

**Calendar for January 2016**

Date	Time	Event	Location
3	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - Melchizedek's Significance</b>	<b>Church</b>
6	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
7	10:30	Presbytery Prayer	Haddington
10	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - Priesthood Comparisons</b>	<b>Church</b>
12-14		Minister at Conference	Crieff
13		Rwanda Team Meeting	
	19:30	Prayer Meeting	Mike & Rachel Mylne's
17	09:30	Prayer breakfast	Eden Room
	11:30	<b>Service of Unity</b>	Belhaven Parish Church
19	14:30	Guild - Rev G Stevenson - 'Go in Peace'	Halls
20	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
24	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - Morality and Jesus Superiority</b>	Church
25	15:30	Mentor Meeting	Manse
27	19:30	Prayer Meeting with Gordon MacDonald from CARE	Eden Room
28	12-2	Ploughmans' Lunch	Halls
	19:30	Congregational Board Meeting	Eden Room
31	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - Christ's Superior Ministry</b>	Church

# Dunbar Parish Church

Minister

Rev Gordon Stevenson

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

## MAGAZINE



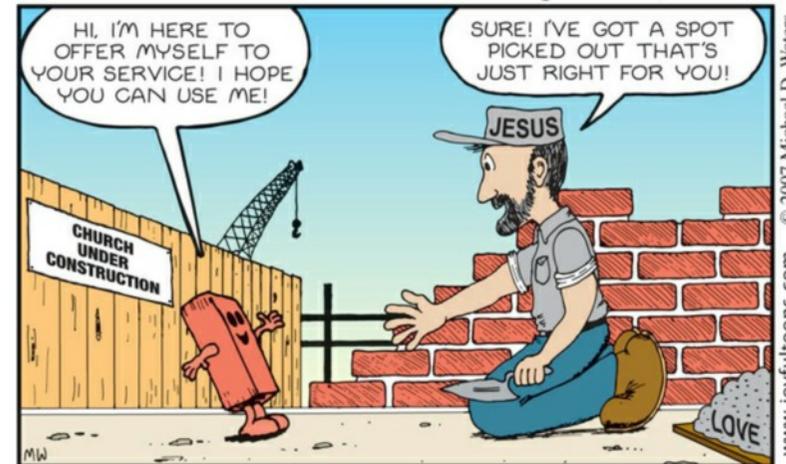
Dunbar Parish Church is a charity registered in Scotland

No: SC000455

January 2016

### CONSTRUCTION SITE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 PETER 2:5 NIV

Spiritually active? - Serving is us doing what Jesus wants.

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Matthew 7:24

May **GOD** be with you through the **NEW YEAR**

and fill your life with

**COMFORT, LOVE** and **CHEER**

May this day and the days ahead hold many blessings for you and yours

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**To all Basics Bank volunteers/supporters. Message from a client/friend:**

“I would just like to say a massive thank-you to you all! You have helped not only me but friends and the other visitors you help out. You have helped me out greatly over the last year or so, not just with food or vouchers but with the simple things that probably matter the most, a cup of coffee, a juice, a biscuit etc. but most of all a chat and a smile. I've struggled a lot this year and doubt I would of made it to Christmas without your kindness and generosity”.

Sunday & Special SERVICES		READERS	PRAYERS
3rd	11:00 Melchizedek's Significance - Hebrews 7:1-10	Barbara Lesley	Martyn Cox
10th	11:00 Priesthood Comparisons - Hebrews 7:11-19	May Low	Catherine Hodgson
17th	11:30 <b>Service of Unity at Belhaven Parish Church</b>		
24th	11:00 Morality and Jesus Superiority - Hebrews 7:20-28	Margaret MacDonald	
31st	10:30 Christ's Superior Ministry - Hebrews 8:1-5	Douglas McClintick	Youth

## Ministers Letter January 2016 : HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016

Another year begins and most of us are planning to be around, still eager to learn and grow, still delighted to serve God where He has located us, and still inspired to watch Him work in our midst.

God has been prompting me to write to you about Gideon :-

An angel said to Gideon: "You are brave and the Lord is with you. Go out boldly, and save *your* people". Gideon replied: "O, Lord, how can I save *Your* people? I am poor and unimportant." **And the Lord said** to him: "**Surely I will be with you, and I will help you**".

This makes ALL the difference. Despite Gideon managing to raise an army of 32,000 fighters, God says, "There are too many and you may believe you win victory on *your* own strength". So God devises methods to sift out all except 300. The battle raged in the middle of the night and the 135,000 Midianites were wiped out.

The story ends with these words, "Of all the 15 men who ruled as Judges of Israel, Gideon, the fifth Judge, was the greatest, in courage, in wisdom, and in **faith in God.**"

So we learn that Spiritual progress involves spiritual warfare. Thankfully these days we are not picking up metal swords, spears or the like. We utilise the *sword of the Spirit which is the word of truth*. Yet our warfare is against evil, injustice, and the devil and his wiles.

I believe God is looking favourably upon us at DPC and in Dunbar at this time. I believe He is planning to grow our **faith** individually and corporately as a Church in 2016. Our victories may not be on the scale of Gideon's, but by building up our trust in our awesome God, great and mighty things may also happen soon or in the future. For with God on our side, or more accurately, when we are serving God's will, then nothing is impossible.

So I am not planning any January depressions after all the highs of Christmas. I am excited, full of expectation, eager and encouraged that God's plan is to utilise and grow those who are up for the journey of **faith** among us in 2016 and beyond.

Who among us is brave or has godly wisdom? Who has **faith**, even if it is as small as a mustard seed? May we be ready and willing for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom that is at hand and God can certainly utilise all those with **living faith**. *Happy New Year, Gordon*

## 'A Life Worth Living' – a study in Philippians

If you have just started out on your Christian journey, then 'A Life Worth Living' is a follow on to the Alpha course. Centred around a DVD presentation by Nicky Gumbel and a group discussion, the 9 sessions work through Paul's letter to the Philippians. The sessions have very practical themes of how being a Christian gives a New Heart; New Purpose; New Attitude; New Responsibilities; New Friendships; New Confidence; New Ambitions; New Resources; and New Generosity. The study is equally a challenging refresher course for maturer Christians.

The study starts on **Tuesday January 12<sup>th</sup>** and will run for 9 weeks. Start time **7.30 pm** in the Eden Room. Please contact Martyn Cox if you are interested in attending on [alpha@dunbarparishchurch.org](mailto:alpha@dunbarparishchurch.org)

## Help!!!

Will Collin is looking for photo's of

- The interior of our church before the 1987 fire
- Guild events and folk (next year is our Guild's centenary)
- Minister - Rev William Chalmers (1966-1992) and earlier
- And any others that record bits of our Church's history

Please get in touch if you have any that you are willing to let Will copy. He can collect them and will return the originals to you promptly.

We are looking to set up an archive which can be used for exhibitions, etc.

Contact Will on 863162 or at 2 Rosebery Place, EH42 1AQ or by email: [willnval@btinternet.com](mailto:willnval@btinternet.com)

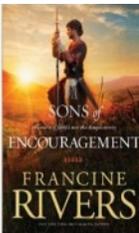
Thanks!

## Bible Book Club

Meeting next on

**7<sup>th</sup> January at  
Emma Weaver's**

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



**CONTINUING ON with Jonathan**  
*Sons of Encouragement* by Francine Rivers

ISBN: 1414348169 on Kindle too

We are exploring the lives of 5 Biblical men who stood behind faith heroes and quietly changed eternity: Aaron, Caleb, Jonathan, Amos & Silas. They all answered God's call to serve without recognition or fame and gave everything, knowing their reward might not come until the next life.

This is another amazing book which brings the bible to life. It's not too late to join join...If you are interested please call *Emma Weaver* for details of venue, 01368 459082.

# F a i t h f u l n e s s

How can there be **great faith** where there is little **faithfulness**.  
*William Gurnall*

It is impossible to be **faithful** to Jesus Christ and not incur the opposition of the world.  
*William Still*

**Faithfulness** to God is our *first* obligation in all that we are called to do in the service of the gospel.  
*Ian H. Murray*

Reverent fear of God is the key to **faithfulness** in any situation.  
*Alan Redpath*

God has no larger a field for someone to work in if they are not **faithful** in doing His work where He is already.  
*Anon.*

The Christian religion is not a matter of fits, starts and stops. It is lived **faithfully** each and every day.  
*David Livingstone.*

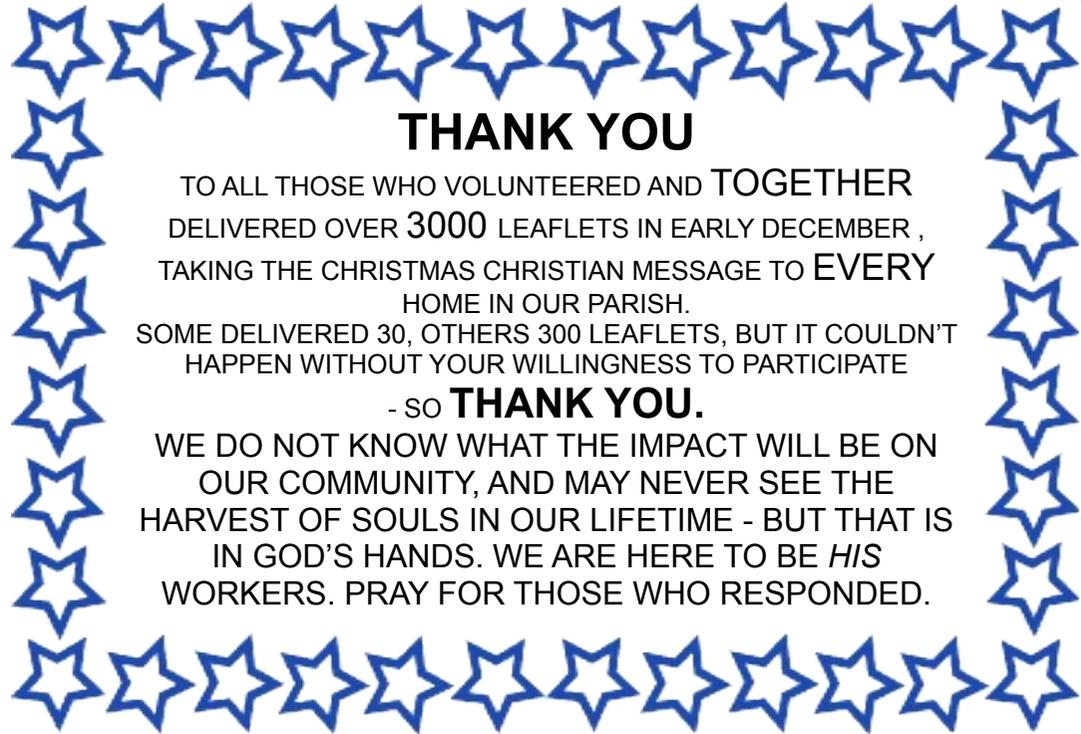
The proof formula for living saving Christian **faith** includes endurance and the confidence to obey all Jesus taught in His word, the Bible. It is underpinned with the fact that God is **faithful** and perfectly reliable.  
*Gordon Stevenson*

JOB VACANCIES - Are we really praying/hearing?

Pray for the Lord to send out more workers into the harvest (we still need the following resources):

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Junior Youth Work Director      | 9. Readers / Prayer leaders                                  |
| 2. Little fishes Leaders (2)       | 10. Support Leaders  |
| 3. Media/Sound Team & Photographer | 11. Film night team  |
| 4. Musicians and Vocalists         | 12. Various groups would welcome extra helpers.              |
| 5. Church lead Artist              | 13. Tea/Coffee rota ·  |
| 6. Intern - <b>NEW</b>             | PRAY that these roles will be filled to grow Christ's Church |
| 7. Cleaners for the Church (4)     |  |
| 8. Prayer warriors                 |  |

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



### THANK YOU

TO ALL THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED AND TOGETHER DELIVERED OVER 3000 LEAFLETS IN EARLY DECEMBER, TAKING THE CHRISTMAS CHRISTIAN MESSAGE TO EVERY HOME IN OUR PARISH. SOME DELIVERED 30, OTHERS 300 LEAFLETS, BUT IT COULDN'T HAPPEN WITHOUT YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE  
- SO **THANK YOU.**

WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE IMPACT WILL BE ON OUR COMMUNITY, AND MAY NEVER SEE THE HARVEST OF SOULS IN OUR LIFETIME - BUT THAT IS IN GOD'S HANDS. WE ARE HERE TO BE *HIS* WORKERS. PRAY FOR THOSE WHO RESPONDED.

This is an acrostic sent to our partners in China by local friends.

**C**hrist, not Cards  
**H**ope, not holidays  
**R**ejoice, not Recreation  
**I**ncarnation, not Impregnate  
**S**alvation, not Santa Claus  
**T**hanksgiving, not Turkey  
**M**editation, not Matter  
**A**dore, not Activity  
**S**haring, not Shopping

### Collection boxes

are available for your loose change to support our

### Overseas Workers

currently in China, UAE and Spain



ASK HELEN  
Missionary Correspondent

- Plans : Coming Soon
- **DCT** Joint service 17<sup>th</sup> Jan. 11:30 am in Belhaven Church
  - **Congregational Board Meeting** 28<sup>th</sup> January 7:30 Eden Room.
  - **Open Conference** TBA
  - **Pilot Lite** kick-off TBA

Flower Rota Vacancies  
Need Filled

**17<sup>th</sup> January & 28<sup>th</sup> February**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> July & 24<sup>th</sup> July**  
**21<sup>st</sup> August**

**If you would like to put flowers into Church for any of the above dates, please speak to May Low**

**Less ABLE access** Let's keep the parking on the left as we enter the main gate free for all those who are less mobile every week please!



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

Philip Taylor

Douglas Laird (V Rev J Cairns)

**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 to get us ready for 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.

**Learning groups**  
Relaxed, informal, a great way to get to know the bible a bit better and to build good friendships. You are welcome anytime.

Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.  
**Continuing Alpha : A Life Worth Living**  
Martyn Cox  
[martyncox43@googlemail.com](mailto:martyncox43@googlemail.com)

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

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything, and may provide in abundance for every good work.  
2 Corinthians 9:8

DATE	SUNDAY DUTY TEAMS	FLOWERS in CHURCH	CLEANING ROTA (U) = upstairs (D) = downstairs
January 3	<b>January</b> <i>Ian Manning</i> Denise Brunton Margaret Croft Ian Hastie Lena Glass May Low Lorna McLeod Derek MacDonald Margaret MacDonald	<b>January Convenor:</b> <b>Elsie Johnston</b> Mrs M Crow	4 Laura Punler & Laura Girvan (U) Ian & Jenny Manning (D)
10		Mrs M Wright	11 Moyra Wright & Liz Thomson (U) Sandy & Ian Darling (D)
17		<b>United Service at Belhaven Parish Church 11:30</b>	18 Gordon & Gail Stevenson (U) Jonathan & Christine Idle (D)
24		Mrs P Rimmer	25 Val & Will Collin (U) Margaret & Derek MacDonald (D)
31		Miss D Davie	<b>Feb 1</b> Margaret Croft & Lorna McLeod (U) Margaret & Ian Coltart (D)
February 7		<b>February</b> <i>Jason Kay</i> Ian Darling Eric Easton Kath Ellis Barbara Leslie Alan Low Tommy Manson Liz Thomson	<b>February Convenor:</b> <b>Val Collin</b> Mrs A Creedican
14	Mrs D Brunton		15 Gill Philip & Alistair Matthews (U) Laura Pulner & Laura Girvin (D)
21	<b>TBC</b>		22 Jenny & Ian Manning (U) Moyra Wright & Liz Thomson (D)
28	<b>Vacant</b>		29 Sandy & Ian Darling (U) Anne Creedican (D)

There are *Flower Rota Vacancies* 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.

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

## Article Series 7 (pt 8) "Life Witness of Faithfulness"

Please read 2 Timothy 4:6-8 : Retrospect

Do you ever enjoy a good reminisce? I suspect most of us flash back to *the good old days* or to *traumatic moments* and everything in between at various times?

With another year just over and New Year resolutions in the air, maybe it is time to reflect on how our spiritual life and witness is doing, and take the positives on for 2016? Paul is doing this to some extent in these 3 verses. Yet as well as reflecting on the past, he is thinking about both the present and the future as well, and that seems to me a healthy balanced perspective for us all to follow. Paul is speaking as if his life is almost over v6, 7, yet it is notable that he "**has kept the faith**". He has persevered.

Following on from 4:1-5 where Paul was warning about how the ungodly will misbehave with God's word. He, having kept to the truth, is citing a better example to follow and a wise goal to aim for. Christian calling is about **faithful endurance** all the way. Paul says he has been "poured out like a drink offering" which suggests that he has served the purpose God had for him to do alongside other sacrificial offerings others were giving, and far more significantly, what Jesus has given. The implications are if Jesus went through all he went through for us, then we as Christians have a very potent example to follow in fulfilling our call, and although Christ's sacrifice is complete, our sacrifice leads to the spreading of the gospel of grace into many lives again and again.

That which is "poured out" alludes to a reduction of *self*, and the chastening of suffering which is part of the **faith journey**. The drink offering of best wine was costly just as our sacrifice ought to be. Paul's departure in the Greek text means the loosing of the chains which hold him in prison. Freedom in heaven is greatly attractive after so many years of toil. The contents of what he has remaining is almost gone. Then the baton passes on to Timothy and others. Paul's fight is finished, his race is run, **but not so ours**.

So Paul is excited and looking upwards v8. A victor's crown or wreath awaits. God will confirm the righteousness of Paul which he was given through justification (*Romans 5:1*)

Paul is about to stand before the emperor Nero and be condemned, but it is insignificant to the judgment that really matters, and God will find Paul righteous.

Paul has "longed" to see Christ. The depth of love expressed here is potent. Christians who are **alive in their faith** are filled with longing to be with their LORD. To be in His presence, to see Him come back and to end all injustice and evil for ever.

Is this our experience of Christianity? Are we challenged to grow our witness and utilise the past to enable the present and the future to bring great rewards? Do we know the deep love for our Saviour which Paul speaks about? These things are worth reflecting over regularly. I affirm Paul's recommendation of constant progression on towards the finish line.

*Still running the race with you* Gordon.

## My 1st Book of questions and answers!

Section 4 - What happened because of sin?

39. What name do we give to this sinful condition?

Answer: Original sin.

but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

- ROMANS 7:23

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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

Accord leader rota

Accord catering rota

Film night catering rota

Prayer Breakfast leader rota

Prayer Breakfast catering rota

\*\*\*\*\*

See other roles that your Church needs filling on the Job Vacancies Section

### 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

Psalm 113: 3

<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to **obey everything I have commanded you**. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." **Matthew 28:18-20**

PRAY constantly 1 Thessalonians 5:17  
How many of us do that? How many of us spend more time watching tv or doing other things? Ever wondered why our nation is running from God?

### CHURCH PRAYER MEETING

Wednesday's at 7:30 pm

13<sup>th</sup> January at Mike Mylne's (10 The Courtyard, Easter Broomhouse Steading)

27<sup>th</sup> January Eden Room with guest Gordon Macdonald from CARE

### Prayer Breakfast Rota

03 January - Liz Thomson

10 January - Emma Weaver

17 January - Ian Coltart

24 January - Catherine Hodgson

31 January - Mike & Rachel Mylne

## Magazine Input :

Please send your items in by  
**Monday 26th January** for  
February Magazine - out on  
31<sup>st</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 as above

### Hall Bookings

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

### 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 Eric Easton on:  
01368 869659 or email:  
[charles.p.easton@googlemail.com](mailto:charles.p.easton@googlemail.com)

**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.

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

### 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 carry an identity  
badge, signed by the minister and they  
are genuinely interested in your well-  
being.

### **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.**

*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*

## **TEEN PAGE . . . NEW YEAR = NEW START!**

2016 is here!!! We're all another year older (definitely) and wiser (well maybe not). One Direction are on a break, a new Star Wars film came out and Scotland failed to qualify for the Euros. Who said history repeats itself?

How was last year for you? If it was a typical year, then you would have experienced some fantastic highs, some major lows, improved and deepened some relationships, while making mistakes in others. You may have achieved great things or failed badly in other areas. Or was it just another bland year, where you were slowly ground down by the pressures of every-day life?

A new year provides a natural point where we can take stock of our lives and situations and endeavour to make improvements. What we all need to guard against is making resolutions that are not achievable, (despite my best efforts, I'm still a premiership striker, trapped in the body of an overweight 47 year old!). Unachievable goals will inevitably end in failure, resulting in that same old feeling when 2017 comes round.

So, what can we achieve? Many disillusioned young people speak of feeling "trapped." This may be in their own bodies (which they hate), in their situations (family relationships and environments they can't control), by financial situations (debt or lack of employment) or in their unfulfilling, seemingly purposeless lives, leaving them feeling spiritually empty and worthless.

To move from being trapped into freedom, this year try taking on one resolution, that is, to get to know Jesus better. To help you achieve this, try sticking to the following mnemonic:

- F – follow him forward (seek him out and imitate him)
- R – repent readily (God is faithful to forgive and make us white as snow, WOW!)
- E – earnestly pray (prayer is powerful and a firm foundation for any life change)
- E – enjoy the journey (God has planned a perfect path for you, enjoy the ride!)
- D – devour his word (it is nourishment for your soul and a map for your journey)
- O – open your heart and mind to his truth (be prepared to hear God speak)
- M – make friends and move mountains (walk in love with each other, forgiving, encouraging and helping, you can achieve beyond your wildest expectations)

So, at the end of this year, I can't promise that you'll have lost those unwanted kilos, solved your relationship worries or achieved fantastic results but take a moment to mull over the promise that God has given us:

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things  
will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33.*

In this verse, Jesus gives us an achievable target, to seek first. We are not told that we have to be perfect or cannot fail or fall short, because God knows us and loves us.

Try experiencing God's gift of freedom this year.

Blessings for 2016! Derek

## **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.

# Eight Ways of Starting A Fresh New Year

## 1. New Beginnings

Start out the new year with a fresh point of view to new experiences, memories, and blessings, having an open mind and heart to wherever the Lord may take you, with full assurance and confidence that He is with you (*Matt. 28:19-20*).

## 2. New Possibilities

There is no limit to what God can do in your life; nothing is impossible with God. God opens doors that no man can shut and closes doors that no man can open. With God the possibilities are endless when we live according to His will (*Phil. 4:13*).

## 3. New Plans

Every year is a new season. Pray about what God has planned for you and be willing to walk by faith in obedience as you follow His leading. Remember that His plans are always for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (*Jer. 29:11-13*).

## 4. New Purpose

God always has a purpose for what you will experience. He has a reason for what He allows in your life, and through it you can trust Him completely (*Prov. 1:3-5*).

## 5. New Provisions

The Bible says not to worry about tomorrow for tomorrow has enough worries of its own. Trust in your Heavenly Father who knows everything you need, who is your God and your Provider. He is faithful and He will do it (*Matt. 6:25-34*).

## 6. New Growth

When we are willing to let go and let God work in and through us, He will always stretch us and grow us. Continue to grow in His Word and your relationship with Him. Pray for God to mould you and make you pliable in the Potter's hand. Then watch the Master Craftsman work on His masterpiece - you!

## 7. New Wisdom

With new experiences and lessons come new wisdom and insight. Make it a priority to seek out wisdom as a hidden treasure or fine gold. Proverbs says that wisdom will set a garland of grace on your head and she will present you with a crown of splendour (*Prov. 4:7-9*).

## 8. Renewed Peace

As you go through new experiences and new adventures, good or bad, I encourage you to keep your eyes fixed on Christ. He will give you rest and peace because He is our peace and He loves you and cares for you deeply (*John 16:33*).

Let us give thanks to the Lord for getting us through another year as we look forward to what He has in store for us. He is faithful and worthy to be praised!

## The Fruitcake Conspiracy by Lynda Schab

It was Stevie who came up with the plan and for the record, I resisted at first. But never in a million years did I imagine that giving in would one day come back to bite me. "Let's ding-dong-ditch Old Lady Swazee's house. But let's not just ditch, let's leave her a present," Stevie, my fearless 10 year old friend, suggested. My eyes bulged practically out of their sockets. "Noooo way. Not crazy Swayzee." Rumor had it that "Crazy Swayzee" kept her 12 year old grandson locked up in her basement. We had no way to know whether or not it was true. But back then, we were convinced of it. "Anyway, why would we leave her a present if we don't even like her?" I asked. "Not a nice present, dummy - a fruitcake," Stevie said. "We'll set it on her doorstep, ring the doorbell and bolt." "Why a fruitcake?" I asked, thoroughly confused. Everyone knew that fruitcake was gross. He rolled his eyes. "Because that's what she is, Carrie." Stevie twirled his finger in a circle around his head. "You know... a little fruity? Plus," he added, "my mom bakes a ton of them for the holidays. She totally won't notice if one is missing." So that's how it began. For 8 straight years on Christmas Eve, Stevie and I left a fruitcake on Crazy Swayzee's doorstep, rang the doorbell and ran. And each time I thought I'd have a heart-attack and die right on her front porch - that's how scared I was.

It had been 10 years since I thought about Crazy Swayzee or the fruitcakes. And it might have been 10 more if it wasn't for my boyfriend, Patrick. After dating for six months, I was about to meet his grandmother, the godly woman who raised him. Patrick spoke so highly of her I just knew we would hit it off. But the moment he pulled into the driveway, a chill trickled down my spine....Crazy Swayzee.

We waited at the door, my heart racing. When she answered, I was shocked to see a little old lady who barely reached my shoulders. I smiled hesitantly and held out my sweaty hand but instead she pulled me into a warm hug. Then she stepped back and looked at me. I swore I saw a flicker of recognition in her eyes but then it was gone. Over dinner, Mrs. Swayzee explained that she had agoraphobia and was afraid to leave the security of her home. I felt ashamed of myself for being so judgemental - and fearful - of this harmless old woman, soft-spoken and kind, that was suffering from a mental disorder but was clearly far from crazy. By the time we'd finished eating, I adored Patrick's grandmother and felt terrible about the pranks I had pulled as a kid. At God's prompting, I started to come clean and confess, but Mrs. Swayzee abruptly interrupted. "I see there's something on your mind," she said. "But if you would wait just a moment, we'll talk more over dessert." She disappeared into the kitchen and returned moments later with a tray that she set on the coffee table...Fruitcake!

I looked up at Mrs. Swayzee, who smiled sweetly. "You know, I received several fruitcakes as gifts over the years," she said as she sliced a piece for Patrick and me. "I think they were meant as a joke but I never saw it that way." I swallowed hard and wiped my hands on my pants. "The year I developed agoraphobia, I refused to go out even for groceries. The delivery service was overbooked with the holiday season and on Christmas Eve our cupboards were pretty bare. Dinner that night consisted of oatmeal and biscuits," she chuckled. "But Patrick never complained. He was a trooper." She patted his knee and went on. "I knew dessert was on his mind and I so wished I had something to serve him. When the doorbell rang and I saw that fruitcake on the step, I knew it was an answer to prayer. God used someone's evil intentions for our good. Isn't that just like the Lord?"

## ID – Intelligent Design

**Dr. Alistair Noble** presented an evening on the rationale of Intelligent Design (ID) in our scientific age. This is a topic that has been relevant to and engaging for Christians since the Enlightenment, and has arguably led to many losing faith, trust and ultimately belief in God.

Dr. Noble gave a coherent presentation of the evidence for ID, in a manner that was easily understood by the large and wide ranging audience, drawn from the churches of Dunbar and the wider community, followed by a lively Q&A session.

The message given was a strong one and important for defending the Christian faith today, as the creator God (*the designer*) is foundational to Scripture, and to the understanding of the personal God we know, through the sacrifice of, and resurrection of Jesus, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

*“Simply stated, ‘Intelligent Design’ claims that the natural and living world show clear evidence of being designed and are not the result of blind, purposeless forces”*

ID is not a branch of religious fundamentalism or a variation of creationism, but is a scientific questioning of the origins of life and the universe. ID does not find said origins in an undirected process such as the evolving and self-organising universe that has become the evolutionary framework integral to much of Western society, and which is the only *current theory* taught in our schools.

Dr. Noble posed the question, why can our children not be taught other theories of the origins of life and the universe, and I feel this is important. Why is our society closed to a wide ranging, open and questioning form of education which enables our young folk to seek answers to the big question of life? It may be in certain areas but on the origins of our universe, our world and life it is very closed – the idea of a creator is only allowed in Religious education – far away from the science labs at school. So I wonder what our educators are scared of?

The evening gave the audience a brief view of the concept of ID and its intersection with evolution.

*“ID does not dismiss the evolutionary process, but is rather about the deep design inherent in the universe, whereas evolution is essentially a theory about the processes by which living things develop. Therefore, ID and evolution do deal with significantly different aspects of origins.*

*However, there are two areas in which ID and evolution collide. The first is the implication of Neo-Darwinism that life is essentially the result of blind and undirected processes. ID maintains that the science points to deliberate design and discernable intelligence in the natural and living worlds. The second is the claim that random mutation and natural selection can account*

*for the generation of greater genetic complexity over time. ID questions whether there is sufficient evidence that such a mechanism is capable of doing what is claimed.”*

The evening raised many questions and for me answered many more. To find out more about this topic, and the nature of God’s creation and how science (that is being denied by many) is compatible with creation and design visit [www.c4id.org.uk](http://www.c4id.org.uk)

Yours in Christ ... Mike Weaver

Quotes from: Noble, A. 2013. *ID - An Introduction to Intelligent Design*. Glasgow: Centre for Intelligent Design

## The Engel Scale

Dr James Engel, director of the Billy Graham graduate programme in communications at the Wheaton College Graduate School, has given us a model of the spiritual decision-making process.

Why not assess where YOU are on it and pray for progress in 2016?

