

Calendar for October 2016

Date	Time	Event	Location
2	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Titus 1:1-16 "The Task of 'Your' Parish	Church
5	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
6	10:30	Presbytery Prayer	Haddington
	13:00	Exploring a call	Edinburgh
9	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - 2:1-15 "The Task of 'Your' Teaching"	Church
11	15:00	Mentor Meeting	Manse
	14:30	Guild Dedication	Halls
12	19:30	Prayer Meeting	Eden Room
13	13:20	S.U.	Grammar
	19:30	Pilot Lite Team meeting	Eden Room
14	19:30	Young Adults	Eden Room
16	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - 3:1-15 "The Task of 'Your' Witness	Church
	18:30	Arise Service Habakkuk 3:1-4 Right thinking informs Prayer	Church
17-24		School Holiday Week	Grammar
19	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
23	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Guest Preacher - Andrew Dick	Church
25		Pilot Lite Discipleship	Linlithgow
26	19:30	Prayer Meeting - Guest John Shearer	Eden Room
27	12 to 2	Ploughman's Lunch	Halls
	13:20	S.U.	Grammar
30	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service Communion – John 2:1-11 Water to wine 3:1-15	Church
	18:30	Open Door Psalm 51:1, 2, 10-13 Chewing Gum sticks	Church
31	19:30	Congregational Board Meeting	Eden Room

Please pray for all other Church activities and for our community!

Dunbar Parish Church

Minister

Rev Gordon Stevenson

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www.dunbarparishchurch.org

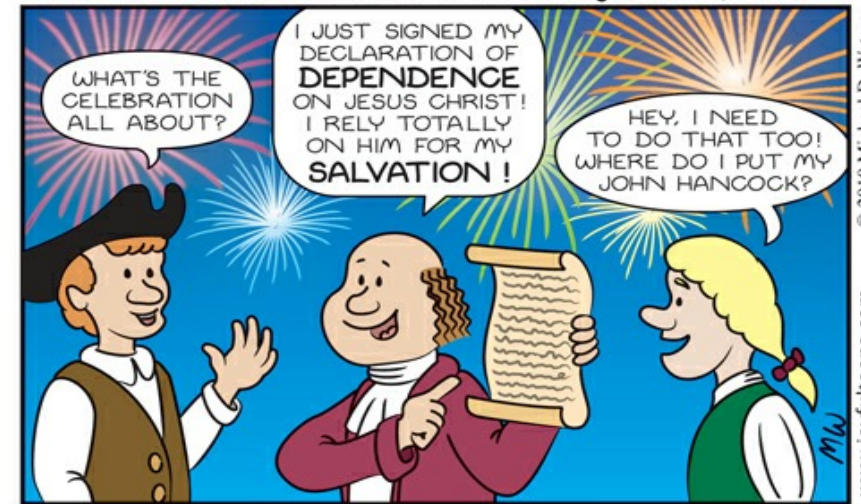
MAGAZINE



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October 2016

DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

— PSALM 62:7 NIV

JESUS IS ABLE TO SAVE COMPLETELY THOSE WHO COME TO GOD THROUGH HIM, BECAUSE HE ALWAYS LIVES TO INTERCEDE FOR THEM. Hebrews 7:5

Are YOU saved by grace OR hopeful your goodness will get you to heaven? What would God want to save You for in the here and now?

Sunday & Special SERVICES		READERS	PRAYERS
2nd 11:00	Titus 1:1-16 Task of your "Parish"	May Low	Martyn Cox
9th 11:00	Titus 2:1-15 Task of "your" teaching	Margaret MacDonald	John Muirhead
16th 11:00 18:30	Titus 3:1-15 Task of "Your" witness Arise - Hab. 3:1-4 Right thinking informs our Prayer	Alison Mitchell	Ian Coltart
23rd 11:00	Pulpit Supply - Rev Andrew Dick	Elaine O'Brien	
30th 11:00 18:30	Communion – John 2:1-11 Water to wine Open Door Psalm 51:1, 2, 10-13 Sticky Chewing Gum	Mike Mylne	Youth

Ministers Letter October 2016 : Salvation is necessary

So many people in our world are on a path of self-destruction. Whether it is by unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, alcohol, drugs, bad choices in relationships or one of the many other things you can add to this list. It would be fair to say that many need **saved** from themselves as well as from thoughts which often drive their desire for escape and folly.

To be honest, any one of us might be or could be in a bad place at various points in our lives. This world is a minefield. We don't get specific manuals for our teenage years, or for mid-life or for our twilight years, and none of us have perfect parents who teach us everything we need to know. Yet there is a guidebook for life; make sure you know that. The Bible does teach us how to live and what to choose to avoid self-destruction, hurting others and ourselves, and more importantly to avoid offending God.

Yet despite being readily available, many Bibles are not read sufficiently for the details or the full implications to be discovered. A Church that treats the Bible inappropriately declines. Conversely one which honours God is very likely to grow in so many ways. (See 1 Samuel 2:30)

One of which is when people, who truly seek God in their lives, encounter Him through His word and by His Spirit. As the Spirit convicts an individual, a miracle happens. We call that conversion or **salvation**. It is a momentous turning point, and it is essential for us, if we are to enter heaven for all eternity. It affects our lives on earth too. 1 John 5:12 says, *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life*. So, **salvation is necessary** for life in the present and life eternally.

Every Christian arrives at a point where they realise that they need to be **saved**. They were sinful, selfish, burdened by guilt etc. Although conversion does not make us instantly and eternally perfect, for we become works in progress, it does make us eternally perfect through Jesus sacrifice for our sin. In addition, we should be growing in righteousness more and more as we live for Christ instead of for ourselves. Growing is essential in life.

In 1 Peter 2:24-25 we read; "Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross that we might die to sin and **live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed**. For you were straying like sheep, but **have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls**."

Too many people know that things are not right in their lives. Many look in the wrong place for answers or try to escape and find themselves in the downward spiral of ill-health, physically, mentally and spiritually too.

As a Church we know that **our GOD Saves. Salvation** is a gift of God. "**For by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**". Ephesians 2: 8, 9 *Can we help YOU escape from your escapes, and help you to find **salvation** instead ?*

Yours in Jesus Christ Gordon

SALVATION

Salvation is moving from living death to deathless life. *Jack Odell*

The essence of sin is arrogance; the essence of **salvation** is submission to God. *Alan Redpath*

The greatest of all miracles is **salvation** of a soul . *C. H. Spurgeon*

Our **salvation** includes more than pardon from sin, deliverance from hell and a ticket to heaven. It includes all that we need for the journey. *Vance Havner*

God never **saves** a spectator. *Robert Brown*

Salvation is a helmet not a nightcap. *(Being in a battle, not a dream) Vance Havner*

No one can be thoroughly humbled until they come to know that **salvation** is utterly beyond their own powers, counsel, endeavours, will and works and is absolutely dependent upon the will, counsel and pleasure of another. *Martin Luther*

No one stands so tall as when on their knees having asked God wholeheartedly to **set the record straight**. *R.O. McClain*

Not for our duties or deserts,
But for His abounding grace,
He works **salvation** in our hearts,
And forms a people for His praise.
Isaac Watts

Salvation is not a cafeteria where you take what you want and leave the rest. You cannot take Christ as Saviour and refuse Him as LORD and be saved.

Vance Havner

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 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 30 October 2016**.

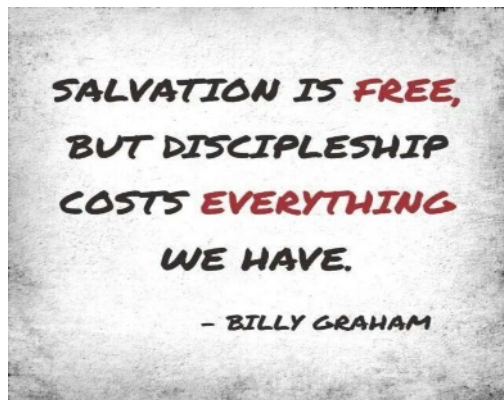
Thank you for your co-operation.

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.

Guild

Dedication Service on the 11th October at 2:30 pm in the halls.

25th October at 2:30 pm in the halls with Jim Herring with Part Two of "Dunbar in the 50s"



Believing that Jesus lived
is faith;
Believing that He died for
our sins is
SALVATION

Plans - watch out for :-

War Room - the Film will be shown on Sunday 27th November at 6:30 - 8:00 pm (It is rated PG). This film has been described as INSPIRATIONAL - Bring a friend (There will be snack's on sale or feel free to bring your own) adults £2 under 16's £1. Proceeds to a Operation Mobilisation (Christian Charity).

Disciple Quiz

1. Who was also known as Cephas?
2. Who were 'The Sons of Thunder'?
3. Who was Bartholomew also known as?
4. Who was Didymous?
5. Who was Levi?
6. Who was Thaddeus?
7. Who was known as 'The Zealot'?
8. Who were the elder and the younger?
9. Who were the Boanerges?
10. Who was Peter's brother?

THE CROSS ROOM

The young man was at the end of his rope. Seeing no way out, he dropped to his knees in prayer.

"Lord, I can't go on," he said. "I have too heavy a cross to bear."

The Lord replied, "My son, if you can't bear it's weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then open another door and pick any cross you wish." The man was filled with relief.

"Thank you, Lord," he sighed, and did as he was told. As he looked around the room he saw many different crosses; some so large the tops were not visible. Then he spotted a tiny cross leaning against a far wall.

"I'd like that one, Lord," he whispered. And the Lord replied, "My son, that's the cross you brought in."

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. (I have paper copies of the 2016 Watch List. If you would like a copy, ask me.)

5 SYRIA

Leader: President Bashar al-Assad Population: 18.6 million (772,000 Christians) Main Religion: Islam Government: Republic Source of Persecution: Islamic extremism
Area: 185,180 sq km. Fertile plain on Mediterranean coast; 60% desert in centre and east but crossed by the Euphrates River.



Syria's Christian community is one of the oldest in the world, going back two millennia. The Bible tells us Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Some Christians in Maaloula can still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

What began as a popular uprising with demands for increased political freedom and economic reform has increasingly developed into a jihad against the Syrian government. Wars are waged within wars. The self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) have claimed parts of Syria for their caliphate and other radical groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra attack those who don't conform to their brand of Islam. It is impossible to survive as a Christian in IS-controlled areas. Even in areas still controlled by the government, evangelism and conversion from Islam are illegal. Christians are not only caught in the violence of the on-going war in Syria, but are specifically targeted by Islamic extremists for attack, abduction and murder.

The Christian church in Syria knows that the real battle is not against flesh and blood. "The world uses bombs and rockets. We have a weapon that gives life: the Word of God, and prayer" says a pastor from Damascus.

PLEASE PRAY:

- For strength and protection for church leaders who are choosing to stay in Syria to shine the light of Christ in their communities, despite the risks
- For provision for the many displaced people in Syria who are simply too poor or infirm to leave the country
- For courage for Muslim-background believers

Put on God's armour so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. Ephesians 6:11,12

Please continue to pray for our Overseas Partners who have all returned to their places of work following summer breaks.

More news is regularly available from Helen.
Please ask if you would like to receive a prayer bulletin.

Collection boxes are available for monetary donations,
or ask our treasurer if you would prefer to contribute to
our Overseas Christian Workers Fund
by standing order or make a one-off payment.

Thank you to all who contribute in any way.

Learn a carol in British Sign Language (BSL) to include at a Christmas service

'ADVENT CHALLENGE' WORKSHOP

A training day to enable participants to teach others as well.
No previous experience required, just enthusiasm and a willingness to learn!

DUNBAR PARISH CHURCH HALL
SATURDAY OCTOBER 8th, 10am - 2pm

Cost £15 (concessions available)

Children welcome. Refreshments provided but bring your own lunch

Contact Maryclare on 865120 or email Maryclare.Jenkins@btinternet.com

Maryclare is willing to provide on-going support for anyone participating in this challenge

The Church of Scotland is keen to remove barriers for deaf worshippers
Please pray for this initiative and consider participating in this challenge.

Thanks from NATHAN COX:

Hi all, I would like to thank everyone who sponsored me for the Commission Programme. Everyone was very generous and I raised £425 in total, thanks to you all for your donations. Nathan

PRAYER CORNER By Michael Veitch (Prayer coordinator)

God continues to bless our church and community in so many ways, and it is therefore right that as a fellowship of his people in Dunbar that we come together regularly to pray for His will to be done in our midst, and to collectively thank Him for all that He is doing.

While many in the church have reasons to rejoice and be thankful, others are labouring under various anxieties, such as health problems, bereavement or work and family concerns. No matter what stage we are at on our Christian pilgrimage, all of us can surely attest to the fact that we desperately require the love and fellowship of our Christian brothers and sisters as we labour to navigate the narrow path of faith together, and what better way to do this than to join together in prayer?

The apostle Paul spoke very vividly about this in 1 Corinthians 12, where he compares the church to a body. Paul writes:

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ...God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it." – 1 Cor 12:12, 18-20, 26

Surely corporate and collective prayer is integral to this process? So even if you've never done so before, please do consider joining others at the fortnightly church prayer meeting or at the weekly prayer breakfast. Do also consider joining our minister at the front of the church each Sunday as he leads all those taking part in the service, and any others who wish to join them, in a very short prayer for the morning worship.

PRAYER MEETING UPDATE

The prayer meeting continues to meet in the Eden Room on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm. Much of our time is usually spent focusing on the needs of our own church and the wider community, as well as the global persecuted church. Guest speakers continue to lead from time to time, and on 10th August we were greatly privileged to welcome James Wildgoose from Belhaven Parish Church who spent some time telling us about his previous work as a senior civil servant from a Christian perspective. On 26th October we welcome John Shearer, former pastor of Musselburgh Baptist Church, to lead our time together.

PRAYER BREAKFAST

The weekly prayer breakfast (9:30 for 10:00 a.m. on the first floor of the church [Eden Room]) continues to be very well attended by a wide range of people, and remains an essential part of the Lord's Day for many. The friendship, fellowship, food and (especially) the great coffee, make for a very blessed time, with the main focus being the short time of prayer at the end. The prayer breakfast is always fairly informal and is an excellent means of introducing friends to church who may be reluctant or unable to attend a full service.

Sincere thanks are due to both Alison Mitchell and to the young people of the church for agreeing to join the prayer breakfast rota as from the autumn. The large number of people willing to serve on the rota means that nobody should need to lead any more than once every ten weeks or so, so if you would be willing to serve in this way, please let me know. A word in closing from the pen of the late Richard Baxter, which will hopefully serve to encourage us all to persevere in prayer and in our work for the Lord:

"May the living God, who is the portion and rest of his saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual, and our earthly hearts so heavenly, that loving him and delighting in him, may be the work of our lives; and that neither I who write, nor your who read...may ever be turned from this path of life"

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

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

Sermon's are available on the Church website. Use the link on the Home page (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

Pilot Church - Pilot Lite Team

This new initiative has just begun. **If you have a passion to reach out into the community, to advance God's kingdom and have some time to join our team we want to hear from you ASAP.** Please speak to Gordon if you are interested.

DATE	SUNDAY DUTY TEAMS	FLOWERS in CHURCH	CLEANING ROTA (U) = upstairs (D) = downstairs
October 2	October Ian Hastie Denise Brunton Margaret Croft May Low Lena Glass Lorna McLeod Derek MacDonald Margaret MacDonald Ian Manning	October Convenor: Moira Anthony Mrs E Cuming	3 Margaret & Derek MacDonald (U) Lorna McLeod & Margaret Croft (D)
9		Mrs G Grandison	10 Margaret & Ian Coltart (U) (D) VACANT
16		Mrs L Glass	17 Fiona Fleming & Barbara Leslie (U) Gill Phillip & Alistair Matthews (D)
23		Mr K Duncan for the late Mrs M Duncan	24 Laura Punler & Laura Girvan (U) Ian & Jenny Manning (D)
30		Mrs M Anthony	31 Moyra Wright & Anne Creedican (U) Sandy & Ian Darling (D)
November 6	November Alan Low Ian Darling Eric Easton Kath Ellis Jason Kay Barbara Leslie Tom Manson	November Convenor: Lena Glass Mrs F Fleming	7 Gail & Gordon Stevenson (U) Jenny & Jason Kay (D)
13		Royal British Legion	14 Val & Will Collin (U) Jonathan & Christine Idle (D)
20		Mrs A Knox	21 Lorna McLeod & Margaret Croft (U) Margaret & Derek MacDonald (D)
27		Mrs P Rimmer	28 (U) Vacant Margaret & Ian Coltart (D)

If you would like to put flowers in the Church please speak with **May Low**. You can put flowers into the Church for an **anniversary** or **in memory of a loved one**, you don't necessarily need to be added to the rota in order to do this. Please speak with May Low or the Flower Convener for that month to help you organise this.

Article Series 8 (pt 6) "The God who SAVES"

Please read *Daniel 3:16-30*: He alone is able to SAVE!

Last time Nebuchadnezzar said "what god will be able to **rescue** you from my hand" v15. So he is either questioning whether God exists or he is speaking blasphemously. Blasphemy is being sacrilegious against God.

Do you stand up for yourself? Do you stand up for God? Sometimes it is fairly easy to stand strong and speak of God. At other times though, the pressure is more intense. Imagine being summoned before a king who can order your death in an instant. Would you boldly exclaim "**the God we serve is able to save us**"? v16, 17. In addition, is our faith in God so assured? - notice Daniel says "our God **WILL rescue us**"? Even if He did not, "we would still not worship your idol" Daniel asserts further v18. Their desire to honour God is more important than any absolute guarantee that God will intervene.

Boldness is easy from a position of power, but not so easy when humility is more likely to be expected from someone in higher authority. As we stand for God, and are faithful in our religious observance, He will grant us boldness as and when it is required. Yet although this boldness seems to create the worst reaction, faith in our **saving** God proves wise v19-24. God faithfully protects His own in moments like this. God is amazing v24 and does the miraculous. The arithmetic is correct, three go into the furnace, but there are four within - with God with us, there is always extra on our side. In v25 the King uses the phrase, "the fourth looks like a son of the gods." The implication is that an angelic creature or something less than God has gone into the furnace. Some Christians have wondered if Jesus was the forth person? In Hebrews we recently learned from faith witnesses who "quenched raging fire as they looked to Jesus". Most importantly there is no doubt either way that something of the divine is present here.

The result is that not only have the flames been quenched. So too has the fire of Nebuchadnezzar's wrath v26-28. Let's also remember that he had a dream about his kingdom being replaced eventually by an eternal one. Daniel had revealed this dream to him and Daniel speaks of his God who is all powerful and eternal. Last time it was a dream, but now there is visual and tangible evidence of this God which the king may previously have questioned the existence of. This is a seminal moment - the kind we all need as we are faced by the reality of our God and His plans for our lives.

So in v29 Nebuchadnezzar makes a new law, such that no one should be blasphemous towards Daniel's God, "**for no other god can save**" like He can. This is repentance. This is the humility that causes even kings to come to Jesus with the humility of a little child. He had opposed and even questioned God previously, but now He acknowledges God fully. He is brought down to earth, but lifted high towards heaven. God is willing to do this for us all too, whoever we are. Yours in bold confidence in Our God **Gordon**.

My 1st Book of questions and answers!

Section 5 - Salvation

44. Who is God's Son?

Answer: The Lord Jesus Christ

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." *Luke 1:35*

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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

DPC Verse for 2016

From the rising of the sun to
the going down of the same the
Lord's name is to be praised

Psalms 113: 3

Bible Book Club

Meeting next on

6th October

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

We are completing *Silas* at
the October meeting then in
November a week's study with
The Shack

December we will be looking at
The War Room with a

5 lesson study

If you are interested please call
Emma Weaver for details of
venue, 01368 459082

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

Martin Luther King JR

Hall Bookings

Please Contact: Sonya Young
she keeps the master diary and
updates the hall one.
email bhraggie@tiscali.co.uk
Telephone: 07874 816326

Answers to Disciple Quiz

1. Peter
2. James and John
3. Nathanael
4. Thomas
5. Matthew
6. Jude
7. Simon
8. John (the elder), James (the younger)
9. James and John
10. Andrew



Pastoral Notes

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

Robert Wright
James Mason
Morag Buchan
Isa Ward

CHURCH PRAYER MEETING

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

BASICS BANK BUDDY SCHEME

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

Prayer Breakfast Rota

2 Oct - Catherine Hodgson
9 Oct - Derek & Margaret Macdonald
16 Oct - Mike & Rachel Mylne
23 Oct - Jim Thompson
30 Oct - Michael & Laura Veitch

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.

Conference on Motivational Gifts

Sunday 20th November 1:30 - 8:30
(food included)

After looking at roles and gifts last month
with Shiona, we have secured an
exciting opportunity to invite a leading
author and member of the
Northumbrian Community to lead a
conference in our Church. Places are
limited, see sign-up sheet in Church.

Magazine Input:

Please send your items in by
Friday 21 October for November
Magazine - out on 30th October, or
if you would like a regular
E_Magazine
Tel: 862903 Denise or email:
dmburton@gmail.com
Weekly Notices: Contact Denise

TEEN PAGE... *Selfies!*

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility
value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but
each of you to the interests of the others."* Phillipians 2:3-4

The world has seen many ages. Ice age, stone age, iron age, etc, etc and it
is probably fair to describe the present day as the technological age. The
advances in technology, in a short period of time have been astounding.
When I started work, I used a manual typewriter and if I wanted a copy of
the document, I used carbon paper! (ask your parents what that is) and
strangest of all, there was no email! Today, at work, after 3 weeks off, 457
emails are in my inbox. Isn't technology supposed to make life easier!

Each advance seems to bring different crazes, from Space Invaders back
in the day, up to Pokemon Go today. We see the bizarre sight of people
wandering around staring at their phones, often oblivious to everything and
everyone around them and of course we now have the camera culture! We
see people filming others rather than helping them and I recently saw three
people, in a restaurant take photos of their food prior to eating!

One of the most fascinating trends has been the rise of the "selfie", now
a recognised word in the Oxford Dictionary. While the pictures are often good,
it does seem to make everything about ME. I am feeling (insert emoticon
here) today, look at how good I look, look at me leading a wonderful, exciting
life, look at my achievements and successes, look at Me, Me, Me!

Similarly, I have experienced many face to face encounters, where the
other person will happily discuss themselves for hours without asking me a
single question. So, this month's question is; have we become a self-absorbed
culture? Have a think about this for a moment.

Of course, I am not suggesting that we are unimportant or insignificant.
We are designed and loved by our Heavenly Father and the apple of his eye
but that does not mean we are the centre of the universe! He is the great I
AM and so I am not. We are not at the centre of God's bigger story, He is!

In this passage, Paul pleads with us that we should be united in love,
elevating others over our own vanity and desires. Our belief and experiences
of Jesus mean our focus should shift from a ME, MYSELF and I mentality,
onto the bigger purposes of God and the needs of those around us.
If we could find all this focus, what a powerful, prophetic and potentially
world-changing perspective that would be! Here is a short prayer to consider:
Glorious God, as I focus upon you, I pray that my perspective would be
changed and my vision renewed. Help me to look beyond my own story to
your bigger purposes. Amen. *Blessings Derek*

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS A young man who had been raised as an atheist was training to be an Olympic diver. The only religious influence in his life came from his outspoken Christian friend. The young diver never really paid much attention to his friend's sermons, but he heard them often.

One night the diver went to the indoor pool at the college he attended. The lights were all off, but as the pool had big skylights and the moon was bright, there was plenty of light to practice by. The young man climbed up to the highest diving board and as he turned his back to the pool on the edge of the board and extended his arms out, he saw his shadow on the wall. The shadow of his body in the shape of a cross. Instead of diving, he knelt down and asked God to come into his life. As the young man stood, a maintenance man walked in and turned the lights on. The pool had been drained for repairs. God is good!

QUESTIONS

- I asked God to take away my pain. God said, No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.
- I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. God said, No. Her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.
- I asked God to grant me patience. God said, No. Patience is a by-product of tribulations. It isn't granted, it is earned.
- I asked God to give me happiness. God said, No. I give you blessings. Happiness is up to you.
- I asked God to spare me pain. God said, No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.
- I asked God to make my spirit grow. God said, No. You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.
- I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. God said, No. I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things.
- I ask God to help me LOVE others, as much as he loves me. God said... Ahhhh, finally you have the idea.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

They lie on the table, side by side The Holy Bible and the TV Guide.
One is well worn, but cherished with pride (Not the Bible, but the TV Guide)
One is used daily to help folks decide. (Not the Bible: it's the TV Guide.)
As the pages are turned, what shall they see Oh, what does it matter?...turn on the TV.
Then confusion reigns, they can't all agree on what they shall watch on the old TV.
So they open the book in which they confide (No, not the Bible.....it's the TV Guide.)
The Word of God is seldom read. Maybe a verse e'er they fall into bed.
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be... not from reading the Bible-from watching TV.
So then back to the table, side by side, lay the Holy Bible and the TV Guide.
No time for prayer....no time for the Word. The plan of **salvation** is seldom heard.
But forgiveness of sin so full and free is found in the Bible.....NOT on TV!

THE SON

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had a great collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit and admire the great works of art.

When war broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He **saved** many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art."

The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package to find a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured his son. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the portrait. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected. The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son.

The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this portrait of the son. Who will bid for this painting?" There was silence. Then a voice shouted. "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?" Another voice shouted angrily. "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice broke the tention. It was the long-time gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, I'll take \$20?"

The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the painting of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!" A man sitting on the second row shouted. "Now let's get on with the collection!" The auctioneer laid down his gavel.

"I'm sorry, the auction is over. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son, and gain everything?"