

## Calendar for January 2017

Date	Time	Event	Location
1	11:00	Service - Luke 2:21-38 Give and Receive	Church
4	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
8	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Luke 2:39-52 The Boy Saviour's Wisdom	Church
10-12		Minister at Conference	Crieff
15	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Pulpit Supply	Church
18	19:30	Property Committee	Eden Room
	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
19	10:30	Presbytery Prayer	Haddington
	18:30	Pilot Light Meeting	Bigden's
22	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Luke 3:1-6 The way is being prepared for unity	Church
23	19:00	Mentor Support	Manse
24	14:30	Minister speaking at the Guild	Halls
26	12 to 2	Ploughman's Lunch	Halls
29	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Luke 3:7-20 Religious and Immoral Rebuke	Church
	11:15	Unity Tea/Coffee and scones after the service	Church
	18:30	Open Door - Isaiah 53:4-5 Hurts Healed	Church
30	08:30	Grammar school Assembly	Grammar
	19:30	Congregational Board Meeting	Eden Room

## D.P.C. Thanks YOU

for every contribution and all your hard work throughout last year, and previous years. As we continue to grow and reach out into our needy world, we urge you to pray and resource all the various ministries in Our Church for Christ

Your minister and the Kirk Session



## Dunbar Parish Church

Minister

Rev Gordon Stevenson

The Manse, 10 Bayswell Road, Dunbar

EH42 1AB Tel: 01368 865482

Email: [revgstev@gmail.com](mailto:revgstev@gmail.com)

[www.dunbarparishchurch.org](http://www.dunbarparishchurch.org)

# MAGAZINE



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January 2017

### TREASURE CHEST

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



...that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- COLOSSIANS 2:2-3 NIV

IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR TRESPASSES, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE WHICH HE LAVISHED ON US. IN ALL WISDOM AND INSIGHT. Ephesians 1:7, 8

What are your goals for 2017? What are your spiritual goals for 2017? Which will you work hardest at?

Sunday & Special SERVICES		READERS	PRAYERS
1st	11:00 Luke 2:21-38 Give and Receive	Mike Mylne	Catherine Hodgson
8th	11:00 Luke 2:39-52 The Boy Saviour's Wisdom	Denise Brunton	John Muirhead
15th	11:00 Guest Preacher	Sarah Turner	Mike Bigden
22nd	11:00 Luke 3:1-6 The way is being prepared for unity	DCT	DCT
29th	11:00 Luke 3:7-20 Religious and Immoral Rebuke 18:30 Open Door - Hurts Healed Isaiah 53:4-5	Anne Creedican	Youth

## Ministers Letter **January** 2017 : Winning the jackpot

A New Year beckons and the spectrum of those reading this will include optimists and pessimists; those suffering and those rejoicing.

Many people dream of life getting easier or more prosperous, as if money, status or their wishes coming true would make things better. Lots of rich and famous people have gone to the grave, despite their wealth, having made a complete mess of their life.

Proverbs 15:6 is an example of God's word warning of this and stating that **real wealth** is found in Him spiritually. "**Great wealth is in the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of those who do evil.**"

Matthew's amazing 6<sup>th</sup> chapter at v20 is well known and applicable on this theme too. "**But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;**" The point is whatever we attain or amass in this life, unless it is **eternal treasure**, is futile and will disappoint when our life legacy is reviewed - even if we leave millions to fight some disease or injustice in this temporary world.

I don't know if you play the lottery or gamble in other ways, but I would seriously urge you all to avoid gambling with your eternal future - it is **much too incredible** to take for granted or to assume it will arrive no matter what kind of life you live.

I am not suggesting that I lead a perfect life but I am very blessed indeed as I get to share the **unfathomable riches** of God often, as part of my job. The apostle Paul knew this too.

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, **to preach the unfathomable riches of Christ**, Ephesians 3:8 .*

So as we head into 2017 we cannot know the future in one sense, yet by getting our lives right with Almighty God, in another sense we can.

Please don't just take my word for it or ignore what I have to say on this. Just before I write this I was called to say that one of our newer attendees has just become a Christian at the age of 68. He says, "it is a wonderful feeling, sort of like being happy drunk, but I could not believe God would so readily forgive all the wrong things I have done over 68 years, but He has."

God really loves those who hunger and thirst for righteousness - and He promises that they will be satisfied.

This God, the real one, He is well worth meeting. Why not make 2017 the best year of your life and give your Church some more great news to enjoy?

*Your local Preacher of the unfathomable riches of God Gordon*

## **Miss\_ion Matters** (from Helen, Miss\_ionary correspondent)

Continuing to inform your prayers with information from the Open Doors World Watch List and Operation World. Please pray for faithful believers in these challenging situations.

### **#4 Afghanistan**

Leader: President Ashraf Ghani

Population: 33 million (0.05% Christian)

Main Religion: Islam

Government: Islamic Republic

Source of Persecution: Islamic extremism

Area: 652,225 sq km Dry and mountainous but with fertile valleys. This strategic land has been fought over by rival foreign empires for nearly 3000 years.



Praise God that attitudes are changing in this country. Young Afghans, who have known nothing but war, long for opportunities in education and employment, and some freedom of choice. Reconstruction of war-devastated infrastructure (roads, medical facilities, schools etc.) is crucial for the nation's future alongside the rebuilding of humanitarian resources. Health services are improving slowly. More children can go to school. Small business initiatives give people an opportunity to earn a respectable living and provide for others.

For decades a number of Christian agencies have been actively serving the people here. Practical demonstrations of Christian care and love have touched many Afghans, breaking down prejudices and preparing hearts for the gospel. Pray for courage in the face of adversity and wisdom to know how best to demonstrate Christ's love to the Afghan people. There is no visible Christian church in Afghanistan, even expatriate Christians are at risk.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

- For protection for believers as Islamic extremism increases.
- For wisdom for Christian parents, who do not wish to send their children to madrassah for fear of being revealed if they share their faith with their children.
- For comfort and strength for isolated believers.

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

1 Corinthians 12:26

**Transport to the Church:** We can arrange for someone to bring you to church and take you home each week. Please phone **Jenny Manning** by the Thursday evening, on **01368 840334**. If you could offer someone a lift, even occasionally, you could be a reserve driver, please let Jenny know, it would be greatly appreciated.

### Prayer for the New Year

May the Almighty bless you.  
For the blessings in life and everything that comes your way.  
May you leave behind all anger, pain, fear and sadness as the year makes a fresh start.  
All God's Blessings to you for a Happy 2017



### Pastoral Notes

We recently offered God's loving compassion to the families listed below, whom we remember in our prayers

Jean Conroy  
Robert Duncan

### PLEASE PRAY...

**For your office bearers and all who lead and teach in Your Church here. Pray for more resources to share the load and for all those we can aid in Christ's work.**

## Bible Book Club

Meeting next on

**5<sup>th</sup> January**

Meetings will be held at various venues always check with Emma/Lorna

**We will be looking at War Room**

Any questions please call  
**Emma Weaver** 01368 459082

Sermon's are available on the Church website. Use the link on the Home page ([www.dunbarparishchurch.org](http://www.dunbarparishchurch.org)) to access them

*The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17*

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.  
Isaiah 43:19

DATE	SUNDAY DUTY TEAMS	FLOWERS in CHURCH	CLEANING ROTA (U) = upstairs (D) = downstairs
January 1	<b>January</b> Derek MacDonald Denise Brunton Margaret Croft Ian Hastie Lena Glass May Low Lorna McLeod Margaret MacDonald Ian Manning	<b>January Convenor:</b> <b>Barbara Leslie</b> Vacant	2 Jonathan & Christine Idle (U) Val & Will Collin (D)
8		Mrs M Wright	9 Margaret & Derek MacDonald (U) Lorna McLeod & Margaret Croft (D)
15		Mrs M Low	16 Margaret & Ian Coltart (U) (D)VACANT
22		Mrs P Rimmer	23 Fiona Fleming & Barbara Leslie (U) Gill Phillip & Alistair Matthews
29		Miss D Davie	30 Laura Pulner & Laura Girvan (U) Ian & Jenny Manning (D)
February 5	<b>February</b> Eric Easton Ian Darling Kath Ellis Jason Kay Barbara Leslie Alan Low Tom Manson	<b>February Convenor:</b> <b>Val Collin</b> Mrs A Creedican	6 Moyra Wright & Anne Creedican (U) Sandy & Ian Darling (D)
12		Mrs D Brunton	13 Gordon & Gail Stevenson (U) Jenny & Jason Kay (D)
19		Mr K Duncan for the late Mrs M Duncan	20 Val & Will Collin (U) Jonathan & Christine Idle (D)
26		Gordon & Gail Stevenson	27 Margaret Croft & Lorna McLeod (U) Margaret & Derek MacDonald (D)

Would you be able to deliver flowers after the Sunday Service to folks who have been ill, come out of hospital or bereaved? We desperately need volunteers. If you can, please speak to Moyra Wright or Denise Brunton. THANK YOU!



## Article Series 8 (pt 8) "Mene Mene Tekel Parsin"

Read *Daniel 5:1-30*: Weighed on the scales and found wanting v27 Belshazzar, is now king in place of Nebuchadnezzar v1. He has organised a party for 1000 of his nobles to get drunk. He greatly offends God as he plans to use the sacred Jewish gold and silver stolen from the temple of God in Jerusalem v2, 3. As the drink takes effect, they began to worship false gods of metal, wood and stone v4.

Following this idolatry and drunkenness the drama unfolds; a human like finger appears and writes on the wall. It is not ghostly vandalism: it is frightening v5, 6. Then in v7 the king calls in all his experts. (He acts just like his predecessor) He will reward anyone who can explain this message. In v8 we hear that none can help and that he is now more terrified v9. The queen steps in and offers a solution - Daniel v10-12.

In v13-16 Belshazzar explains the situation and offers Daniel great rewards if he can help. In v17 we see Daniel is not driven by financial or status rewards - he will explain the message. The interpretation is, Nebuchadnezzar was given greatness by God v19, but as his heart became hard he was stripped of his position and lived with the donkeys in the field v20, 21. That was until he looked heavenward and acknowledged the LORD as being sovereign over everything. Despite past lessons, Belshazzar has not humbled himself, and even worse he has set himself above and in conflict with the LORD by using the sacred vessels inappropriately and by worshipping false idols v22, 23. So he has dishonoured the God who holds his life in His hand.

Therefore the message is, Your reign will be brought to an end. You have been weighed "spiritually" and found to be without any substance fit for eternity, and your kingdom will be divided v24-28.

Belshazzar takes this bad news pretty well. He delivers the rewards Daniel did not desire - yet that very night Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede took over his kingdom. It is a swift judgment. That head of gold Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream is now no more.

God's judgment is not always so swift. Often the *greedy oppressors* or *worst sinners* seem to have it all their own way. However, there is no doubt that God will judge us all. Time and time again we are given scriptures which make this patently clear. The message for us is simple: **If we were weighed in the spiritual balance, would we be found wanting?**

What does God have to do to get the reality of how we live and the potential consequences or rewards into our minds? We do have free choice; obey Him and be blessed or serve our own ends and see our lives amount to nothing. How is your life shaping up spiritually as you head into 2017? Are you hearing and heeding God's word or taking a huge gamble which will never ever pay off? Jackpot or crackpot?

*LORD let us not be found wanting spiritually.* Yours Gordon.

## My 1st Book of questions and answers! Section 5 - Salvation

47. Did he have an earthly father?  
Answer: No. He came into the world  
by the power of the Holy Spirit

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 1:18*

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### Opt - ins : Serving

There are many rota's you  
can serve on among us.

Add your name where you  
are **gifted to serve**.

Coffee/Tea rota

Cleaning rota

Sunday Bible reading rota

Sunday prayer rota

Film night catering rota

Prayer Breakfast leader rota

Prayer Breakfast catering rota

### Your Elder

All members and adherents should  
contact their elder if they know of any  
pastoral needs. If you don't know  
who to contact, ask Alan Low

### CLEANING ROTA



We are desperately looking for  
more help with the cleaning of  
the Church. If you are able to  
help could you please speak  
to Sandy Darling.

The more folk on the rota, the  
less number of times in the  
year you would take a turn!

### DPC Verse for 2017

The LORD says, I will guide  
you along the best pathway  
for your life. I will advise you  
and watch over you

Psalm 32:8

## Hall Bookings

Please Contact: Sonia Young  
she keeps the master diary and  
updates the hall one.  
email [bhraggie@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bhraggie@tiscali.co.uk)  
Telephone: 07874 816326

## Prayer Breakfast Rota

8 Jan - Jim Thompson  
15 Jan - Michael & Laura Veitch  
22 Jan - Mike & Rachel Mylne  
29 Jan - Emma Weaver

5 Feb - Alison Mitchell  
12 Feb - Ian Manning  
19 Feb - Ian & Margaret Coltart  
26 Feb - Catherine Hodgson

## HOME GROUPS

Wednesday evenings at 7.30 p.m.

Contact Ian /Jenny Manning  
2 Temple Mains Cottages,  
Innerwick 01368 840334

Jonathan and Christine Idle  
4 Salisbury Walk, Dunbar  
01368 860922

See Calendar for dates

## BASICS BANK BUDDY SCHEME

If you are not already part of the  
Buddy Scheme please drop an email  
to [basicsbankbuddy@gmail.com](mailto:basicsbankbuddy@gmail.com)  
and you will be kept up to date with  
a weekly email and shopping list.

## CHURCH PRAYER MEETINGS

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday's at  
7:30 pm In the Eden Room

To be a Christian without prayer is  
no more possible than to be alive  
without breathing.

Martin Luther King JR

## PASTORAL TEAM

Do you know someone who could use  
some pastoral help?

Perhaps someone infirm, lonely, or  
bereaved of a loved one? Maybe an  
illness or operation or other suffering  
has knocked you a bit? Any member or  
adherent who is interested contact  
Moyra Wright (tel. 863316) or Mike  
Bigden (tel. 865385) directly or via any  
Church member.

The pastoral team are genuinely  
interested in your well-being.

## Magazine Input:

Please send your items in by  
**Friday 20 January** for February  
Magazine - out on 29<sup>th</sup> January,  
or if you would like a regular  
E\_Magazine

Tel: 862903 Denise or email:  
[dmburton@gmail.com](mailto:dmburton@gmail.com)

Weekly Notices: Contact Denise

## TEEN PAGE... Best Groupon Ever?

We all love a cheeky wee bargain!

And this is the month of the 'sale' - January sales. There's nothing better than getting that item we had our eye on (but couldn't afford or didn't want to pay full price for) reduced or even ½ price. Ahh! The happiness it brings! Something we really wanted and at a fabulously reduced price! ☺

But even throughout the year we are now bombarded with various offers like Black Friday (which seems to last longer than just a Friday?!) and the new online phenomenon – Groupon/ Wowcher/ Itison..... etc. For those that don't know, they are online discount website that offer deals on things from hotels, restaurants, activities, gifts etc. I can get up to 20/30 a day in my email box!

Derek and I were recently having lunch in a well know Pizza chain when I 'googled' (other search engines are available) to see if there were any money off vouchers for the restaurant. And sure enough.... we got 20% off the cost of our lunch. All we had to do? Show the waiter the code. It was as easy as that!

But what about getting a good deal on something we really need? We have the Best 'Groupon' deal ever...in Jesus!!

*The offer:* eternal life, salvation, a place in heaven....  
*And the price?* Nothing!

The price has already been paid. God sent his only son to die for our sins – so we could live with him forever. This deal doesn't give us a brief time of happiness. It gives us eternal joy!

Aren't we glad it was God who set up this deal? We would never be able to afford the price for our eternal salvation ...so we are offered it free. What do we need to do to get this deal? Is there a code to download for this? No! It's even easier than that. All we need to do is believe and accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. So go on.... get the best deal around!

**1 John 4:10** This is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

*Blessings Margaret*

## Row Raid for ERCC

In February I am taking on a massive challenge. I decided after being asked to go to row the Tasmanian coast, and I do it for the charity Rape Crisis. I will row over 200 kilometres wild camping on route, it's a massive challenge.

As a Christian who is active in this Church I am so thankful that we are outward looking involved in missions. However, I grieve sometimes as I know so many people broken on our doorstep many I know of affected by sexual violence, some in our congregation. It is an issue that affects so many that is hard to equip churches and provide resources, be understanding etc. to support those suffering the consequences of abuse. Victims can feel isolated, stigmatised and afraid to speak out. I have walked this path. Recovery is ongoing and it doesn't happen without a great deal of support and time. For any reading this who may be struggling. I want you to know you are not alone. In my times of need the church and Christians who take the stance of no sex before marriage, psychologically created a large hurdle, which prevented me from sharing how I felt. I needed support and to belong. So God has called me to a mission, to link my faith with the need right on our doorstep, to support those experts and volunteers who are specially trained to sustain their work, to confront and help prevent violence, and aid the healing of those affected.

When I heard the waiting lists are increasing and the ongoing funding of the staff hours ongoing struggle at Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (who provide key services locally) I had to step out to raise funds and awareness. I would have struggled to be here if it wasn't for the volunteers who made themselves available on the phone lines every day from 6. The flash backs and panic attacks, and the fear that no one believed me when I was dissociated. The police calling at any time that suited them, and I was alone and deeply depressed. I wouldn't be here or be able to praise God if it wasn't for Rape Crisis Edinburgh. God has since used my experiences to help others, in unimaginable ways, which is a massive testimony in itself.

I want to ensure the volunteers and counsellors and individuals who work to campaign, support victims and prevent sexual violence. It would mean a great deal to me if you could support or donate in anyway, and hold me in your prayers while I am away (February).

If you want to speak to me if you're suffering from these kind of issues please do. I will happily pray for you and am able to signpost you to those who helped me. The work they do as a charity is lifesaving.

<https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/rowraidforrapecrisis>

Many thanks Linda Greig

If you would like to find out more about *Violence Against Women* follow this link:

<http://www.restoredrelationships.org/>



## THANK YOU to everyone

who volunteered and delivered nearly 3500 leaflets across our parish last month, putting a simple Christian Christmas message and invitation into as many homes as we could.

This huge undertaking couldn't happen without willing volunteers taking to the streets, so thank you all very much. We may not see an immediate impact on our community or in our church, but continue to pray for our neighbours, look for opportunities to show love and friendship in unexpected places and God will work through you. We are His hands and feet in this place.

**Collection boxes**  
are available for  
your loose change  
to support our  
**Overseas Workers**  
currently in China,  
UAE and Spain



*Ask Helen*  
(Missionary correspondent)

### Prayer for Revival And

### Community Transformation

8-9 am Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> January  
Lighthouse Central  
Community Hub  
West Loan  
Prestonpans EH32 9NT

8-9 am Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February  
Salvation Army Tranent  
25 Winton Place  
Tranent EH33 1AE

8-9 am Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March  
St Peter's Episcopal Church  
High Street,  
Musselburgh EH21 7AG



## THE LIFE OF JESUS – AN OPPORTUNITY TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS



### Who He Is and Why He Matters

**6 week course starting 17<sup>th</sup> January**

**Tuesdays at 7.30 pm, in Eden Room**

As our saviour Jesus is the centre and the reason for our faith; we need to trust in Him; it isn't enough to be a good person to be part of His kingdom. But how much do we really understand about this person with whom we need a relationship stronger than any human friendship.

Over 6 studies "The Life of Jesus" looks at

1. Jesus as God's signpost to Himself
2. Jesus as the long awaited 'Messiah' but not quite as had been expected by some
3. Jesus bringing the Kingdom of God to earth
4. Jesus being our Judge and Friend
5. Jesus' death bringing a source of life, both more vibrant now and eternally
6. Jesus' resurrection involving a personal revolution.

The evenings will start with tea / coffee, followed by a short DVD presentation leading into discussion. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about Jesus, why He came to earth, what His purpose was, what the implications are and what it means to be part of His church.

Anyone interested should contact Martyn Cox or e-mail

[alphadunbar2016@gmail.com](mailto:alphadunbar2016@gmail.com)

## SPIRITUAL RICHES

Wise people **invest in eternity** rather than on earth things which will become someone else's. *Gordon Stevenson*

If we are **spiritually impoverished** it is not because the hand of grace is tightfisted; it is because the hand of faith is too weak. *Ronald Dunn*

It takes a radical break to turn from earth's trash to **heaven's treasure**... but God wants **our souls to be more prosperous** than in all the other areas of our lives. *Vance Havner*

Shame on us for being **spiritual paupers** when we are meant to be **princes fit for heaven**. *D. Martyn Lloyd Jones*

A **most incredible inheritance** is yours. All you need to do is repent and receive it. *David Shepherd*

Those who are **spiritually upright** are **vastly wealthy**. *C.H. Spurgeon*

It is highly unlikely that God will entrust us with **spiritual riches** until he sees that we are genuinely serving him appropriately. *David Watson*

How vast the **treasures** we possess

How **rich thy bounty**, King of grace

This world is ours, and **worlds to come**  
Earth is our lodge, and **heaven** our home  
*Isaac Watts*

Hunger and thirst after righteousness;  
yearn after **God's rich favour** A.W. Pink

## Starters for Sunday!

Start Sunday morning with a nice breakfast, coffee or tea, in good company. 9:30 in the Eden room. We chat over breakfast, then have a short time of reflection and prayer prior to worship at 11:00.

No need to worry, you can just sit back and listen or join in. If you are able to help in leading or catering speak to Michael Veitch or email: [michaelgveitch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michaelgveitch@yahoo.co.uk) for more information.

## Communion

In order to maintain accurate records of our Communicants, the Kirk Session is encouraging the congregation to hand in their Communion cards in the tray provided in the narthex. If you do not have one, can you please take one and place in the tray, or fill in the sign-in sheet at the table.

The next Communion is

**Sunday**

**5 March 2017**

Thank you for your co-operation.



East Lothian has an SU Regional Worker. Hazel Gray works with SU groups in all of the 6 secondary schools in the county and has positive contact with many of our primary schools. She participates in weekend activity camps, holiday clubs and discipleship events, including the Youth Alpha Group recently held at the Bleachingfield Centre.

## Pray Together!

A FREE fun-filled, afternoon prayer event, particularly aimed at families with primary school age children who can discuss, read and write (older or younger siblings are also welcome).



When: Sunday 5th February 14:30 - 16:30  
Where: Macdonald Houstoun House Hotel, Uphall

The vision of Pray Together! is to be:

- ☐ a place to discover new, uncomplicated ways to pray together
- ☐ a place of fun, exploring what it means to talk with God
- ☐ a place where Jesus is at the centre.

Booking is necessary (free event). Speak to Helen for more details.

Scripture Union Scotland have offered holiday events for P5-S6 children for over 70 years, with the aim of giving young people a superb holiday experience and providing a simple introduction to the Christian faith. Young people of any faith, or none, are welcome at all SU Holidays.

S.U. Holidays

YOU belong HERE

BOOKINGS OPEN 4TH JANUARY

## The Forgotten Diamond

Ashley turned the beautiful stone over and over again in her hand. "Are you really giving this to me?" she whispered in awe and wonder. The thought that her father was giving her this priceless diamond seemed almost too much to comprehend. "Yes, my darling daughter, I am giving you that diamond. Love and cherish it, and keep it ever in your thoughts." Ashley threw her arms around her father's neck. How she loved him! She couldn't imagine life without his love.

For the first few months after Ashley's father gave her the diamond, she guarded it as she would her own life. She spent hours gazing upon it, then went and told everyone she knew about her father's marvellous love. Her heart of gratitude showed in all she did. She was kind and loving toward others because her thoughts were focused on her father's kindness to her. She was always eager to serve and praise her father because her thoughts were completely consumed with him.

I'd like to stop here and say that Ashley faithfully treasured her diamond for the rest of her life and continually lived in the same joy she had those first few months, but I'm afraid that would not be true. Ever so gradually, Ashley began to become accustomed to the diamond she'd been given. Although the diamond itself never diminished in value one bit, she stopped thinking of it as much. While she was still kind toward others and told others of her father's love, she did so more from habit and duty than from gratitude and joy. Her words sounded like hollow recitations instead of heartfelt realities. "Ashley, can I talk with you?" Ashley's friend Eliza asked one afternoon. "Of course," Ashley replied, wondering what Eliza could want. "The diamond your father gave you—can you describe it to me? And can you tell me what that diamond means to you?" "Why, of course I can," Ashley replied. She stumbled through a description that sounded strangely vague even to her. Ashley's encounter with Eliza awakened her sleeping conscience. I have forgotten to gaze upon the diamond my father gave me! I've forgotten to let it bring me joy. Saddened at her folly, Ashley slowly walked upstairs and knocked on her father's study. One look at her father's face showed Ashley that he already knew how she had neglected his treasure. "Come, my dear, let's go look at the diamond again together," he said as he gently wiped her tears. With that, Ashley's father led her to the special case in which she kept her diamond. Ashley broke into a fresh set of tears when she saw it. She had forgotten how beautifully it glittered and glistened! Her heart felt overwhelmed once again by the incredible gift that her father had given her. "Oh, Father, please help me to never forget!" she whispered, looking up in love and admiration into her father's face.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

*Matthew 13:44*