

# Leaflet



Greenbank Parish Church  
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES  
No 617 May 2012

## *Pulpit Diary*

**May 6**  
9.30am First Sunday Service led by WAGS  
10.30am Morning Worship

**May 13**  
10.30am Morning Worship

**May 20**  
10.30am Morning Worship

**May 27**  
9.30 Pentecost Communion  
10.30am Morning Worship for Pentecost

**Jun 1**  
19.30 Pre-Communion Service

**Jun 3**  
9.00am Communion  
10.30am Communion (Springboard and Spectrum meet as usual)  
3.00pm Communion (Braid Room)

For information about church organisations, please contact the Church Office (Mon–Fri, 9.00am–12.00pm, 1.30pm–3.30pm):  
Mrs Virginia Johnston  
tel and fax: 0131 447 9969  
e-mail: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com  
The pastoral team can be contacted through the Church Office:  
Rev Alison Swindells  
tel and fax: 0131 447 4032  
email: alisonswindells@blueyonder.co.uk  
Rev W. Peter Graham  
tel: 0131 445 5763

To make contact with any of the organisations described in this Leaflet, please use the telephone number given, if there is one; otherwise contact the Church Office.

## Minister's Letter

### Dear Friends

As I have mentioned before, the Church of Scotland is in the midst of a National Stewardship Campaign. Our own campaign last year here in Greenbank, has already contributed to this, and we are very grateful for the generous response which this generated. However the National Campaign also requests that congregations have an ongoing emphasis on stewardship.

In response the Kirk Session has agreed that we should encourage members to review their givings annually, bearing in mind that incomes can decrease as well as increase. Inside this Leaflet you will find a pledge card, which you are invited to complete and return to the Treasurer by the end of May. These pledge cards will be taken into Church and dedicated at the 10.30am June communion service.

But of course stewardship is about so much more than money. It encompasses our whole attitude to God's creation, and how in the light of God's generous love for us, we choose to spend not only the wealth of financial resources which we have at our disposal, but also our time and our talents. And so the Kirk Session has also agreed to designate the last Sunday in April as an annual "Stewardship Sunday". By adopting a three year cycle, focussing, in turn, on this particular Sunday of the year on time, talents and money, we would hope to encourage everyone to take the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the ways in which we use the time, the talents and the financial resources which we enjoy. This year we begin by focussing on time.

When I mentioned our plans to a colleague his response was – "Ah that's the one thing you can't get back! Time! You can always earn more money. And you can learn new skills. But you can never recover time spent." Those words have remained with me –a reminder perhaps of the need to use our time wisely. How many times have you experienced that feeling that there just aren't enough hours in the day?



If I might digress slightly for a moment or two - over the last few weeks a lot of publicity has been given to the centenary of the sinking of the Titanic following its collision with an iceberg. The author, Walter Lord, in his classic account of that event, entitled "A Night to Remember", tells how in 1912 wireless was still an erratic novelty. Range was short. Operators were in-

experienced. Signals were hard to catch. Yet passengers were fascinated by this new miracle of communication. They could not resist the sending of messages to friends at home or on other ships. As a result the airwaves were occupied with a great deal of what the author refers to as "frivolous private traffic". And in the midst of this frivolous private traffic one very important message was lost. That message was from another ship, the California. And it warned of icebergs nearby!

How vital it is to be able to recognise the important amidst the trivial. And that is true of all the things which demand our time and attention. How do we sift out that which is important from the myriad tasks which demand our attention each day? How do we find that sense of perspective?

Jesus advised his followers to seek first the Kingdom of God...and that is not just about fitting more church activities into an already frantic life. Rather it is about taking time to reflect on who God is, on who we are and on the relationship which God longs to have with each one of us. It is about learning to recognise that it is God's desire that the whole world might enjoy life to the full. And that that life is to be found in learning to love God and one another. It is when we discover this that everything else begins to fall into its rightful place

*With warmest wishes*

**Alison I Swindells**  
Minister

## Around the Sanctuary



*The Children's Easter Cross*

We hope you liked the picture of the Revelation window in the April Leaflet, and



*The Chancel Cross*

have located the "Lamb and Flag" in the real window. Here are some more details to look for:

Sun and moon: "The sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood" (Revelation 6, 12 - opening of the sixth seal)

The "seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God" (Revelation 4, 5). The designer has only depicted five of the seven torches in the window.

The four living creatures (Revelation 4, 7)

The seven angels with seven trumpets (Revelation 8, 1-6). How many angels with trumpets appear in the window?

## Roddy Morrison

### *New Preses*



At the Board meeting in March, Roddy Morrison was appointed as our new Preses.



Roddy was ordained as an elder at Greenbank in 2000 and, as a chartered surveyor by profession, has an interest in property and building maintenance. He has served on the Congregational Board and the Property Committee, as well as the Communications Committee of the Kirk Session.

He jointly led QII for five years, which included the 'QII in Peru' trip to work with street children hosted by Vine Trust and Union Biblica del Peru. More recently, as a supporter of Scottish Love in Action, he travelled to India to work with the children at Tuni.

His family life includes wife Debbie, children Rebecca, Laura and Niall, and two springer spaniels, and in his spare time he enjoys golf, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits.

We wish him well in his new position.

## Malawi Bike Ride 2012

Susan (elder D41,A&B) and Mark Beaumont are preparing to undertake a bicycle ride to visit projects in Malawi in July this year, to support Link Community Development, a charity that works to improve the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa. Mark is a trustee of LCDS.

If you would like to help generate much-needed funds for LCDS, please consider sponsoring us. Every penny helps. You won't be sponsoring the bike ride; we will cover the trip costs.

Susan has an online giving page at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SusanBeaumont> or you may send donations (made out to Link Community Development Scotland), directly to us: 12 Greenbank Row, Edinburgh EH10 5SY

We would be delighted to tell you about the work that LCD does, or you can see further details at: <http://www.lcdinternational.org/scotland>

Thank you.

**Susan and Mark Beaumont**

## Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week 13th-19th May - Thank you to all those who have agreed to be part of the door to door collection team this year. Collectors should pick up their bags of envelopes at Church on Sunday 13th May. If you need to make alternative arrangements please contact me on 447 2866. Christian Aid relies on donations locally collected by congregations, to sustain its important work combating poverty in the developing world.

**Pam Jack**

Gbap town, Sierra Leone



**christian aid** Your Support can make a difference in Sierra Leone.

To celebrate the beginning of Christian Aid Week

13<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

**UNITED  
CHURCH SERVICE**  
**Morningside Parish Church**  
**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012**  
**At 6.30pm**  
**Preacher: Rev. John Cameron.**

## St Patrick's Night Ceili

We had an absolutely fabulous night considering those organising were not Irish and had little experience of other St Patrick's Nights. The sell out ceili had Irish dancing, Scottish dancing, performers and Irish community singing.

The evening opened with Professor Brian McKinstry of Belfast giving the Irish blessing...

May the Irish hills caress you.

May her lakes and rivers bless you.

May the luck of the Irish enfold you.

May the blessings of Saint Patrick behold you.

....and the assembled company toasted the Saint with Guinness or Limeade.

We had three wonderful young dancers from the Ward School of Irish dancing. Their names were Rebecca Franklin, Angel Douglas and Gemma Yoxall. They all looked stunning in their Irish costumes and danced three wonderful Irish dances with amazing competence, vigour and agility.



**Morningside Parish Church Halls**

**Sat. 26 May 2012. 10am-2pm.**

**Stalls:** Home Baking & Preserves  
New & Nearly New Items  
Plants, Indoor ,Outdoor & Bedding  
Books, DVDs, CDs & Jigsaws  
Fairtrade Food & Crafts.  
Tombola & Raffles  
Crafts: Jewellery, Cards, 20 min. Massage  
Top Tots Boutique.  
Children's Activities & Face Painting.

Refreshments: Coffee, Tea, Juice, Biscuits with Soup and a variety of Filled Rolls at Lunchtime.

Donations for all Stalls and Prizes for the Tombola will be very gratefully received.

Admission free, do come along!

A ten strong group of Intermediate fiddlers, self deprecatingly calling themselves 'The Intereejits' proved that they were poor judges of their own abilities for they played skilfully and entertainingly.

Clarsach players Ellie Evans and Sam Macadam played three duets with great sensitivity and beauty. Ellie is a music student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. Susan Beaumont and Tom Inglis played Annie's Song evocatively on flute and guitar respectively with Tom in further demand to lead the Irish community singing and also entertain the company with two familiar Irish songs: 'The Hills of Connemara' and 'The Star of the County Down' who turned out to be our next performer, storyteller Audrey Parks who is originally from County Down and told us a fascinating Irish Tale of fairy people which held the entire audience spell bound. Audrey is a well kent face at the Storytelling Centre on the High Street.

The Greenbank Buskers provided music for dancing and the assembled company tried at least one Irish set dance: 'The Walls of Limerick'. The rest of the dances were Scottish - mostly danced to Irish tunes.

At the interval there was a taste of Ireland with Barmbrack and Irish Soda bread with cheese.

It was a fun night attended by a mix of people who all said how enjoyable it had been. Particularly interesting was the attendance of two young Chinese students who had spotted the Ceili on the Edinburgh Irish Festival website and they danced every dance. £880 was raised for Scottish Love in Action [www.sla-india.org](http://www.sla-india.org)

Hazel Macaulay

## Welcome to our new Staff

Both Ginny and Keith have had varied careers.



### Church Administrator

Our new Church Administrator is Mrs Virginia (Ginny) Johnston.

Ginny has worked in a variety of Administrative posts including working with the Institute of Chartered Accountants Scotland and running her own property business. She is married with two sons.



### Caretaker/Handyperson

Our new Caretaker/Handyperson is Keith Craven.

Keith comes from Northern Ireland and was in the Army. He has worked with a removal firm and volunteers with the Edinburgh Cyrenians and with the Bethany Trust.

We hope they will enjoy working here in Greenbank.

## Scout Jumble Sale

The Scout Group would like to thank the Congregation for their support for the annual Scout Jumble sale and for the help and donations from the members. It was again hugely successful raising just over £8,000 for funds and activities. Again a team of volunteers ensured that items



not sold but in good condition, clothes, books, bric a brac, pictures, CDs etc were distributed to a pre-arranged group of charity shops so no waste. Over the years



*Christmas Stall*

we have seen the demise of TVs, monitors, videos, records, home brew kits, china services and an increase in lamp shades, CDs/DVDs, pictures and suitcases. We now even have a Christmas decorations



*Trying the chairs for size*

stall. Books however remain a standard although a noted increase in non fiction. Out of the mounds of clothing only 3 skirts! and a big increase in and demand for shoes. As always a number of items left even the most fervent antique road-show watcher completely flummoxed. If the day itself was a blur for most of us with, perhaps some 750 adults and children passing through the doors over the 3 hours, the success was the result of planning and preparation by the Leaders from December last year and a large turn out of helpers in the final week to assist the Scouts and parents in setting up the halls, collecting goods round the Parish, sorting and displaying and assisting with the sale.

**Stuart Sanders**

## Book Review:

### *Praying With the Earth*

**John Philip Newell**

**Canterbury press £10.99**

**ISBN 978-1-84825-049-9**

John Philip Newell is one of the Church of Scotland's hidden gems. He is an expert in

Celtic spirituality, a poet, author, activist, minister, and former Warden of the Iona Abbey.

Last April I was fortunate enough to be a part of a Pilgrimage for Change led by Philip and his wife Ali, and I found the seven days we spent on Iona incredibly enriching and invigorating. I enjoyed reading two of his books in preparation for the pilgrimage, and was excited to receive *Praying with the Earth* as a wedding gift in July.

The book contains a series of seven morning and evening devotionals that draw from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish traditions. Individual devotions contain scripture, prayers, and places for silence and reflection, all of which seek to illuminate the connection we share with God, with creation, and with all of humanity.

Newell describes the book as having a two-fold purpose, "to learn from the wisdom of other parts of the family", (of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar), "and to recover, or perhaps to hear for the first time, some of the lost wisdom in our own branch of the family. And in all of this to be called back to the deep yearnings for peace that are at the heart of our shared inheritance and at the heart of the human soul".

My wife Hayley and I used this book as a devotional guide during Lent, and would occasionally also make use of the *Chanting for Peace* CD that makes a good companion to the book. We both found the rhythm of scripture, prayer and silence to begin and end our days nourishing. And we especially appreciated the opportunity to appreciate the wisdom of Muslim and Jewish traditions.

The book is thoughtfully put together, even down to the colourful artwork that graces each page. Images of the Golden Haggadah from 14th century Spain recall the medieval *convivencia* when Jews, Christians and Muslims lived in relative harmony with one another. These, along with images from the Lindisfarne Gospels and woven carpets from 14th century Cairo have surprising similarities, and once again draw one's mind to focus more on what the three historic faiths have in common.

As we continue to see conflicts around the globe in which religious identity is used as



Date for your Diary.....

## SLA SUMMER FAIR

Saturday 16th June

10-12am

Coffee Morning

Baking, Plants, Entertainment

a wedge to drive people apart, I can think of no more appropriate devotional than *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace.*

Bill Stone

## Bookstall

On Sunday 6 May there will be an opportunity to browse through a selection of books for summer reading in the main hall after the 10.30am service. We will have copies of *Fulfilling a Vision*, the Contribution of the Church of Scotland to School Education 1772-1872 by John Stevenson available for purchase as well as titles that have been reviewed recently in the Leaflet. If you wish to see any particular books please contact us and we will try to obtain a copy for you from the Cornerstone Bookshop.

John and Joan Ritchie



The last collection date this session is 10th June, at the Sunday service (table set up in main hall).

Thanks to all who have donated items to Fresh Start. I would like to appeal for more items to be given, as the response has slipped recently. The problem of homelessness is as great as ever. So is the need for good quality donations to the starter pack

scheme, for people moving into their own accommodation.

Below is a full list of household goods wanted. *Please refer to it, to avoid giving unwanted items.*

Dishes and Crockery

Dinner plates, side plates, bowls, cutlery, mugs, glass tumblers, tea-towels.

Pots and Pans etc

Pots with lids, milk pans, frying pans, plastic boxes, cooking utensils, can openers, potato peelers, wooden spoons.

Cleaning Things

Washing up basins, washing-up liquid, toilet cleaner, toilet rolls, hand soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dust pans and brushes, pedal bin liners, rubbish bags, all purpose cleaner, laundry tablets.

Bed linen and towels

Single flat sheets, double flat sheets, single duvet covers, double duvet covers, pillow cases, blankets, duvets, bed covers, towels, face cloths, bath mats, curtains, rugs.

*Also wanted are small household electrical items - not T.V.s*

Pick up a leaflet from me, see [www.fresh-startweb.org.uk](http://www.fresh-startweb.org.uk) or phone 476 7741, to find out more about Fresh Start.

Alison Ambler

## The Guild

The Guild Trip this year is a visit to Inwood Garden near Carberry followed by a meal at the



Buckstone. Cars will leave the Church at 5.30 on Tuesday 15th May.

If you would like to come and haven't got



your name on the list please let me know by Sunday 6th May at the latest.

Ann Pirie

## Lent and Easter Appeal

This year's appeal in support of the Edinburgh Headway Group raised £2800 which, together with Gift Aid, should amount to approximately £3350. The Group is an independent charity founded in 1982 to support adults who have suffered head and brain injury and their families.

Thanks to all who contributed so generously to this valuable work.

## Friendship Club

Canal Outing Wednesday 9th May  
Reminder for those going on the Seagull Trust Barges:-

We will meet at the Church at 2.00 pm. We should return by 8 pm.

For any queries phone 447 6001



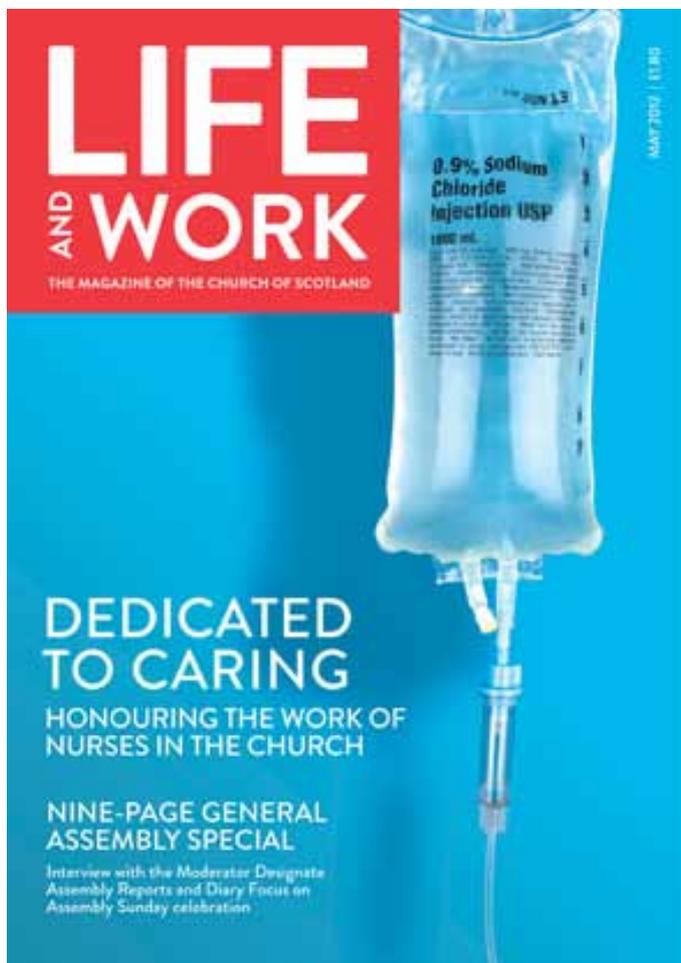
Don't Forget! Save the Date  
On Your Marks Holiday Club  
for children of Primary School age

6 - 10 August 10am - noon

Join us for fun and games  
for more information contact

the Church Office

or Alison Reid



## MAY ISSUE

### A Nursing Church

A series of articles marking World Nurses' Day on May 12. Jackie Macadam unearths the history of the Nurses' Chapel at Glasgow Cathedral. Barbara MacFarlane talks about the work of the Parish Nurses in Scotland. Ida Waddell, Church of Scotland mission partner in Zambia, tells how her nursing career has supported her faith journey.

### General Assembly 2012

Lynne McNeil meets the Moderator Designate, the Rev Albert Bogle. Assembly reports, timetable and fringe diary. Heart and Soul: this year's General Assembly Sunday celebration. The Big Question: what is your most memorable Assembly moment? A Month in a Life: Tom Murray, Purse Bearer to the Lord High Commissioner.

### A Theft Deterrent

Jackie Macadam reports on a new technology that can help protect churches from metal thefts.

### Changing Church

A brand new building which is benefiting both church and community in a small Ayrshire town.

### View from the Pew

Nancy Gilmartin encourages the use of more 'crossover' music in church.

### A Little Red Book

The Rev Doug McRoberts describes worship as part of a world-wide family

### The First and Last Adam

The Rev Marion Dodd outlines more evidence of Genesis in the New Testament

**Plus** all the regular columnists, letters, reviews and crosswords – all for just £1.80

**Online** Life and Work will be updating from the General Assembly through [facebook.com/lifeandwork](https://www.facebook.com/lifeandwork) and [twitter.com/cofslifeandwork](https://twitter.com/cofslifeandwork)

## Thomas Reflecting

I expected him to give me a row,  
Not - as you might think - for doubting.  
We had all doubted, at different times,  
And He was never angry.  
Indeed, He doubted Himself, sometimes,  
Or, if He didn't  
He certainly understood how it felt,  
Because He would sing the Psalms of doubt  
with great fervour.  
Doubt wasn't an enemy to Him.  
He could stand us doubting.  
It was indifference He couldn't thole:  
Indifference and apathy.

I expected Him to give me a row  
Perhaps for making conditions.  
I did do that and I won't deny it.  
'If only I see this and do that...then I'll believe.'  
Fancy me, thinking I could make conditions with God,  
But He didn't take me to task.  
He saw that I was happy because I had seen  
And He said that they were also happy  
Who believed without making conditions,  
Without saying, 'if only' or 'unless.'

I expected him to give me a row  
Because I wasn't there when He came.  
The others were present, I was absent.  
It wasn't their fault or His fault.  
It was mine.  
I had - for whatever reason -  
Decided that it was all finished.  
He came back to say it was all beginning.

I expected Him to give me a row.  
 But He didn't.  
 He gave me His hand  
 And, more than that,  
 He gave me His peace.

Taken from Stages on the Way worship resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter from the Wild Goose Worship Group.

## Congregational Register

*Omitted from the online  
 version of the Leaflet*

## Welcome Teams

May

- 6th** **Rosemary McCulloch**, Rona Ferguson, Fiona Grant, Frank Hutson, Christina Morrow, Alison Murison, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Peter Shannon
- 13th** **Roger Bland**, Eileen Campbell, Richard Dunbar, Clifford Hastings, Chris Horne, Doris Laing, Enid Mowat, Robert Nimmo, Keith Winton
- 20th** **John George**, Kenneth Aitken, Alistair Hunter, Hazel Macaulay, Kathleen Patrick, Jill Powlett-Brown, Dorothy Whitehead, Tony Foster
- 27th** **Alan Armit**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Iain Davidson, David Ferguson, Michael Pearson, Malcolm Watters, Nora Kellock, Elizabeth Mackay

June

- 3rd** **John Ritchie**, Eric Brown, Stewart Coghill, Ralph Davidson, Susan Inch, Gill Sweetman, Ian Thomson, David Easton, Susan Jackman

## Coffee Rota

May

- 6th** Susan Inch D48
- 13th** Valerie and Duncan Macniven D39
- 20th** Rachel McWilliam D58
- 27th** Margot Fergusson D11



## Creche Rota

May

- 6th** Janet Inglis Grace Pollock
- 13th** Vivien Hutchison Fenella Murray
- 20th** Hazel McLachlan Carrie Reid
- 27th** Alison Ambler Grace Pollock



June

- 3rd** Christina Morrow Fenella Murray

## Flower Rota

provided by / delivered by

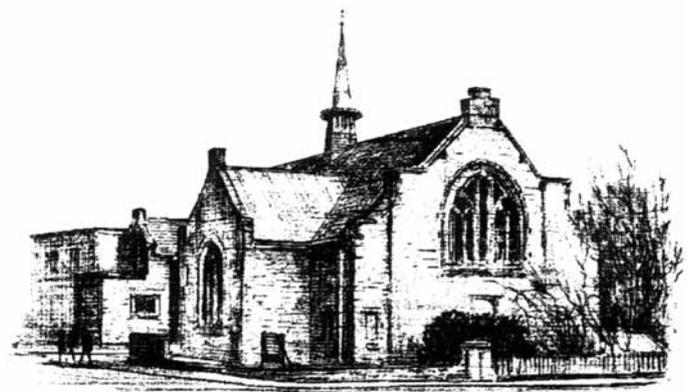
May

- 6th** Allan-Johnson wedding Joan/Sandy Cameron
- 13th** Martin Jones Family Liz Foster
- 20th** Marjory Thomson Fiona Kelly
- 27th** Rosemary McCulloch Susan Black



June

- 3rd** Weir Family Charlotte Tucker



Material for the June leaflet should be delivered to the Church Office or to the Editors' pigeon-hole in the Main Hall by Sunday 13th May or sent by e-mail by 9am on Tuesday 15th May to [greenbankleaflet@googlegmail.com](mailto:greenbankleaflet@googlegmail.com)

## PEOPLE WHO PRAYED: ALAN PATON

Alan Paton is perhaps best remembered for his first novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Although fictional, it vividly portrays the inequality and injustice prevalent in South Africa immediately prior to the implementation of apartheid in 1948. It is both a powerful protest against the structures of South African society and a moving plea for racial understanding and co-operation. It enjoyed critical success around the world, except in South Africa, where it was banned due to its politically contentious material. The book sold over 15 million copies around the world before Paton's death in 1988.

**Born in Pietermaritzburg in Natal in 1903, from his early childhood Alan Paton witnessed the increase of white power at the expense of the rights of the black majority.** His father was deeply religious and a strict and controlling parent who used corporal punishment to control his sons. This led to Paton's open opposition to any form of authoritarianism and physical punishment. However, his father introduced him to literature and sparked a great love of nature in his son, which was apparent in his books. Paton especially enjoyed Scott, Dickens and Rupert Brooke, as well as the Bible. After studying at a white-only university, he took an educational diploma and started teaching at a high school for white students in the little town of Ixopo in Natal, before returning to teach in Pietermaritzburg.

**At the age of thirty two Paton was put in charge of the Diepkloof Reformatory for seven hundred delinquent Africans, just outside Johannesburg.** He stayed thirteen years — and transformed it from an insanitary, appalling kind of prison into a school with a large degree of freedom. He had compassion and courage. Every time he made a change the staff threw up their hands in horror. There were moments when anything might have happened and this extraordinary experiment might have collapsed. But it came off. This period was crucial for the formation of his political consciousness. Interested now in the whole question of prisons, he set out in 1946 on a tour of Europe and North America to study penal reform. It was when in Trondheim, Norway, homesick for his wife and country, that he began writing, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

**After completing *Cry, the Beloved Country* Paton resigned from his post in Diepkloof and moved to the KwaZulu Natal coast to dedicate himself fully to writing.** He was very prolific and published 19 books between 1948 and his death in 1988. In 1953 Paton's desire to contribute socially inspired him and his wife to work at the Toc H Tuberculosis settlement in KwaZulu Natal. He also helped found the Liberal Party in the same year. The political situation in South Africa had been deteriorating steadily and he reluctantly felt compelled to take part in politics. He was elected as leader of the party in 1955 and remained in this position until the party's dissolution in 1968 due to new legislation banning multiracial political parties.

**His first wife, Dorrie Francis died in 1968 from emphysema.** Alan was by her bedside in her two years' illness, an almost continuous struggle to breathe. It was in the extreme tension just after Sharpeville, where sixty seven Africans had been shot down by the police. He and his wife had to sit by and see the police

search their personal papers. He was told that he might be arrested, but at the last minute nothing happened. It was at this time that the Liberal Party was banned by the Prohibition of Political Interference Bill. Alan Paton was not only harassed by the racist government. Anti-apartheid activists considered his gentle Christian-liberal solution to the problems of South Africa to be hopelessly inadequate. Also his friendship with the conservative Zulu leader Buthulezi, and his opposition to international sanctions, were criticised.

**There is much we can learn from Alan Paton's experience.** He became irritated with what seemed to him a needless accumulation of doctrines and with the attitude of the church to apartheid. The failure of his high hopes of political change and the long illness of the wife he loved so much brought on the most fundamental doubts. In one of his writings he says, "We want to believe, but can't". Many people go through times when there seems no hope, no faith, no one to pray to. There is bleak despair; we continue to breathe, to eat and to drink, but there is nothing more we can do. There are times when we may be paralysed by fear. And fear cannot be got rid of just by our own effort, but only by finding ourselves caught up in a cause greater than our own interests. In a little book reflecting on the prayer of St Francis of Assisi, *Instrument of Thy Peace*, Alan Paton wrote: I give my own testimony that when I am tempted to despair... I pray or speak or read this prayer of St Francis — "Lord, make me to do some work of peace for thee" and *I am moved to act on it*.

This attitude underlies a prayer written by Alan Paton:

*O Lord, open my eyes  
that I may see the needs of others;  
open my ears that I may hear their cries;  
open my heart so that they need not be without succour.  
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak  
because of the anger of the strong,  
not afraid to defend the poor  
because of the anger of the rich.  
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,  
and use me to bring them to those places.  
And so open my eyes and my ears  
that I may this coming day,  
be able to do some work of peace for Thee. Amen.*

**Here is a prayer born out of the misery of apartheid-torn South Africa and yet capable of speaking to many situations.** It has its roots in one man's struggle to speak out against a regime which systematically oppressed the poor black majority and elevated the interests of a rich and powerful white minority. It continues to call on us as the Body of Christ on earth to become involved in today's struggles to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality, and to commit ourselves to the cause of justice and peace, in the little world of our own lives and in the bigger world around us. And it reminds us that unless we are open to God we cannot be truly and fully open to other people.

**For further reflection:**

*I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see;  
I sought my God, but my God eluded me;  
I sought my neighbour and found all three.*