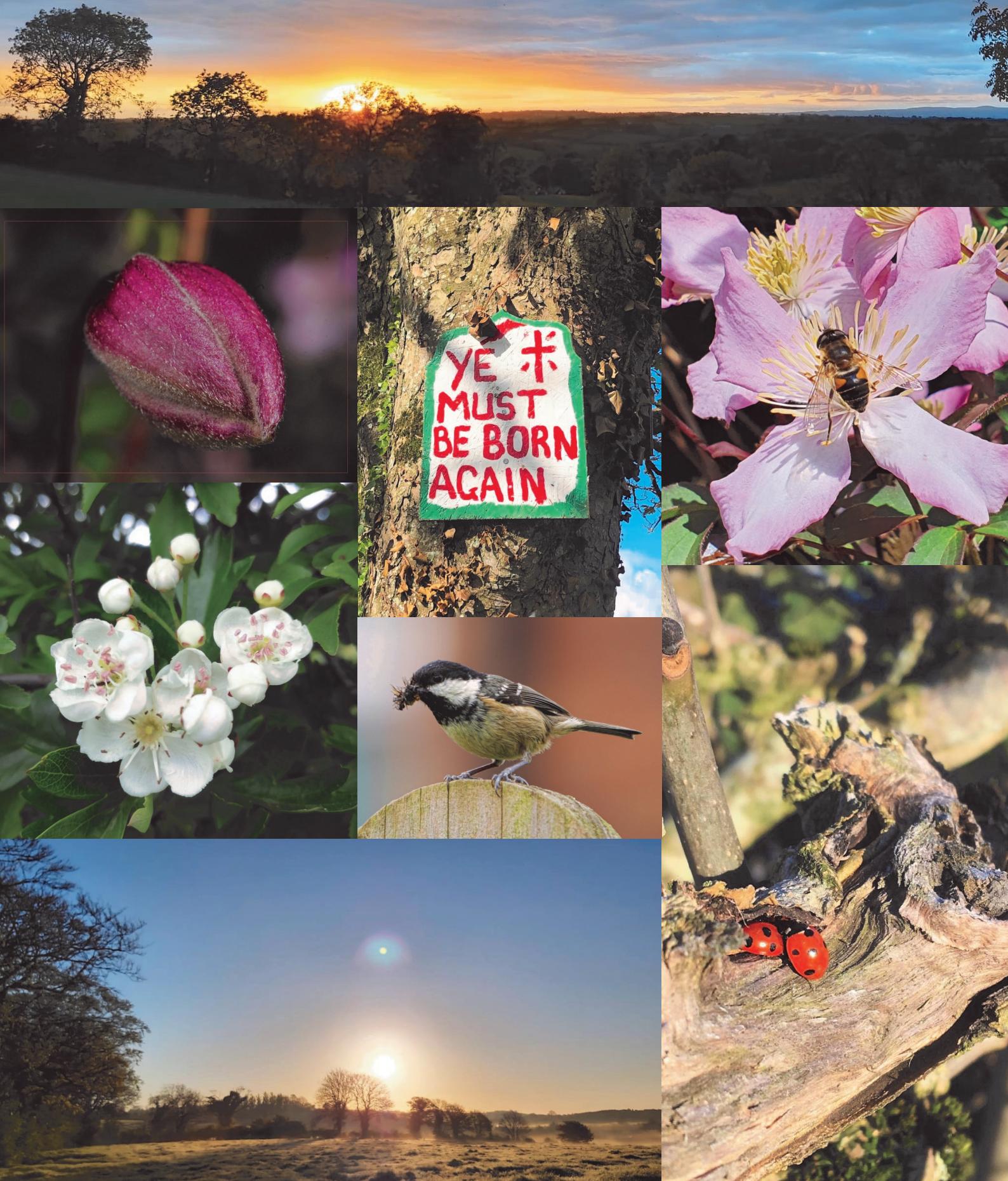


The Link



First Dromara
Presbyterian Church

September 2020



Dear First Dromara friends,

The year 1992 was for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, an awful year. She reflected and realised that her son the Duke of York divorced his wife, her daughter the Princess Royal divorced her husband, her son the Prince of Wales revealed that he and Princess Diana had a rather dysfunctional relationship and a huge section of the millennial structure, Windsor Castle, was ravaged by fire.

As Her Majesty opened parliament that year, she described 1992 as an “annus horribilis”, a horrible year.

Perhaps, 2020 has been an “annus horribilis” for you. Maybe you’ve watched death enter your family, sickness protrude into your home, unemployment or financial hardship cascade around you or you’re just fed up with COVID-19 and the havoc this pandemic has brought to us individually, as families and as a congregation.

As you know, for almost five months we were not able to meet for public worship. For the first time since Presbyterians first worshipped in Dromara in the 1650s, Lord’s Day Worship had been cancelled.

Obviously, we know the reasons for this, and we understand the Public Health Guidelines. However, we want to redeem the time. The writer of Hebrews says, *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* Hebrews 10:19-25



Instead of being an “annus horribilis”, let’s make 2020 an “annus mirabilis”, a wonderful and miraculous year, as we move forward with the hope that we have in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope this is a fresh invitation to you. I want to commend this latest edition of ‘The Link’ and thank those who have contributed towards it. Some outreaches and ministries have carried on throughout lockdown, some will creep back again, some will take considerable time, and some may not return. Please read this magazine and be encouraged about the Kingdom of God’s proclamation and increase in our locality and let us make 2020 an, “annus mirabilis.”

With every blessing from your Minister.

Scott

Operation Christmas

Child 2020

This year First Dromara will be supporting the Operation Christmas Child appeal, with the shoeboxes due to be brought to the service on Harvest Sunday.

Growing up in Mexico was very difficult.

Ernesto struggled, especially in school where he frequently found himself getting involved in arguments and even fights. He felt lonely and isolated, he was searching for meaning and satisfaction but finding it nowhere.

That is, until one of his friends invited him to attend church. Ernesto had nothing to lose. As he listened in to what was being taught, he quickly discovered that Jesus was the one he had been searching for. Within two weeks of attending church, Ernesto surrendered his life to Jesus. Two more weeks later, he had the joy of receiving a shoebox from Operation Christmas Child.

Packed in the shoebox were new supplies for school, something Ernesto's family weren't able to buy themselves. With these supplies his academic performance improved drastically with many teachers recognising a change in his behaviour.

More than that, Ernesto was able to take part in the Greatest Journey course, where he learnt how to tell others about his new faith in Jesus.

Using a football that he also received in the shoebox, Ernesto now asks others if they want to play, and seeks to share the good news about Jesus with them while doing so. The football became one of his greatest tools for evangelism.

The shoebox Ernesto received from the Samari-

tan's purse through the

Shoebox appeal changed his life. But Ernesto's story is just the tip of the ice-berg.

Last year Samaritan's purse were able to send joy-filled shoeboxes to over 10.5 million children in need across 112 different countries throughout the world, as a tangible expression of God's love for them, whilst also giving them an opportunity to experience the even greater joy of being born again through faith in Jesus.

Within our own congregation, the shoebox appeal kicked off last year with roaring success, with 81 children in the Middle East receiving a lovingly-packed gift that was sure to light up their Christmas, praise God! Not only that, but through this appeal each child, where appropriate, also had the opportunity to learn about the Lord Jesus and the even-better free gift of salvation He offers.

So why stop? It is our hope once again this year to support this worthy cause. Will you join us in bringing some much-needed happiness, and the very best news, to those less fortunate than ourselves, in what has been an incredibly difficult year?

If you are unsure about how to get involved speak to Jonny Rodgers or Judith Redmond. Perhaps your shoebox could be used by God to make a difference.





You are invited to...

**First Dromara Presbyterian
Church Harvest Thanksgiving
Services on 4th October 2020**

**11:30am- Rev. Scott Moore
7:00pm- Rev. Alistair Smyth
(Carryduff Presbyterian Church)**

**“Give thanks to the Lord, for He
is good.” Psalm 136:1**

**N.B. Shoeboxes for Operation
Christmas Child will be collected
on this day.**

Lights, camera, action!



Covid-19 meant we were unable to meet as a congregation for a number of months. Howard Bull outlines some of the challenges and opportunities as our services moved online.

I'm sure that we're familiar with the phrase 'Every cloud etc etc...?'

Well, for all its trouble and inconvenience, the challenge of COVID-19 has spawned some unexpected opportunities and surprises through the challenges presented by the virus at First Dromara.

Quite obviously, nobody would have wished for such a calamity but, through adversity comes innovation and therefore, a chance to accelerate opportunity. My feeling is that the biggest surprise has been the magnitude of effort from so many people.

The challenge exposed us to many people with so many hidden abilities and talents. Who realised

that Lucy Copes had such a lovely solo voice? Who knew that Emily Williamson could both sing and play piano so well? Who knew that Jonny Rodgers was such an eminent scientist?

The opportunity in question is our ability to reach out from our First Dromara fellowship to those that previously hadn't heard from us or, through circumstance, had been prevented, for various reasons, from experiencing 'church'.

What am I talking about? Well, it's our newfound ability to harness technology, through adversity, and to use it to magnify the word of God.

More importantly, perhaps, reach people who, for whatever reason, didn't know us or had never worshipped with us.



To reinforce this, a quick look at the viewer numbers for most morning broadcasts show regular ‘church attendances’ of over 400 and remember that each view may not be a person but a family. The COVID-19 pandemic reached Northern Ireland on 27 February 2020. On the evening of the 28th March, the Northern Ireland Executive announced new stricter measures to combat the spread of the virus. On the 22nd March, First Dromara had already recorded its first morning and evening services with Scott, making sure that the service reflected as close a representation to a real-life service as possible.

An analogy of those times that springs to mind, is of a duck, swimming gracefully on the surface, but, furiously paddling below the water. David Spiers and myself were fairly close to those (unlikely) ‘ducks’!

The virus lockdown had presented the team with a scenario that none was prepared for and we quickly had to come up with both a plan and equipment, to ensure that we could effectively project Scott and the wider congregation to the world but, well within the rules of the current lockdown. We had to rummage around in both our abilities and equipment and found that God had blessed us with ability, opportunity and resources to take on the challenge.

It would be very easy to attribute our ability solely to technology but, I have to admit, that without the creative bones of our own minister, Rev Scott

Moore, the output on our screens would certainly not have been so energised or compelling. I will guess that the 1-2-3 series was everyone’s favourite series and that idea was solely down to Scott. ‘Lockdown Look in’ was also a novel series that attracted many viewers.

For those that are interested in the mechanics of our broadcasting, I can tell you that there were no fancy gizmos available. When we had trawled though our inventory of useful equipment, we drew upon a collection of photography equipment that consisted of three Lumix (Panasonic) stills cameras (with video capability) and lighting from a home studio. Between us, David and myself linked them up to the sound desk to create a reliable, week in, week out set-up that allowed us to broadcast First Dromara Presbyterian church to the world.

To enable as close an approximation to a real-life service, there had to be both music, and a children’s address. Scott, in cahoots with a certain Jonny Rodgers, created the ‘Preacher and Teacher’ series which was a huge success with both youngsters and adults alike. Perhaps the only member of the congregation to regret the series was Jonny’s mum Ruth whose worktops were reportedly ruined by more than one of the experiments!

There were many contributions from our regular singers and musicians, with multi-screen productions from the praise group, the girl’s group and the youth group. Leah Spiers impressed by learn-



ing a whole new skill set in video editing techniques. People dug deep and came up with the goods in an impressive way.

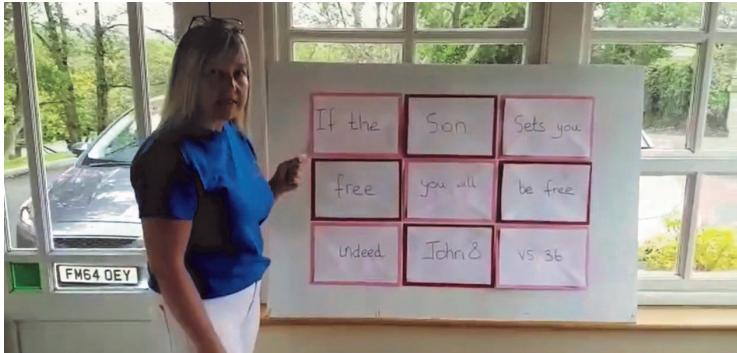
It soon became apparent that we needed to engage a wider segment of the congregation and to encourage as many contributions from as many people as possible. The 1-2-3 series accommodated this through offering bible verses, testimonies and music contributions.

Judith Redmond, Brian Copes and Alison Starrett kicked off the series and that was followed by 23 other broadcasts. Six o'clock in the evening was the broadcast time and it was impressive to see how many people tuned in, at that time, to watch. When the series finished, there were many regrets expressed from various sources and, as such, a measure of the popularity of the series. Over 80 people were involved in one way or another and credit certainly goes to them for the success.

The key aspect of the whole effort was to ensure that the fellowship remained engaged and that God continued to receive praise in the absence of physical worship.

When I was asked to write this article by the LINK editorial team, I struggled to describe what we did without appearing vain or proud. As I wrote, I quickly realised that our collective effort was certainly in keeping with what God expects from us and, for ourselves, worthy of self-recognition at least.





Holiday Bible Club 2020

At the end of June we normally hold our annual Holiday Bible Club.

This obviously could not happen this year, however we did not want to do nothing and decided to try an online club. Thankfully the rest of the leaders did not think we had totally lost our minds and all were very willing to contribute.

Around 46 people went in front of the camera recording the praise, bible lessons, memory verses and dramas in their own homes. Many more helped out behind the scenes, planning, recording, editing and preparing worksheets and activities.

With *everything* recorded and edited, the videos were uploaded to YouTube, Facebook and our church website, ready to be premiered on each

evening of the club. Worksheets and craft ideas to accompany each Bible Lesson were also posted on the church website.

The club premiered each evening from Monday 29th June to Friday 3rd July and I know in our house, we eagerly awaited it each night and it was enjoyed by all. Each night followed the same format - Welcome and praise, Drama, Bible lesson, Memory Verse, Close.

For this year's club we decided we would follow the theme of our church services by looking at the story of Joseph. The lesson and central truth for each night was:

Monday: Joseph the beloved son - Only Christ can free from sin

Tuesday: Joseph sold by his brothers - All God's





children experience difficult times

Wednesday: Joseph the prisoner - God helps his children live for Him, wherever they are

Thursday: Joseph rewarded - God rules over everything, everyone, and everywhere

Friday: Joseph cares for his family - God promises, "All things work together for good to those who love God".

The online Bible club was watched and enjoyed by children and adults alike in our own locality, but we have also heard of viewers from Kilkeel, Dervock, Dundalk, France, Romania and Australia.

We know many of our own congregation young and old tuned in each night, but if you missed it, you can still check it out at <https://www.firstdromara.org/holidaybibleclub>.

We would like to thank all of the leaders who contributed to club this year, we do know it is not easy to go in front of a camera and record yourself for public viewing, and we appreciate that you all stepped outside your comfort zones and made our online club fun, energetic, creative and most importantly Christ-centred, with the gospel truth being simply and clearly presented each night.

David and Gillian Spiers



Missionary focus

Pastor Adam Urban joined us during one of our Zoom prayer meetings. Scott meets with him monthly and the missionary committee is currently supporting his work.

Who We Are

My name is Adam Urban and together with my wife Dagmara (Daga) we serve as EMF missionaries in Poland. I was raised in a Catholic family and was born again in 2010. Quickly after my conversion I experienced deep hunger for the word of God and soon I realised that God was calling me to preaching ministry. In 2013 we moved to Scotland and in 2014 I started the Diploma in Theology course at Edinburgh Bible College which I finished in 2016. The day after graduation I came back to Poland and since then I have served as an assistant pastor in a local evangelical church in Siedlce (Shed-tse).



Where do we serve

Siedlce is an 80 thousand people city in eastern Poland, located between Warsaw and the Border with Belarus. The church here was planted by American family Ben and Sarah Layer and for almost 15 years there has been some gradual growth. The congregation now is now made up of 40 members. Eastern Poland is extremely poorly evangelised. Often there is no evangelical church even in the big towns. This means that even if someone would become a believer sometimes, he or she may have to travel one or sometimes even two hours to get to the nearest local church and most probably it will not be a healthy one.



What do we do

In 2013 planted a church in Łuków (Woo-koove) – city located 30 minutes journey south from Siedlce with a population of 35 thousand people. For seven years there was a really slow growth

but in 2019 we baptised five people and have six members in this congregation. We are ready to register it as a mission station. Apart from pastoring these two churches we also organise conferences and run a website, "The Gospel in the Centre", where we translate, publish and promote edifying resources like articles and video courses mainly from The Gospel Coalition, 9Marks, Desiring God and Ligonier Ministries. <https://www.ewangeliawcentrum.pl/>

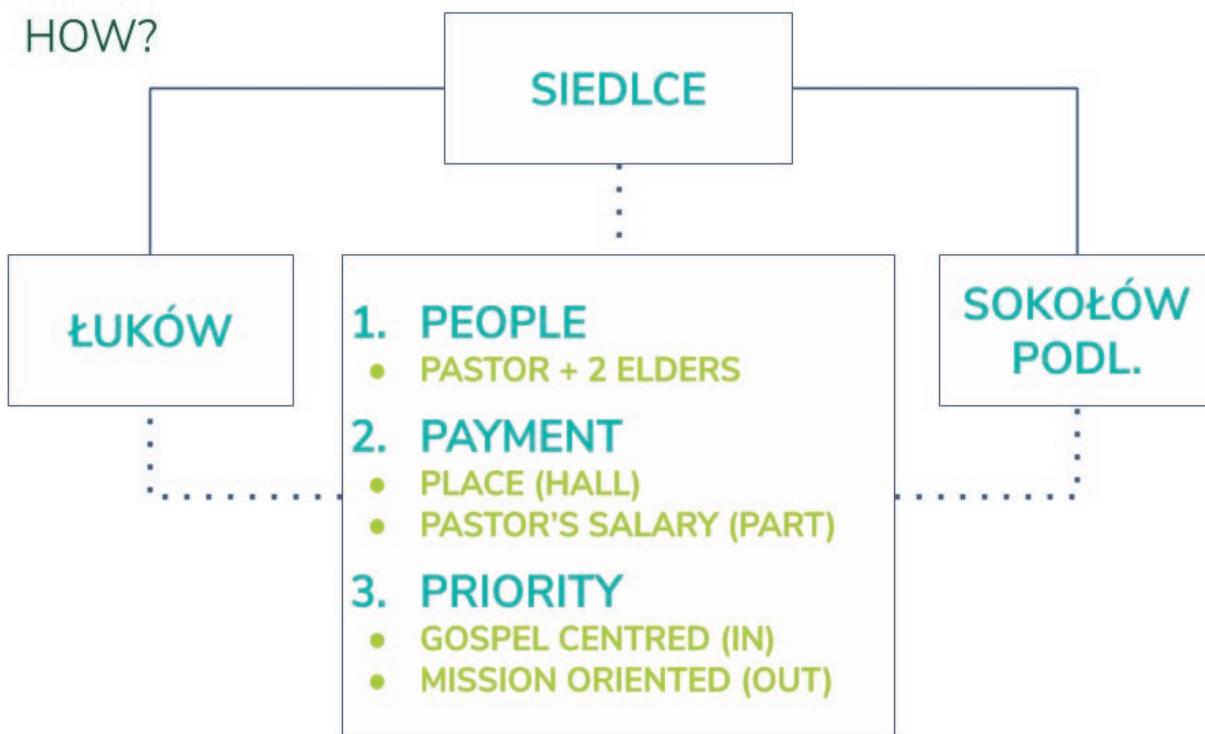
What is our vision

In 2040 we would like to see three or four churches planted and established in our area — churches in Siedlce, Łuków, Sokołów Podlaski and Biała Podlaska.

In order to do that we have to achieve three big goals: People, Payment, and Priority. We need People – that is at least one pastor and two elders in each church. We will need Payment – to rent a property for public gathering and at least part of a pastor's salary. And we need Priority – we want to lead those churches in such a way that members will be gospel centred and mission oriented.

VISION FOR 2040

HOW?



33

If you would like to know more or you would like to support us you can visit EMF's website, contact them and request updates from us.

<https://www.europeanmission.org/missionary/adam-and-dagmara-urban>

With love and many blessings

Adam and Dagmara Urban

Life during a pandemic

Some of our key workers outline how the Covid-19 pandemic changed how they lived and worked during lockdown.

'I thank God for His protection for me and my family'

RUTH COPIES: I work as a practice nurse in a GP practice in East Belfast. On the first morning of lockdown, after quite a sleepless night worrying about my family and what lay ahead for me the next morning, it was so strange travelling to work. No traffic jams, I think I saw about five other cars that morning and it seemed like everyone else was having a lie in. On arrival to work there were so many instructions and guidelines to read up on and on meeting with the senior partner my role was to change. Telephone triage was something I had never done before but with so many phoning the practice asking questions about symptoms, their concerns and shielding, it was all hands on deck. Guide-



lines were changing all the time and it was a challenge to keep up to date. There seemed to be a constant stream of zoom meetings and I found myself constantly listening to the news and reading up on the internet until it got to the point that I had to learn to switch off. That was of course with juggling home schooling, day to day life as a mother and doing my parents' shopping. I have continued to review those patients with chronic disease and immunising children every week. I really felt

for those frightened new mothers coming with their new babies. Probably their first time out of the house, with me greeting them dressed in PPE. How daunting that must be for them. We did lovely fun things too and got two new additions to the family. We got two hens which has been great fun and we are enjoying fresh eggs every morning. David even managed to start that vegetable patch that he always talked about. All this has been a great distraction.

I thank God for His protection for me and my family. God is in control at all times in our lives, and as we get used to the new normal, these words are so relevant now more than ever. Ecclesiastes 3:1-5, '*A time for everything under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.*'

In times of worry I always cling to 1 Peter 5:7. '*Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you.*'



'News of this virus brought a lot of fear and uncertainty'

DR SIMON MCCRACKEN: After hearing rumours of a deadly strain of coronavirus spreading across the world, I knew it would not be long before it came to the shores of Northern Ireland.

Throughout the pandemic I have been working on the Children's wards in the Ulster Hospital. The

news of this virus coming to Northern Ireland brought a lot of fear and uncertainty amongst staff. We had been told to expect the worst; intensive care beds would be over capacity, rotas would be collapsed to accommodate staff shortages, annual leave would be cancelled, I could be redeployed at any time to Covid-19



'Our Lord really did supply our needs'

DAVID AND KAREN KEOWN: Lockdown at the Keown household kicked off mid March with David being stranded in England after his boat journey home was cancelled just a few hours before sailing due to Covid 19, ensuing with a mad dash to rebook a successful alternative route home.

As the crisis heightened and redeployment was imminent, we both knew it would mean great changes and challenges ahead to keep our family safe, as two nurses and a child needing shielded would certainly present us with some difficulty.

During lockdown we spent the last few months apart, spending some time living in separate households and also time together but living in separate parts of the home. It really was a strange way to live, but we also felt thankful for technology as we were

able to come together by using FaceTime which enabled us to enjoy mealtimes and pray together as a family. The glorious weather of course was by no means an accident and we could enjoy time conversing outdoors but remain socially distanced too.

During this time it could have been so easy to give into feelings of worry and negativity, but the words of Philippians 4:6-7, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus,*" were a great source of comfort reminding us that our Lord will take care of our tomorrow, just as He takes care of our today, carrying every burden that weighs us down, so we can take His peace as our own.

Our Lord really did supply our needs during this time, as we were blessed with the kindness and generosity of our church family who gave us unwavering support, aptly timed encouraging words, additional PPE, laundry powder and even delicious buns and a beautiful cake. We were truly overwhelmed and humbled by this.

We were delighted to reunite together as shielding ended and we could enjoy our first of many family hugs for the first time in a few months.

As we begin to adapt and establish 'new norms' in this situation and pray that things will improve, we remind ourselves often that our God reigns, just as He always has and no disease or disaster can ever thwart His good and perfect will.

"The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all." Psalm 103:19.

wards where help would be needed the most and that many people would likely die.

This was the reality of what was happening in Italy back in March, but I thank God that Northern Ireland did not see anything near this. Thankfully, I was able to continue working on the

Paediatric wards and did not have to be moved elsewhere in the hospital. We quickly became used to the routine of gowning up in PPE to see and assess patients with showering twice a day becoming the norm to prevent you from potentially bringing this virus home. The number of patients admitted with Covid-19 to the Ulster was

well below predicted levels, and we did not have a single positive case in any child admitted.

God truly answered prayer for the people of Northern Ireland. Please continue to stay safe and be sensible as numbers of cases begin to rise in many parts of the country again.

From the archives



If you have
any old
pictures
which
should be
archived for
posterity,
please
speak to
Scott or
Rosemary
Sibbett.



Praise my soul...

Some members of our praise group tell us which items of praise have proved to be inspirational to them during lockdown.

When I was asked to write a short piece about a song that has meant something to me during Lockdown, I knew immediately what that song would be.

I don't know for sure but I suspect that many of you have, like me, experienced many times of anxiety and worry over these past few months. Concerns about family, finance, jobs or health. Concerns when we experience other people's apparent apathy and complacency in relation to social distancing, mask wearing, or other guidelines.

The song that has kept playing over and over in my head during this time is one written and performed by my good friend Eilidh Patterson (pronounced Eye lee), a singer/songwriter from Londonderry. Some of you who read this know what Eilidh's acoustic guitar playing and pure voice are like, and how her songs are written from the heart.

The song that I have chosen is called "*You are there*" which features on her album, '*When the time comes*', released in 2009.

The lyrics follow, but it has been, and continues to be, a reminder to me that, no matter what our circumstances are, even when we don't feel God's presence, He is always there. He is with us, even in times of doubt and anxiety, and we CAN "rest in the safety of His love".

If you would like to see/hear more of Eilidh, please check out her website www.eilidhpatterson.com
You won't be disappointed!

Rosemary McCullagh



Tiny strands of starlight pierce the darkness
Here and there a flicker comes and goes,
And underneath this wonder I am feeling so secure
And I'm not afraid to feel the cold wind blow.
You are there even though I cannot see You
You are there though sometimes I cannot hear You
And I'll never be alone for You won't leave me
So I'll just sit here in the safety of Your love.
You know I haven't felt like this for ever
It's only since You came into my heart
And I believe that someday we'll meet beyond the stars
But 'til that day I'll know when we're apart
That
You are there even though I cannot see You
You are there though sometimes I cannot hear You
And I'll never be alone for You won't leave me
So I'll just sit here in the safety of Your love.
You are there even though I cannot see You
You are there though sometimes I cannot hear You
And I'll never be alone for You won't leave me
So I'll just sit here in the safety of Your love
I'll just rest here in the safety of Your love.

*Copyright Eilidh Patterson
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'Still, my soul be still'

The song "Still, my soul be still" is written by Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townsend and draws upon the words of Psalm 46:10 'Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth'.

The song encourages us to still our minds before God because even 'though winds of change may rage tomorrow', God is always by our side and in control of everything we do.

I found this song comforting during lockdown as it reminds me that even though everything around us is so uncertain, God is constant. He never changes, He is always with me and I can be 'still', trust in Him and 'not be shaken'.

Even when we are going through a global pandemic we can find rest and peace in knowing Christ.

"Still, my soul be still
And do not fear
Though winds of change may rage tomorrow
God is at your side
No longer dread
The fires of unexpected sorrow

God, you are my God
And I will trust in You and not be shaken
Lord of peace renew
A steadfast spirit within me
To rest in You alone"

Leah Spiers



'Sovereign Over Us'

A song that has encouraged me over lockdown is 'Sovereign Over Us'.

I was introduced to this song a few years ago on a School SU weekend.

During the weekend we studied the story of Daniel, and saw how, even though Daniel was in exile from the other children of Israel, even though he was tested in the furnace and in the lion's den, God was in control and had a plan for Daniel.

During Lockdown as we studied Joseph, I was reminded of the words of this song.

The song draws on the words from Genesis 50 verse 20 "You intended to harm me, but God

intended it for good".

Despite Joseph finding himself in the pit and in prison, God was in control of Joseph's life and was using him for good.

I found this song an encouragement during lockdown as it reminded me that our God is sovereign, He is all powerful and all loving, He is in control and has a plan for me.

The chorus says:

"Your plans are still to prosper,
You have not forgotten us,

You're with us in the fire and the flood.

You're faithful forever,
perfect in love,

You are Sovereign over us."

Joy Spiers

Howard Bull tell us why he loves ‘Pretty Amazing Grace’

I have an eclectic taste in music ranging from trance/dance music, through the many genres of rock to classical music and particularly military brass bands. H.M. Royal Marines playing ‘Hearts of Oak’ is a particular favourite as is King Crimson’s ‘Court of the Crimson King’.

The song that has inspired me most during the lockdown is a song with a split personality in as much as it claims to be one thing and in fact (in my opinion), is quite obviously another.

The song in question is ‘Pretty Amazing Grace’ written by no other than Neil Diamond. When asked what it’s about he’ll tell you it’s about love but virtually everyone else I know who’s heard it will tell you it’s about coming to faith.

Read the lyrics and you tell me!

*Pretty amazing grace is what You showed me
Pretty amazing grace is who You are
I was an empty vessel
You filled me up inside
And with amazing grace restored my pride*

*Pretty amazing grace is how You saved me
And with amazing grace reclaimed my heart
Love in the midst of chaos
Calm in the heat of war
Showed with amazing grace what love was for*

*You forgave my insensitivity
And my attempt to then mislead You
You stood beside a wretch like me
Your pretty amazing grace was all I needed*

*Stumbled inside the doorway of Your chapel
Humbled and awed by everything I'd found
Beauty and love surround me
Freed me from what I feared
Asked for amazing grace and You appeared*

*You overcame my loss of hope and faith
Gave me a truth I could believe in*

*You led me to a higher place
Showed Your amazing grace
When grace was what I needed*

*Look in a mirror
I see Your reflection
Open a book
You live on every page
I fall and You're there to lift me
Share every road I climb
And with amazing grace You eased my mind*

*Came to You with empty pockets first
When I returned I was rich man
Didn't believe love could quench my thirst
But with amazing grace You showed me that it can*

*In Your amazing grace I had a vision
From that amazing place I came to be
Into the night I wandered
Wandering aimlessly
Found Your amazing grace to comfort me*

*Pretty amazing
Pretty amazing*

*You overcame my loss of hope and faith
Gave me a truth I could believe in
You led me to that higher place
Showed me that love and truth and hope and grace were all I needed*



‘O Breath of Life’

By Robert Hawthorne

The hymn that inspired me most throughout “lockdown” was ‘O Breath of Life’.

This hymn is a prayer asking for the Holy Spirit to move among us. Never had there been a time when we had been in greater need of the Holy Spirit to be moving among us than during Lockdown.

The hymn pleads that the Holy Spirit would renew and revive us and equip the Church to spread its light. This time of physical closedown could have been a time for the Church to be quiet, but instead it has given opportunity to reach out in new ways via the internet to people in our congregation, community and beyond.

O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,
revive Your Church with life and power;
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us
and fit Your Church to meet this hour.

O Breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive Your Church in every part!

O Wind of God, come bend us, break us
till humbly we confess our need;



then, in Your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore – for this we plead.

Revive us, Lord; is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting –
equip Thy Church to spread the light.

Words: Elizabeth Ann Porter Head (1850-1936)

Lockdown 2020 DVDs

During lockdown the ‘1,2,3’ series was very popular with our online audience. A DVD has now been produced and can be purchased for a minimum donation of £5, with all proceeds going to European Missionary Fellowship’s Church Planting Project in Poland.

Psalm 137

*By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion.*

*On the willows there
we hung up our lyres.*

³*For there our captors
required of us songs,*

*and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”*

⁴*How shall we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?*

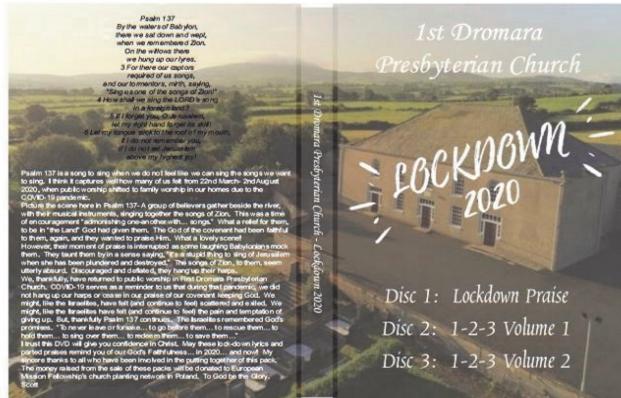
⁵*If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget its skill!*

⁶*Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!*

Psalm 137 is a song to sing when we do not feel like we can sing the songs we want to sing. I think it captures well how many of us felt from 22nd March - 2nd August 2020, when public worship shifted to family worship in our homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Picture the scene here in Psalm 137- A group of believers gather beside the river, with their musical instruments, presumably for a time of praise, singing together the songs of Zion. This was a time of encouragement, “admonishing one-another with... songs.” What a relief for them, to be in ‘the Land’ God had given them. The God of the covenant had been faithful to them, again, and they wanted to praise Him. What a lovely scene!

However, their moment of praise is interrupted as some laughing Babylonians mock them. They taunt them by in a sense saying, “it’s a stupid thing to sing of



Jerusalem when she has been plundered and destroyed.” The songs of Zion, to them, seem utterly absurd. Discouraged and deflated, they hang up their harps.

We, thankfully, have returned to public worship in First Dromara Presbyterian Church. COVID-19 serves as a reminder to us that during that pandemic, we did not hang up our harps or cease in our praise of our covenant keeping God. We might, like the Israelites, have felt (and continue to feel) scattered and exiled. We might, like the Israelites have felt (and continue to feel) the pain and temptation of giving up. But, thankfully Psalm 137 continues. The Israelites remembered God’s promises. “To never leave or forsake... to go before them... to rescue them... to hold them... to sing over them... to redeem them... to save them...”

I trust this DVD will give you confidence in Christ. May these lockdown lyrics and parted praises remind you of our God’s faithfulness... in 2020... and now! My sincere thanks to all who have been involved in the putting together of this pack.

To God be the Glory.

Rev Scott Moore

Deaths

**As a congregation we note and extend our sympathy
to the families of:**

Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) McCalla née Skelly –
2nd January 2020

Mr Charles Sydney Younge - 13th January 2020

Miss Martha Wilhelmina (Ina) Harte - 5th February
2020

Mrs Annie Malcolmson née Wilson - 18th August
2020

Miss Annie Graham - 8th September 2020

*‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is
your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power
of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us
the victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ.’ 1st Corinthians 15:55-57*

Marriages

As a congregation we note and extend our congratulations to the following:

"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:14



ABOVE: Dr Simon McCracken and Miss Bethany Lucas, Kilkeel Baptist Tabernacle, 21st August 2019



LEFT: Mr Christopher Gamble and Miss Rachael Keys - Colaghty Parish Church, Lack- 15th August 2020

Cries from Calvary

Seven Studies by Rev. Scott Moore

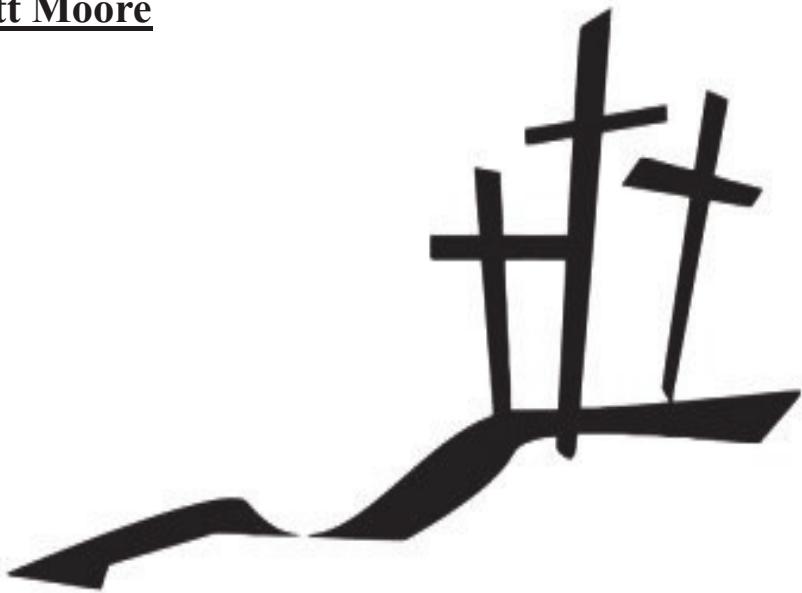
John 19:16-30- "It is Finished!"

Our seven last sayings from the cross series is almost at an end. Five have been studied, with just one more after this.

Continuing on from last time, we begin with another musical maestro's concluding comments. Ludwig Van Beethoven, known for his classical works (the tune Ode to Joy, sometimes used for Psalm 98 in our church, comes from his great 9th symphony), is thought to have muttered before leaving the scene of time, "*Plaudite, amici, comoedia finite est.*" *Applaud, friends, the comedy is now over.* It is over! It is interesting how these words are somewhat linguistically just like the dying words of our Saviour, yet theologically, they are poles apart. Bishop J.C.Ryle describes this last cry from Christ as "*remarkable*." In the language Jesus spoke, this was just one word! If we could search through Scripture for just one word with significant and eternal consequences, this is it. This is a remarkable word! This is an encouraging word!

This cry - What about it?

At first glimpse, you may well say to yourself, this is a cry of surrender! Jesus is crying out defeated, deflated and demotivated. This could not be further from the truth. This is a euphoric end, this is conquering



completion, and this is victorious vindication. I wonder have you ever completed a task - painted a fence that you thought would never end, began a room renovation in your home that you regretted once you realised the scale of the project - but when the job was finished, you were so overcome with that sense of accomplishment you would say, "done!"

To fully grasp the full extent of this cry, "*it is finished*", we have to look at how this word was actually used by the people of Jesus' day.

Here are three examples of this word in use:

A Servant - When a servant completed a task given them by their master, at the end of the task the servant might have said, "It is finished." A Servant's reply. Paul, in Philippians 2 reminds us, that Jesus

was a 'servant.'

An Artist - When a painter had toiled long and hard over a masterpiece, when he set his brush back onto the palate for the last time, painted the last brush stroke and beheld his work, he might have said "It is finished." The great tapestry of redemption is being portrayed. Here, on the cross it finds its fulfilment. An Artist's reply. Paul, in Hebrews 1 reminds us, that Christ was a 'creator.'

A debt collector - When you owed the tax man money, once you had paid your last portion of debt, the banker/debt collector might have said, "It is finished." Fully Paid! No more payment will ever be needed! A debtor's reply. Jesus is the great debt canceller recorded in the Lord's Prayer.

This is completion!

This cry - What does it mean?

Another reason we know that Jesus' cry was one of Accomplishment and not Abandonment is because of what it is Jesus says is finished. He does not say, "I am"; He says, "it is", and this is very different. Jesus is saying the job I am here to do, the salvation I am here to secure, the way I am here to make clear, the Father's will I am here to obey, "It is finished." Satan has had his armoury plundered and pillaged, the sneaky serpent has his head well and truly squashed and crushed by the stamp of this cry, the ravenous lion has his devouring teeth chiselled to nothing, his fire is out and he is now nothing more than a puff of smoke from a smouldering fire! This is finality! Never again, will Jesus Christ be prostrate before prattling Pilate, never will He be denied by His devoted disciple, never again will He withstand whipping from whining wrongdoers, never again will He suffer shouts of scandal from scoffing scoundrels, never again will He gaze upon the gyrated back of the glorious Godhead. All four gospels attest, Jesus, at the end of His suffering, cried loudly, "*It is finished.*" Never again!

However, the meaning to this cry is explained more in what happened as this cry was heard. Mark 15:38 records, "*And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*" You may well think, so what? This wasn't a curtain like the one you draw back every morning as you behold a new day. This curtain was magnificently majestic,

around 60 feet long, 30 feet high and 1 foot thick and took almost 300 priests to move it. It was the one obstacle between the people and the Holy of holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant (the physical representation of God on earth). This curtain meant separation between a Holy God and an impure and iniquitous people. The High Priest had access through this curtain on one day a year when he would make atonement through the sacrifice for the people. However, "*it is finished.*" This is no longer needed. The curtain was ripped from TOP to BOTTOM. God ripped it! God is now saying, through my Son, the way to me is now open, come! God is saying through this remarkable rip, "yes, *it is finished*, for I accept it!"

This cry- What now?

If you're a Christian, hear this cry, "*it is finished.*" If you're burdened by sin, convicted of past sins, worried that you will be unworthy, then hear this cry, remember "as far as east is from the west" that's how far the Lord has cast our sin from us, "*it is finished*", it is done! Time and time again, instead of boldly walking through the curtain because "*it is finished*", we try to stitch the curtain up again and forget we have open access.

For those who trust in Christ, He has paid the price of sin, God is satisfied with Christ's payment and you need to be, too! You have nothing more to do to earn your salvation. The Holy one now invites you to step through the curtain and into His presence because of what Christ has done He can

now look at you and call you "Holy." Do you need to hear this? I think we all do from time to time.

In Ancient Egypt, when life came to an end, it was believed before you could enter the afterlife you would have your heart weighed against a feather. If your sins made your heart heavier than the feather, you were denied access. Aren't we glad our works are not weighed up, or no one would enter glory. Thankfully, it's not about us and our list of accomplishments, but about what He has done and now, "*It is finished.*"

The price is paid in full, nothing needs to be paid again, and the great transaction has been made... look to the one who paid it all.

Here's a great hymn penned by Philip Bliss, which we sometimes sing, that helps us think about this climatic cry from Calvary!

*Man of Sorrows! What a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

*Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

*Lifted up was He to die;
"It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in Heav'n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

*When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew His song we'll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!*

