jesus enjoyed eating and drinking with his disciples, but that he was willing to share table-fellowship with all sorts of people. He received prostitutes and quislings and other notorious sinners, the outcasts of society at his table. He refused to put up fences."

This is not an extreme thought from the brilliant Professor. He is quoting scripture. Try to hear the anguished tone as the Jewish leaders announced loudly on this topic at Luke 15 verse 2, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Jesus enjoyed meals with those with the most dubious of reputations. Many of us prefer to be insiders. Some of us will find Jesus' approach and attitude very challenging. It doesn't fit with social norms in most societies. We can however learn from Jesus. At some point in our lives we may find ourselves in a seriously sticky situation and be delighted and relieved when someone in His name says, "All are welcome", and we are included and not excluded despite our preferences and privileges.

Shirley Erena Murray has written a fine modern hymn which epitomises all being welcomed.

- 1 For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead.
*And God will delight
when we are creators of justice and joy,
yes, God will delight
when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy!*
- 2 For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair.
- 3 For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong.
- 4 For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live.
- 5 For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free.

The bread of life comes from God for God's undeserving people and I am grateful to be one of them. Today I hope you are too.

Rev. Ian Y Gilmour



We bring prayers of concern to You,
lead us in Your way of love
and fill us with Your Spirit.
Use us to bring good news to the poor,
and to set free the oppressed,
so shall Your new creation come and Your will be done.

Spirit of truth and judgment who alone can cast out the powers
that grip our world at this point of climate crisis,
give us Your discernment,
that we may accurately name what is evil,
respond with vigour and discover the way
that leads to stability and a healthy future.

Loving God,
today we listen for the Gospel of Christ
which bring us joy,
it can be heard by people in every family
and on each continent,
as individuals hear Your words,
'All are welcome' in every language,
and experience being valued.

We delight in the Olympic values,
the motivation of athletes meeting in Tokyo.
We applaud those who have overcome high hurdles to participate.
We are glad to hear of the new freedoms
for church and society in Europe
following the reducing infections of Covid 19
and we pray for quick progress in Sri Lanka and Asia.

May we continue to be active,
in Christ's service so that no person in St Andrew's
feels excluded by their gender, schooling, income or ability level.
Let each one hear your words without equivocation
'You are welcome', and experienced joyful liberation.

An Appreciation of Rev. Jim Sharp

By Chandan de Silva



Jim - the person

Jim was from the county of Fife in Scotland. Following his education in Scotland, Jim joined a bank. He worked his way through the ranks and at a certain point his career took him to London.

Jim had an adventurous streak and when an opportunity to work for one of the bank's overseas branches became available, Jim jumped at the opportunity. This took him to Nova Scotia – which ironically means new Scotland – in Canada.

Jim spent many years in Nova Scotia and by his own admission enjoyed his time there. It was during this time that he joined the National Scouts Movement and moved up the ranks as time went by.

At a certain point in his banking career, he decided to quit and work as a paid employee of the Global Scouts Movement which took him to Geneva. Jim loved Geneva – who wouldn't – with its beautiful lake and Jet D'eau. He was a single man who led a very private life and his days on earth ended in his beloved Geneva.

My interaction with him

I first came across Jim in Budapest in 2007, when Rev. John Purves and I represented SASK at the Presbytery of Europe – now called the International Presbytery – to make our case for inclusion within the Presbytery of Europe. This was after the World Mission Council, which used to supervise the Church of Scotland's overseas charges, decided it was time to cut the umbilical cord and persuade congregations like SASK to indigenize. The Kirk Session of SASK did not want to indigenize and we were given an opportunity to make our case, which was duly accepted.

Jim, at that time was a member of the PoE and I remember him as pencil thin, which he continued to be, with a clear and penetrative voice. My next interaction with him was when he visited Colombo as the Presbytery of Europe's Safeguarding Trainer to train the elders at SASK.

Jim subsequently became the Presbytery Clerk of the IP and my next interaction occurred after SASK's Locum Rev. Stewart Lamont left Colombo. Those were turbulent times following the demission of SASK's full time Minister, the Rev. Roderick Campbell, and the emergence of factions within SASK's Kirk Session.

Jim was appointed interim moderator of SASK and I was the Session Clerk. We interacted a lot as we looked for ways to heal the wounds of division and navigate SASK to calmer waters.

I found Jim to be a clear-headed person, who did not prevaricate once a course of action was agreed. He made some courageous calls, that led to the resignation of certain elders at the time and difficult though these calls were, they helped to move SASK forward. His wise and firm hand during his tenure as Interim Moderator was instrumental in bringing the Kirk Session together.



An Appreciation of Rev. Jim Sharp (cont...)



On one occasion when Jim visited Colombo, he and I made an appointment to visit the Rev. Roshan Mendis. At that time, members of the Kirk Session were drawn to Rev. Roshan's preaching and open to the idea of inviting him to be our Locum. Roshan could see us only at 8 pm at S. Thomas' Mount Lavinia. So Jim came over and had a simple evening meal – simple at his insistence - with Nadhini and I, before we set off to Mount Lavinia. Despite the limited success we had in showing Jim the beautiful school buildings because it was dark, we spent the next hour at the pleasant poolside deck of the Mount Lavinia hotel, with its swaying palms and soothing sounds of the sea, chatting, while sipping coffee.

Easter 2017 was a very happy occasion when Jim not only installed a number of new elders, but also confirmed a number of younger members into the congregation. He wore his rainbow stole, which I took to mean his support for the LGBT cause.

Jim had been very impressed by the stand some of SASK's elders took in distancing the church from the views of a visiting pastor, who sowed seeds of prejudice & discrimination towards the LGBT community, in the course of a sermon on marriage.

My last significant interaction with him was at the General Assembly in May 2019, which both Buwanika Weerasinghe and I attended. Jim was not short of a bob or two, with pensions from his bank and the Swiss state, and he informed me that he would be staying at a hotel walking distance away. I decided to follow his example, which allowed us to meet for breakfast before setting off for the 30-minute walk to the General Assembly, chatting whilst doing so. It was during these chats that I learnt about Jim's life and realized how utterly dedicated he was to the Church of Scotland and to the International Presbytery in particular. We had a few very nice meals together including one where he introduced me to Rev. Ian Gilmour.



Jim handed over his interim moderator's role to the Rev. Ian Gilmour in late 2019 and continued to be a great supporter of SASK. He used to enjoy Rev. Ian's online services during the pandemic, and he would openly state his appreciation of them at the International Presbytery's committee meetings.

Earlier this year, Jim informed the International Presbytery Business Committee that he wished to step down from his role as Presbytery Clerk. Even though he didn't give a reason, it is now apparent that it was due to his deteriorating health although none of us suspected he had anything serious.

He had only just passed three score and ten, and his passing is terribly premature. SASK has lost a good and valued friend.

May he rest in peace!

22nd August 2021



Ten Little Known Facts About Jesus



The New Testament is replete with stories about Jesus. If one compares the gospels, each account has its own shades and nuances but at the same time, may weave Jesus' entire story. However, reading through these accounts, there may be questions that pop to mind. You may find some of the answers below:

1. Jesus is a common first century name but it was full of meaning. Hidden in the common name is the truth that 'Yahweh saves'.

2. Jesus' last name wasn't Christ. In first century Palestine, people didn't have last names and were identified by referencing parents. The word Christ has Greek origins – Christos, which means the anointed one.

3. Jesus probably wasn't born in 1AD although Jesus' presence divides history with references to BC (before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, the year of the Lord). Because Herod died in 4BC, the chances are Jesus was probably born before 4BC and not in 1AD.

4. It may not be only three wise men who visited Jesus. The number could be much more. Scripture doesn't quantify the number of Magi, only the three gifts.

5. Bethlehem means 'House of Bread'; Beth means house and lehem, bread. The prophet Micah predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and the significance of Bethlehem in Jesus' story is that Jesus frequently referred to himself as the 'Bread of Life.' (John 6:35, 48, 51)

6. Matthew and Luke compile the gospels quite differently. Luke penned multiple eyewitness accounts for a man named Theophilus, believed to be a high-ranking Gentile making Luke's Gospel the only Gospel written by a Gentile

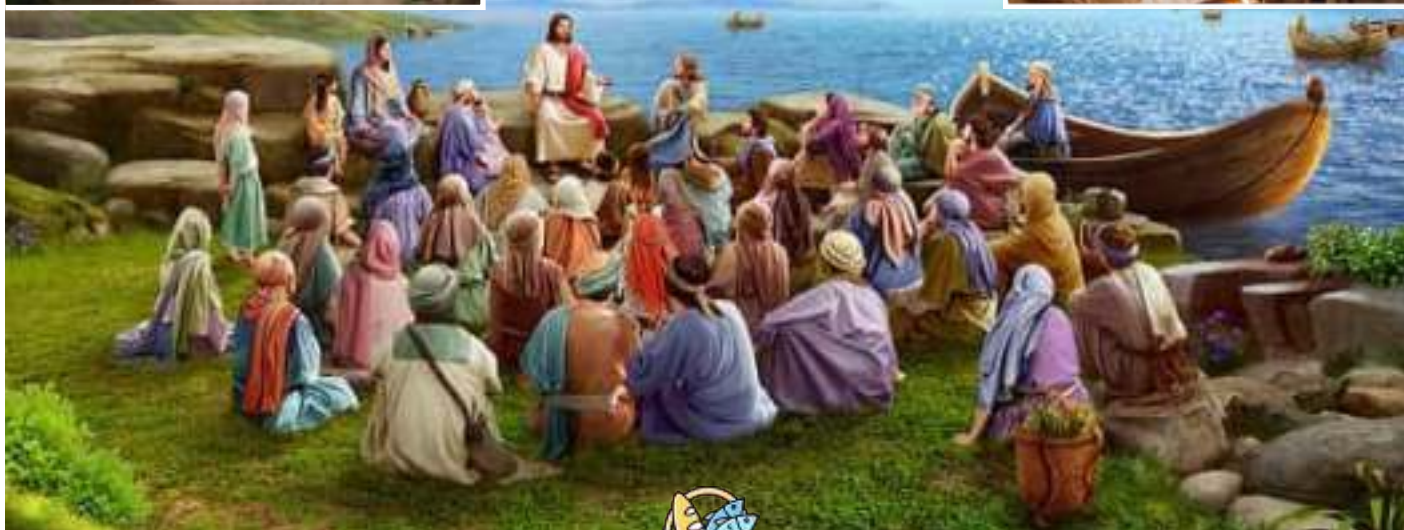
for a Gentile Audience, and Matthew, who was a Jew was intent on proving to the Jews that Jesus was the promised Jewish Messiah.

7. Jesus began his ministry when he was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23) and it lasted only three and half years, judging by John's account of Jesus attending three Passover feasts and eventual findings by scholars. However, in this short period, he was baptized by John, called his disciples, began a ministry, travelled all around Judea and Capernaum and fasted 40 days. Three and a half years is an unbelievably short amount of time to change the world.

8. Jesus spoke multiple languages as did most Jews, whose primary language was Aramaic. He would have studied the Torah in Hebrew and it is likely that he spoke Greek when he conversed with both the Centurion and Pilate, as Greek was the link language used by the Romans when engaging with the Jews.

9. Jesus was not a vegetarian. Jews in Palestine had a regular diet of fish and probably lamb which is customary during Passover and Jesus most likely partook of such meals.

10. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared twelve times – to Mary Magdalene, the women at the tomb, Peter, travelers on the road, the disciples without Thomas and again with Thomas, the disciples while they fished and on the mountain, the crowd of five hundred, James, those at the Ascension and Paul.



The Biggest Change I Experienced During the Pandemic



With Sri Lanka in periodic lockdowns since May 2020, church worship within the church building has been sporadic. Our congregation has been through lifestyle changes and we asked some of them about the biggest change they have experienced during the pandemic.



"The most amazing change for me during the pandemic is silence. The surroundings are so peaceful and calm. I see and hear many types of birds; a mother bird teaching three baby birds to fly while the crows try to peck them. The butterflies flying into our home through open windows, the geckos, bugs, bees and insects I've never seen before, happily moving round. The smell of fresh air, the trees and flowers...it is as if the nature is singing its own song and I can hear it because there is less noise and pollution.

I hear and feel my Ammi's presence more than before. There are less phone calls and emails now and I have her all to myself! The magic of silence.....the beauty of nature.... the love of family ...I realize how much more God loves me."

Adina Rosa Senaratne

"The pandemic has affected us in many ways. Mostly, it's behavioural change, affecting our psychology and increasing stressful situations as well. We will always be resistant to change. I have been able to adapt within a short period of time and that has seen a behavioural change in me. Before the pandemic, we had certain patterns in our lives. Once it began spreading, those patterns were replaced with new patterns."

Buddhika Chandrasoma

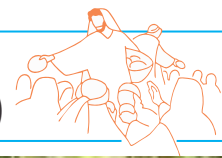


"The biggest change for me has been getting my wings clipped. Over the many years I've lived away from home, I had been fortunate to have managed to travel once a year or so to be with family – usually to be home over Christmas or a parent's birthday, at times to meet up elsewhere to attend an event or to have a short holiday in a nice new place away from home and share some firsts. These family reunions have become virtual meetings. At least there's that and somehow, they do make me forget about how far apart my family are from each other."

Norma Swyngedauw



The Biggest Change I Experienced During the Pandemic (cont...)



"During the pandemic the biggest change I experienced was getting approval from the Ministry of Health for our church events.

First, I have to ask the wedding party for the guest list. Once I have the guest list, I have to inform the Session Clerk to prepare letters requesting permission for the wedding to be held in our church. These are printed and signed and then I call the MOH doctor for an appointment to present my case.

Once I get approval from the MOH, I have to monitor the guests, ensuring they follow COVID protocol guidelines – washing hands, temperature checks, social distancing, wearing face masks and sanitizing. After every event, the church is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Through this pandemic I have learnt a lot. Even though it's risky and I do my best for the church. If every one of us follows the proper protocols, we can win against Covid 19."

K S Kumar
Church Officer



Last year started off with football being my favourite sport, but because of the pandemic it was harder to play. Football is a team sport and it's hard to play one-on-one. I had a basketball hoop at my house so I started taking my basketball outside and shooting hoops. Then I learned to dribble and started playing with my parents. In the evenings, I would stay up and watch basketball highlights. That is when football and I grew more and more apart. I wouldn't really say it was a negative thing; maybe it was for the better.

I used to have two dogs - a golden retriever and a dachshund. As we had to move into an apartment I had to give away one of my dogs. Her name is Duchess and she is a Golden Retriever who loved to play with the ball and would love to run around. When the time came to move, we thought it would be cruel to bring a dog who loves to run around and play ball, into an apartment. We decided to give her to my dad's brother because we knew she would be happy there, because they have a big garden and love dogs. I definitely miss her.

The obvious change would be school, I went from face to face to online. It was certainly hard for me, but as time went on I started to get used to this and actually prefer it. This was a new normal for me and I really loved it. After this, I haven't really wanted to go back to school. I like being at home with my dog and doing online school. I certainly didn't have to wake up as early anymore and have breakfast really early in the morning.

I have experienced a lot of changes and had to make many sacrifices during this pandemic, but I think it is for the better."

Arian Fernando Singh



"This year, my family moved from a house to an apartment. It was hard for me moving from a big space to a smaller space. I went from having two dogs, a basketball hoop with a paved area to play and a nice neighbourhood, to an apartment with one dog, no basketball hoop and no real neighbourhood, only hotels, other apartments, shopping centers and more tall buildings - no other houses. Hopefully I will start to get used to this new area and begin to feel more comfortable.

The Biggest Change I Experienced During the Pandemic (cont...)



"For me personally, the greatest change in my routine was no longer attending my sports training. I would usually practice putt shot and disc at least four times a week if the weather was kind, and it was an unusually calm part of my day. As a solitary sport, there's little focus on teamwork or fostering relationships with fellow players, but sharing the throwing circle was an unobtrusive way to exist in the same space with other people. Post pandemic, I'm not sure there's anything that will be quite like it."

Lauren Williams-Bastians



"My wings have been clipped because my top priority has been to travel and explore new destinations. Since being grounded, I am now the master of the remote control and spend time with our doggies. I have more time to pursue my passion of supporting the community too."

Deepal Ahangama

"I have more time to reflect and understand the true meaning of life and how minimalism works; the many challenges that we all have to face and overcome, to be more humane and exercise a greater sense of empathy, compassion & understanding. We enjoy being at home and living the moment to the fullest and often count our blessings."

Shanthini Ahangama



and keep in touch regularly with goings-on. I know how difficult it is to find a minister these days. No doubt in the fullness of time, someone will come forward. The Spirit works in its own way.

When we left St Andrews, we returned to Scotland and I became minister at Inveraray, linked with Cumlodden and Lochgair. This is a parish in the Western Highlands, along the shores of Loch Fyne. It comprised small rural communities who made their living through farming, forestry and tourism. The three churches were all of different characters; Inveraray the seat of the Duke of Argyll is the town of about 600 people and was rebuilt in the 18th century by the then Duke. It stands at the head of Loch Fyne. Cumlodden, about eight miles further south, caters to the folk from the village of Furnace and its surrounds. Lochgair another eight miles further south, caters for the small community at one of the best anchorages for yachtsmen on the west coast.

Ministry was a bit different from that in Colombo. There was no rush and bustle of city life and far less humidity and heat. The people were wanting to belong to their church and to take it forward. Ministry is ministry wherever one is. People who need to be cared for, visited, supported and sometimes led. In each congregation there are people of energy, vision and commitment, so although numbers are small, they will create their future.

One of several highlights at Inveraray was the Laying Up of the Colours of the First Battalion - The Scots Guards. Why Inveraray? Well, in 1642 the First Battalion was founded by the Duke of Argyll and so it was thought fitting that the Colours should be placed in perpetuity in the Church. The Colours are a symbol of the family of the Regiment and of the sacrifice and service of the men and women who in the past have served.

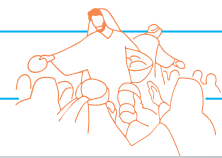
Greetings!

Some will remember us both but to others at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk, we will be strangers. However, we are all one in Him who calls us into his church.

Gillian asked if I would like to write an article for the magazine. I well remember the meetings we had to get it started and am delighted it is still being used as a powerful means of communication of all the good things at St Andrews Scot's Kirk.

We have many happy memories during our time at St. Andrew's





We were sad when our ages forced our retirement. I had been lucky that I had been able to extend my service beyond normal retiral age. Sue and I have been blessed with good health and have found a house in the village of Taynuilt, Argyll.

We have quite a lot to do in the house and garden. However, we have been able to play golf and make friends. Like yourselves we have been very limited in what we could do during the pandemic. Both of us have been well, and much of that is due to the fresh country air, the amount of dog walking we do and living a very healthy life style, for which we are grateful.

Retirement has not really been as I imagined it would be. We are so short of ministers that there is regular pulpit supply needed, and the Presbytery of Argyll has asked me to remain as Convener of Superintendence. I will no doubt ease my way out of these in due course.

I am still asking questions, researching and thinking about our faith, and how it is expressed. I am full of admiration for men and women who in their time wrote the gospels and developed the faith. Each did it within their own social context. It seems to me that we need to be able to give our own 21st century understanding of Jesus of Nazareth and his importance as a reality in our own living. There are some who have made great sacrifices such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, and Desmond Tutu, the former Archbishop of South Africa, each giving relevant expression in practical ways.

It may be that the emphasis of my retirement will be to put my thoughts together and share them with others in the hope that we might contribute to making the mission of Jesus more accessible to people, especially the young.



I noted that Chandan had resigned as Session Clerk and then taken on a very high powered and responsible role in the business world. He did a sterling job as Session Clerk and will no doubt be successful in his new work. It is indeed great that a man of faith should be in such a powerful position. As the future unfolds, I would like to wish him and each of you every blessing.

Remember Paul's words: There is nothing, nothing in all creation which can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

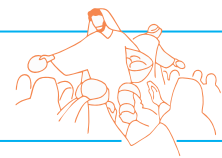
May God's blessing rest upon and remain with you.

Roderick and Sue Campbell
July 2021



THROUGH THE LENS

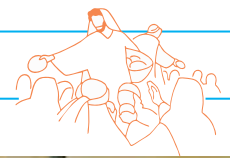
Mission Projects, Committee Reports and events at St. Andrew's



Easter Service & Congregational Brunch 2021

During a brief respite from lockdowns, when churches were allowed services, we were very glad that SASK could have its regular Easter service and host the annual Easter Brunch for our congregation. With Pastor Abby Schaffter giving a very powerful sermon, Rev. Roshan Mendis conducting Holy Communion and congregational participation, the service was uplifting. We then made our way to the Hall for brunch immediately after the service where Rev. Roshan Mendis said an opening prayer and grace. Our congregation enjoyed each other's company after many months of being in isolation and shared the joy of Easter.







Sunday School

Life goes on for Sunday School at St Andrews in spite of the curfews and restrictions on gatherings. Sunday School has simply become SS online! There has been no lack of interest or enthusiasm to gather and learn more about the Bible stories and to think about the lessons they teach us. The children have been zooming regularly at the usual time every Sunday and have continued to be as eager as ever to learn together.



Who was King Saul?

- Israel's first king
- Started out humble
- Did things his way instead of God's way
- Obey God
- Not thinking highly of ourselves
- Admit when we are wrong



- ❖ What have you learnt?
- ❖ What did you feel?
- ❖ What is your **take-away** from this story about Jesus?



We thought you would like to hear their thoughts and ideas about their SS experiences. As teachers of Sunday School, we ourselves learn a lot from these young children of God. Their faith, trust and kind souls are infectious and admirable.

Here are some of their own thoughts and words.

Adina (7 years)

1. What makes you want to go to SS?

Because I feel very happy there and I learn about Jesus. We get to meet our friends in SS. We get to know new stories from the Bible

2. What's your favourite story from the Bible?

When Jesus was walking with a big crowd, a lady who had been sick for 12 years couldn't get through the crowd and she got Jesus' cloak, and touched it and then Jesus said, 'who touched my cloak?' He screamed and asked the crowd: 'How do you expect us to know? So many people are close to us.' But Jesus said: 'No, no. Somebody really touched my cloak.' The lady said 'I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to do that.' Jesus: 'That's ok. Why did you do that?' I have been sick for 12 years, and I wanted you to bless me so that my sickness can go away. Then, Jesus said: 'You are very brave. Actually, you are now healed, and you can go back home.'



Adina's depiction of the Armour of God

3. What did you learn about God in that story?

I learnt that Jesus can do miracles and help us. Jesus has power in Him to heal people. The power went to the lady when she touched the cloak.

I learnt about God, that he can do miracles and save people. We need to always listen to God. We have to very much believe in God



THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)



Aleeza (3 years)

Aliza sang a song she enjoys singing with actions and shared a prayer that she prays every day before

Thank you, Lord for my nice
food every day
In Jesus, name Amen

Sheneshi (9 years)

1. What makes you want to go to Sunday school?

The way that you teach is very interesting. You both conduct the class very nicely. I can understand God's word well, you teach very simple and easy to memorise



2. What's your favourite Bible story?

Feeding the 5000 is my favourite bible story. It's about Jesus using two fish and five loaves of bread. He did a miracle and made more to feed the 5000 people without letting them stay in hunger. I liked it because it was a story where Jesus did a miracle

3. What did you learn about God from that story?

God always shares, and we should believe that God can do anything. The little boy shared, he didn't keep it for himself and he gave it to everyone. He taught us to be sharing and kind



Jacob (11 years)

1. Why do you like coming to Sunday School?

To learn more about Jesus

2. Favourite Bible Story -

Story about the Five loaves of Bread and two Fish





Judith (8 years)

1. Why do you like coming to Sunday School?

To learn about Jesus

2. Favourite Bible Story -

The story of David and Goliath

3. What did you learn from this Bible Story?

To pray like David when facing

CHURCH RE-OPENED

In July, the curfew was lifted for a few weeks, so we resumed classes at the Manse terrace during service, and when some of our children couldn't come to church in person, they joined us on Zoom. Here is our last group pic taken when uncle Buddhika came to join us.

BACK TO SS ONLINE

As church closes again due to COVID-19 cases increasing, we all returned to online sessions from the safety of our home. Each week we all offer prayers at the end of our lesson before saying goodbye and the kids pray for each other, praise God for the blessing of being able to meet online, pray for the sick and to end the pandemic and for God's guidance and protection.

We welcome any children who would like to join our Sunday School either in person when the Church is open or online any Sunday, if you cannot manage to get to St Andrew's Scots Kirk.

Please do contact Norma at nsswyng@gmail.com and Buwanika at buwanika93@yahoo.com. Sunday School takes place at 9.30am Sri Lanka time.

Buwanika & Norma





Netherlee Cottage

Life has been difficult at the Cottage over the past few months for all the reasons associated with lockdowns and isolation. The ladies need to develop shopping activities and social skills all of which are difficult in these circumstances. They have however managed to get to Church when we have been allowed to open our doors and to outside activities at the park.



We celebrated Sinhala New Year at the Cottage with sparklers and lanterns and Easter brunch at the Church on Easter Sunday.

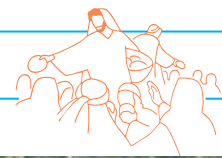


Lunch was supplied by friends from Australia and by our neighbours to celebrate special events.



The second Covid vaccine for the residents were given by the army which has a mobile tuk-tuk service.

The Community House is working well and the savings of the residents suggest we will have funds available for next year's rent.



The Lunch Project

The Lunch Project commenced in 2018 as the community of St Andrews Scots Kirk felt a need to support the wider community in the vicinity of the church. Inspired by the Soup Bowl project of our neighbouring Methodist Church Kollupitiya, we visited, observed and learnt the successes of their project. As the Methodist Church served lunch on a Friday, we commenced serving lunch every Thursday.

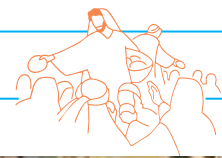
We had a robust team of regular servers, regular donors and a reliable supplier of wholesome lunch which was served on the Church premises, creating an ambience of camaraderie as we ate and chatted together.

COVID19 presented challenges and due to health protocols we were no longer able to gather to eat together. So we commenced handing out packed lunches at the gate. We were able to see our regulars at a distance and converse briefly about life in challenging times.

Sri Lanka then went into lockdown with curfew and we were aware that many of our 'lunchers' were daily wage earners, people who were part of the thriving informal economy who support many areas of life in the city. Many returned to their villages unable to pay rent and utilities, while others were permanent and long term residents of the city.

We had many regular 'lunchers' from the adjacent Muhandiram Watte located next to our local police station. The 'watte' is a densely populated housing scheme with over 350 dwellings encompassing low income groups and also daily wage earners. Learning that food was scarce, we utilized the funds from The Lunch Project to purchase dry rations and daily necessities, distributing these under police guidance to over 150 households. We repeated this exercise when the second COVID wave hit.





During the next period of lockdown the request was for fresh produce; vegetables for nutrition with the escalating price of produce and interprovincial travel restrictions precluding the transport of produce.

Our first donation was to Muhandiram Watte and St Micheal's Watte of Colombo 3 delivering 150 packs of vegetables. The Registrar for Colombo 3 handled distribution with police presence for Muhandiram Watte, while our able helping hands at SASK, Kumar, Charles and Croos handled distribution for St Michael's Watte. The criteria of the beneficiaries were the elderly and unemployed.

Our second donation of fresh produce was to the Modera/Mattakkuliya region due to a request by one of our regular 'lunchers' as many of her team reside in the area. The school in the area functioned as the distribution centre and the Principal and staff, together with the OIC of Modera police

supported to ensure discipline during distribution. We distributed 180 packs of fresh produce.

We still receive regular donations each month and are grateful that the donors are confident that we utilise the funds to distribute dry rations, fresh produce or packed lunches depending on the constantly changing situation due to COVID restrictions. We continue our mission to feed those in need in difficult times.

If you wish to donate to The Lunch Project, the account no is 101000786967 at NDB bank and the name of the account is 'Lunch Project'

Our Thursday Lunch Team currently comprise Priscilla, Yamini and myself.

Shalini Wickramasuriya





Ward 8 – Mulleriyawa Halfway Home

“.....God has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”
Hebrews 13:5

The SASK Journey with Ward 8 has been a long and winding road with many a rewarding twists and turns that has got us to where we are today.

Our relationship with the Ward 8 Team continues to deepen with a greater sense of understanding and bonding.

We have not been allowed to visit the ward since 2020 due to the 'Covid Crisis'. However, with a constant flow of communication we have lent a helping hand when needed and support has been offered in a timely manner and at most times their needs have been anticipated and attended to.

SASK has assisted and supported in the following:

FACILITY MANAGEMENT

- A broken part of the ceiling was repaired with the aid of the church. Another part of the ceiling now needs attention, which will be done when permitted to do so.
- A large board to hold toothbrushes was presented by the church which came in handy with the looking more orderly
- The Church also donated a stationery cupboard and other items which were required to follow the '5S' concept (Lean Methodology: Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)
- The Nurses Bathroom too was improved by installing a shower, tap and mirror
- The supply of adult pampers which is of great help to two patients

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- In 2020, the cooking of rice in the ward kitchen brought the ladies closer to their goal of preparing meals in their own kitchens which will give them much satisfaction and greater control of nutrition /meal distribution
- Letters of acknowledgement for sponsorships and donations have been received by SASK from the National Institute of Mental Health





RAY OF HOPE

In order to create a positive atmosphere and some excitement in the New Year Season; the hospital organised the 'Avurudhu Kumari' Contest (New Year Beauty Pageant) with the Church sponsoring the contestant Miss Pushpa's attire

Miss Pushpa was the first runner up at the Pageant and appeared on National TV!

THE 'C' WORD

17th June was a sad day when we received the news of the first COVID positive patient. PCR tests were performed on all the patients and they tested positive. This resulted in a move to the main Angoda hospital and Ward 8 being shut down.

Sadly, we lost 3 patients: Prema, Margaret & Jayasinghe
We were encouraged by the news on 29th June that 30 patients were back at the ward and required some basic amenities and toiletries which we supplied. None were in the ICU.





Helping Hands

The HH Campaign moves on despite the Pandemic. It is largely due to the untiring efforts of the Rev.Ian, Anna, Gillian, Lakshmi and Joubert.

The month of April is an important month in the Sri Lanka calendar. It is the month of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. We made prior arrangements to make it special time for all our Helping Hands beneficiaries. In addition to the monthly stipend, we also gave them a gift of provisions. The package contained rice, sugar, milk powder, tea, noodles, lentils, jam, biscuits, chocolates etc. The cost of a bag was about Rs.2,000. The bag was quite heavy and they found it difficult to carry but they were all happy to receive this New Year bonanza.

The month of May brought floods which affected a few of our beneficiaries. Prasad lives in a flood prone area and the surrounding land goes under water. Prasad is an amputee and wading through flood waters on one leg is a difficult exercise. Pathmalatha lives with her husband and three children, also in a flooding area but she lives on the 11th floor of a new building and so there is no danger of the flood waters reaching her doorstep. It was not about the bad weather that she sought help for, but needed financial help to settle the water bills that had gone into arrears being in danger of the water supply being disconnected. She was, however given additional handouts earlier in the year so her appeal was not favourably considered. We remain in touch with her, encouraging her to pay her bills on time.

There was also a bereavement in the Helping Hands family when Parvathi lost her husband, who had been ailing for awhile. Parvathi is a Crystalgazer and a Fortune Teller and perhaps had premonitions of the unfolding events ahead of time. Parvathi

like all gypsies use dancing monkeys and swaying cobras to make a living, reading palms. For her readings, she pulls out an ola leaf manuscript from her bag, which is quite impressive. However, Parvathi can hardly read. The younger generation have moved away from the monkeys and cobras. The males have taken to knife sharpening with a small grinding wheel mounted on a box, walking from house to house sharpening knives and scissors. It is a pity that life is difficult for them. Very often, they are mugged by the hooligans of the area who rob them of their meagre earnings. Their only remedy is to run and escape from these predators as taking recourse to the police complaints procedure doesn't work for them.

Carmel Rose has returned home after a short stay in the hospital. Carmel is always well behaved and soft spoken but it is quite lamentable that she suddenly goes into a mental breakdown and becomes quite aggressive, needing hospitalisation.

Kumudini who was suspended from the Helping Hands family for a short period as a disciplinary measure for having taken money under false pretences, is knocking on our doors again, pleading to be reenlisted.

Premadasa, the only male in the all- female group, is very feeble now, with his health is fast deteriorating. He cannot walk and finds it difficult to recognise faces. We now go to his house to give him the money.

There was a slight hiccup in the July payment due to funds not being readily available, but this was overcome, thanks to Anna's intervention and we managed to keep to the schedule of the second Thursday each month to distribute funds.

Our thanks to Livingston Church for their continued support of the Helping Hands Project in Colombo

Helping Hands Team





The Nomination Committee

SASK has been without a permanent Minister since November 2015. The International Presbytery gave its approval for SASK to call a Minister in October 2018 and the Nominating Committee were selected by the congregation in February 2019 to represent various interests and age groups within the community.

Advertisements were placed with the Presbyterian Communities in Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and South Africa. 7 applications were received and all were evaluated by the Nominating Committee. Questions were formulated by the Committee to evaluate each candidate and used consistently across all applicants. The questions seek to understand the experience of the applicant, how they would respond to specific situations, the decisions they may take and what extra energy and knowledge they would bring to SASK. Each member of the Committee asked a series of questions and everybody evaluated the responses using a scoring system.

The International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland applied to the Vacancy Procedure Committee in Edinburgh for a change to the tenure and the training process to facilitate Ministers from outside of the Church of Scotland. This change was granted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in October 2020. The restricted call for an SASK Minister is now three years with the option to

renew the term for another three years and the training to acclimatize the Minister to the Presbyterian ways of the Church of Scotland is now the responsibility of the International Presbytery. This was a huge change which has helped to reduce the time and expense associated with placing a permanent Minister in the pulpit at SASK. The SASK Kirk Session also decided to slow the process of looking for a Minister during 2020 whilst we evaluated the finances of the Church and the preferences of choice. The procedure was started with renewed energy at the beginning of 2021.

Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to select a candidate that would be the best fit for the future of SASK, to sit well with the thinking and attitudes of the SASK congregation and the position of SASK in the community of Colombo.

The Nomination Committee have expanded their advertising base across the world and have received new applications for evaluation. The Committee regularly spend 5 to 6 hours over 2 interviews evaluating each candidate and will continue doing so, until they find the best fit for SASK.

The elders have worked hard to keep the congregation active during a very difficult year. Thanks to all our members and friends who have helped St Andrew's Scots Kirk stay afloat in the stormy seas of a worldwide pandemic.

The Nomination Committee



In Memory of a Rare Breed of Sri Lankan Woman - Chloé de Soysa



A long standing and active member of St. Andrew's Scots Kirk

Despite her small stature, Chloé de Soysa had an awe inspiring personality—one where she could walk into a room and command any audience. It was music that introduced me to this larger than life personality, and a few years later, I received a phone call from Aunty Chloé inviting me to Sunday lunch to discuss new prospects for Vox one, my choir in Negombo. We were joined by Lilamani Dias Benson that afternoon and the three of us proceeded to have a delightfully interesting and informative conversation on music and art.

At the end of our luncheon meeting, Aunty Chloé called me aside and handed me a musical score—the Sinhalese setting of the Ceylon Liturgy, composed by her uncle, Devar Surya Sena. She requested me to present it to the congregation on behalf of the Devar Surya Sena Trust, whispering to me that. "It has to suit a cosmopolitan audience". A month later, under the leadership and direction of Rev. Dr. Roderick Campbell, incumbent minister of St. Andrew's Scots Kirk, the Order of Service was prepared.

Given that St. Andrew's has an international congregation, introducing a trilingual service was challenging. But Aunty Chloé was adamant that music breaks down barriers and transcends boundaries. On the second Sunday in Lent 2015, history was made at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk when the choir and congregation blended seamlessly in an experience of inspiring music and worship. Led by Rev. Dr. Campbell and Denham Pereira at the Organ, it was truly an experience to treasure. Aunty Chloé had looked into every detail of the service, from the floral arrangements to sharing traditional sweet meats served with the congregation after the service.

Aunty Chloé was for me, a dear friend, a godmother and supporter. She supported many of my concerts and recitals with the Colombo Philharmonic Choir, never failing to attend them too. I treasured her professional and personal advice, and even

the occasional constructive criticism of my work. I enjoyed regular visits to her beautiful home and regular phone conversations giving her updates on the music and arts scene. She would relate stories of the World War II and her days in the fort as a pioneering working woman when she was the Founder Chairman of the Women's Chamber of Commerce.

Chloé de Soysa was a rare breed of Sri Lankan women. Classic elegance and simplicity defined Chloé, a mix of legend, icon and pioneering woman. She was the oldest member of St. Andrews Scots Kirk and enjoyed attending regular services. Even when she was unable to attend she would always request a copy of the order of service and the sermon. Her words to me will always echo, "Music unites where words divide."

Every once in a while, one comes across someone who leaves an indelible mark which stays etched in one's memory. Aunty Chloé, was that person to me.

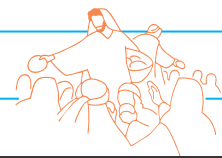
Harin Amirthanathan

Conductor, Colombo Philharmonic Choir

(Harin is a guest organist at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk Sunday Services)



The Story Behind the Hymn - Amazing Grace by John Newton



It's a hymn we are all too familiar with; it soothes the brow, warms the heart and calms the soul. It reminds us that God is always with us and His Grace is all embracing.

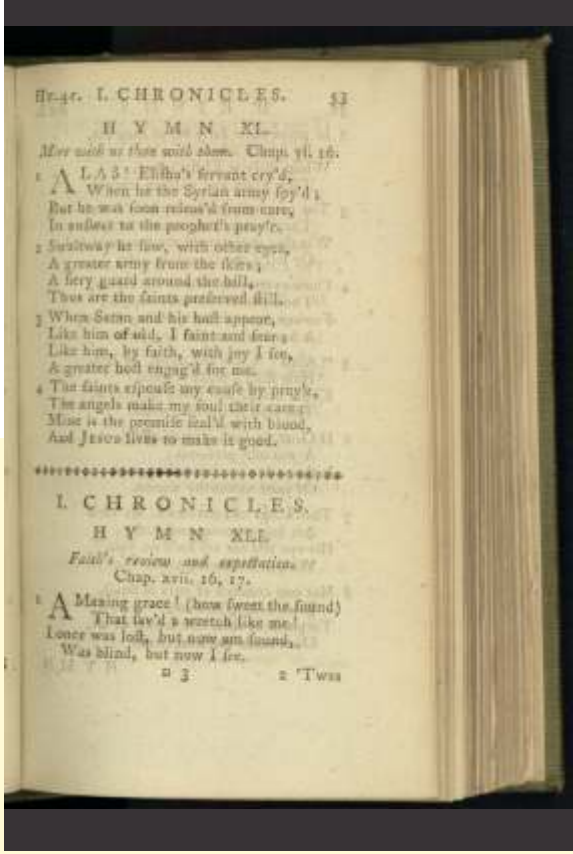
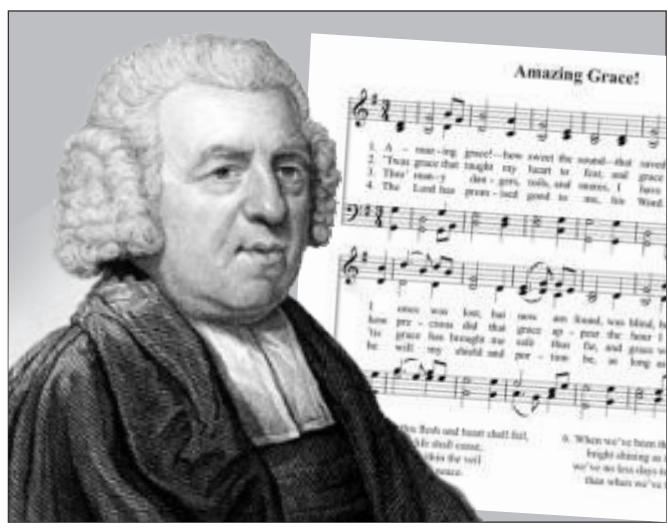
John Newton was born in London in 1725 to a father who was a sea captain and a mother who was a devout Christian. Her time on earth was short lived and she knew the disease ravaging her body will take her soon. So she taught her son the Bible.

John was seven when his mother died. He went to sea with his father when he was eleven and by the time he was seventeen, had joined the British Royal Navy on a man-of-war ship. As a sailor in the Atlantic slave trade, he worked on a slave ship of which he eventually became captain, ferrying slaves from Africa to international ports, for slaves to be sold for the best prices.

The sea made him drift away from his mother's teachings, sinking him deeper in the pit of sin, with each passing year. He engaged in physically and spiritually destructive behaviour which saw him being demoted which he didn't take to too lightly. He composed disrespectful songs about the ship's captain and was very committed to self-destructive vices, frequently drowning himself in drink. He prided himself on creative profanity and sharply attacked Christian belief. He eventually deserted the Royal Navy for which he was flogged.

One night in 1748 off the coast of County Donegal in Ireland, a violent storm battered his ship. The ship was waterlogged, the mast broke in two and he dropped to his knees and asked God for mercy. It was on this night that he came face to face with the God he learned about in his childhood.

It was also on this night that his life changed forever. He gave up the sea, settled in Liverpool and married Mary Catlett. He felt God's call to preach and was soon on the way of this calling, preaching at the parish church in Olney, England. His special touch to end his sermons each Sunday was a poetic verse he would compose himself. And it was on one of these Sundays, that he wrote the original, "His Amazing Grace".



The original lyrics of John Newton's Amazing Grace – Olney Hymns 1779

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

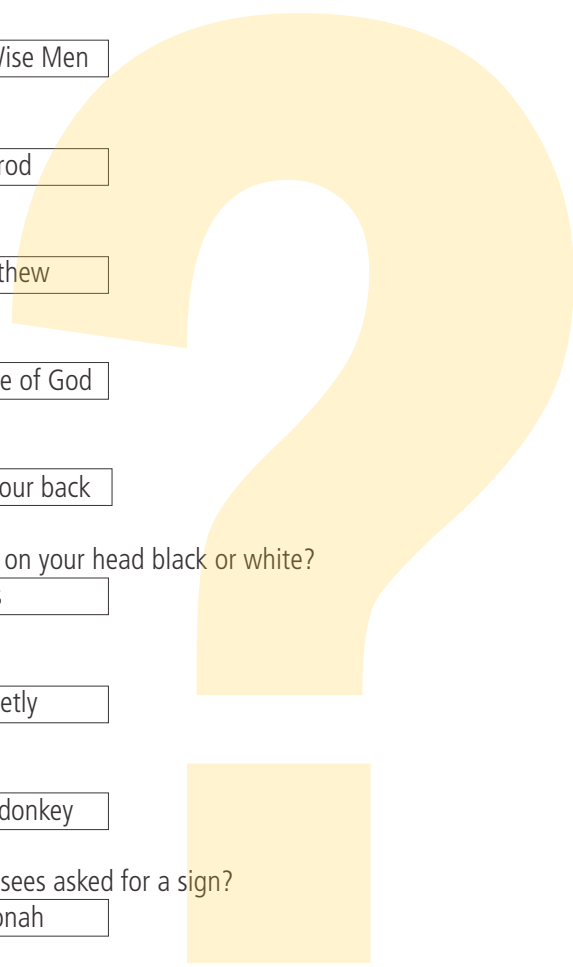
The Lord has promis'd good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who call'd me here below,
Will be forever mine.



- 1) Who asked Joseph not to fear taking Mary as his wife?
- 2) Which ruler wanted the baby Jesus killed?
- 3) Who baptised Jesus?
- 4) What does Jesus say that the meek will inherit?
- 5) What does Jesus say to do if your right hand causes you sin?
- 6) What was Jesus talking about when he said you can't make one hair on your head black or white?
- 7) How should we practice charitable works, prayers and fasting?
- 8) Where was Matthew sitting when Jesus called him?
- 9) Which prophet did Jesus refer to when some of the Scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign?



Answers

- 1) Angel of the Lord
- 2) Herod
- 3) John the Baptist
- 4) The earth
- 5) Cut it off
- 6) Oaths
- 7) In secret
- 8) In a tax booth
- 9) Jonah

Graham's Funny Bone!



Compiled by Graham De Kretser



What kind of fruit did Noah take on the ark?
Pears of course.
Which animal on Noah's ark did not come in pairs?
Worms. They came in apples.



By the time the morning service was to begin, only one man was in the church. The priest said to him, "it looks like everyone has slept in. Do you want to go home or should I preach the sermon?"

The man replied, "When I go to feed the chickens and only one comes, I still feed it."

The priest took that as a yes, mounted the pulpit and delivered an hour-long sermon. At the end, he asked the man what he thought.

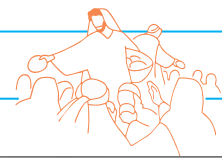
His answer: "When I go to feed the chickens and only one comes, I don't give it the whole bucket!"

A Pastor was preaching fire and brimstone one Sunday morning. At times he would stop and say, "If you want to go to heaven, raise your hand". Each time he asked, more and more people raised their hands. Near the end of the service, he noticed that one man in the front row had never raised his hand. Frustrated, the Pastor asked, "Brother, don't you want to go to heaven when you die?" The man responded, "I sure do when I die, but I thought you were getting a group together to go today!"



"Where is my Sunday paper?" loudly asked the irate customer calling the local newspaper delivery service. "Ma'am," said the newspaper employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until tomorrow, on Sunday." There was quite a long pause on the other end of the phone followed by the woman muttering, "So that's why no one was at church today."





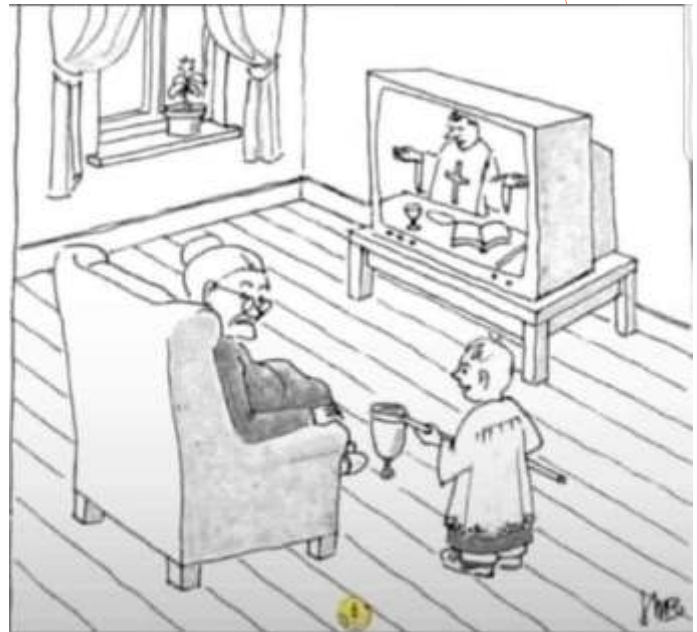
Do You Know Your Hymns?

- Dentist's Hymn Crown Him with Many Crowns.
- Weatherman's Hymn There Shall Be Showers of Blessings.
- Contractor's Hymn The Church's One Foundation.
- Tailor's Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy.
- Golfer's Hymn There's a Green Hill Far Away.
- Politician's Hymn Standing on the Promises!
- Optometrist's Hymn Open My Eyes That I Might See.
- IRS Agent's Hymn I Surrender All.
- Gossip's Hymn Pass It On.
- Electrician's Hymn Send The Light..
- Shopper's Hymn Sweet Bye and Bye.
- Realtor's Hymn I've Got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop.
- Massage Therapist's Hymn. He Touched Me.

AND for those who speed on the highway - a few hymns:

- 55 mph God Will Take Care of You
- 75 mph Nearer My God To Thee
- 85 mph This World Is Not My Home
- 95 mph Lord, I'm Coming Home
- 100 mph Precious Memories

Give me a sense of humor, Lord, Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some humor out of life, And pass it on to other folks.



Granny watching mass on tv & grandson taking collection 😊

Lack of proof reading can change the direction of your church FAST





St Andrew's Scots Kirk, Colombo

**We are international, interdenominational, open to all
All are welcome.**

**Sunday morning services are currently halted due to pandemic regulations.
Services will resume at 9.30am every Sunday once these restrictions are
lifted.**

Mission Work at Scots Kirk

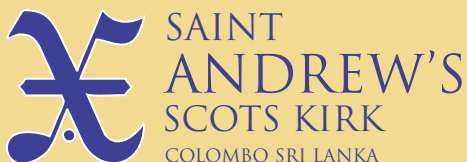
**Helping Hands - Financial support for those disadvantaged and living in the
area of St Andrew's. Contact Joubert +94777722736**

**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.**

**Our Church is used by
The Korean Church every Sunday.
The Four Square Church, every Sunday evening and Thursday lunch time.**



73, Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka T: +94 11 2 323765

<http://www.scotskirk.lk/> <https://www.facebook.com/standrewsscotskirk/>

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