

Weekly Newsletter: 15th November 2022

Reflection: Putting the pieces in place

By Lorna Ferguson

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

I wonder if you enjoy jigsaw puzzles. I have to admit that I don't particularly like them- I don't have the patience required! But my mother is a fan. When I visit, there is often a special mat on the dining room table with a partially finished puzzle that she gradually works on for days, if not weeks, until the picture is finished.

When I read the Bible, it seems to me that some of the stories are a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. God is slowly and steadily putting different pieces in place which will one day form a full picture. In fact you could say that the whole story of the Bible is like that as God puts together the pieces of His plan of salvation.

We find one such story in the book of Esther. The main action of the plot to destroy the Jews doesn't begin until into Chapter 3, but in Chapters 1 and 2 we see God (even though His name is never mentioned in the book) putting various pieces in place which will be essential to the final picture. For example:

- Queen Vashti refuses to obey the command of her husband, King Ahasuerus, to appear at his feast in Susa in Chapter 1. As a result, she is banished from his presence. This happens in the third year of King Ahasuerus's reign.
- Mordecai and Esther are two Jews living in Susa. For some reason they had decided not to return to Jerusalem at the end of the exile. Mordecai is descended from Kish, a Benjaminite.
- The King decides to hold a competition to find a replacement queen. Esther is one of those taken into the palace to take part. She finds favour with everyone involved, including the King, who decides to make her his Queen. This happens in the tenth month of the seventh year of his reign
- Mordecai then becomes aware of a plot on the King's life. He reports this to Esther who informs the King, and the plot is thwarted. Mordecai doesn't receive any honour for this at the time, but what he did is recorded in the King's book of chronicles, something which will be very important later in the story.
- The King promotes Haman to a position above all the other officials. Haman is an Agagite, a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites, and an enemy of the Jews. In 1 Samuel 15, God had commanded King Saul to destroy Amalek and devote everyone and everything to destruction. Saul, however, disobeyed this command and spared King Agag and the best of the livestock. King Saul's father

was Kish. Mordecai, descendant of Kish, refuses to bow to Haman, descendant of Agag, who then decides to seek his revenge.

- After nearly a year of casting lots, Haman approaches the King to destroy all Jews, and an edict to that effect is signed at the beginning of the thirteenth year of the King's reign.

Nearly ten years pass between the feast at the beginning of Chapter 1 and the edict at the end of Chapter 3. During that time, God has gradually been putting all of the pieces into place to enable victory over the plot to destroy the Jews.

When we read these stories, we do so with the benefit of hindsight. We know the picture that God is working on as He puts the different pieces in place over weeks, months, or even years. But the people at the time had no idea of the significance of what was happening. They didn't have that final picture. We might even think that some of the decisions people made were dubious ones: for example the decision of Mordecai and Esther not to return to Jerusalem, or the decision for Esther to participate in a competition which included spending a night with a pagan King. Yet through all of this, God was patiently working behind the scenes to put the necessary pieces in place.

Perhaps as you reflect back on your own life, you can see something similar. I know I certainly can in various events which have happened, not least in the way God put various pieces together in the years before David died, pieces which would turn out to be exactly what we needed when that time came. In the present, however, we don't usually have the big picture. It can be hard to understand why certain things are happening, or even to remember that there is a big picture. But recalling how God has worked in the past, whether in our lives or in the lives of others, gives us hope for the present and future. It helps us to trust that, even though we may not be able to see the big picture, the One who can is in control, patiently putting all the pieces in place.

Tearfund Quiz – this Saturday

This coming Saturday, 19th November, we are hosting the Tearfund Big Quiz Night. We will be running the quiz, starting at 7.30pm, in the downstairs hall in the church building with the aim to finish approx. 9pm. There will be 6 rounds of questions, a break for tea/coffee and traybakes and also a chance to hear a bit about the work Tearfund are involved in. Recommended team size is 4-6, and you can join a team on the evening.

As we have given to Tearfund via our Harvest Appeal we will be promoting the work of a Tearfund as part of the evening and tally up the total amount given alongside the Harvest Appeal.

Jean Little

Some of us will remember fondly Jean and Eddie Little who worshipped with us for a number of years. We were so sorry to hear of Jean's passing on Monday morning. Pray for Eddie, Edna and Audrey and the family as they grieve. Funeral arrangements will follow.

Church Flowers

We are looking for volunteers to arrange the flowers in the vestibule window each week. Please contact Fiona (fiona@kcestimating.co.uk) if you are able to help. Many thanks!

This Sunday...

Joe is heading down to London this weekend to teach at London City Presbyterian Church, where Andy Longwe is the pastor. We're looking forward to having Craig Anderson from Galashiels take our morning service. We'll have an evening service, instead of an Equip session, and are delighted that Bob Akroyd will be preaching.

After the morning service, there will be-

- A litter pick up in Montgomery Street Park with the Friends of Montgomery Street Park
- The Christmas Choir practising in the hall downstairs
- No Hope Explored this week but the final session will take place on Sunday 27th November.

Bethany Welcome Centre: an update and items needed



**Bethany
Christian
Trust**

One of the many services Bethany Christian Trust offer is the Welcome Centre (previously known as the Bethany Shelter).

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre provides emergency accommodation with support to anyone who would otherwise be rough sleeping in Edinburgh. Operating from a hotel October through to May, the Welcome Centre provides each individual or couple with their own bedroom and en-suite facilities. 24/7 care and support are provided by the professional Bethany staff, as well as specialised support from 26 visiting partners, with a focus on rapid re-accommodation. Each day there is breakfast, lunch and a hot nutritious evening meal provided by churches. (We are one of the churches providing these meals.) In the first four weeks of the 2022/2023 season, the Welcome Centre has supported 232 individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Guests arrive at the Welcome Centre with many mental, physical and practical needs. The Bethany team have asked for help to provide the following practical items:

- Warm clothing – jackets, jumpers, T-shirts (not shirts)
- New underwear and socks (we never have enough!)
- Trousers – jeans, tracksuit bottoms (no suit/dress trousers)
- Hats & gloves (no scarves – we always have too many)
- New travel size toiletries (soap, shower gel, shampoo, razors, moisturiser, lip balm, deodorant, packets of tissues)
- New toothbrushes and toothpaste

****Please note that the vast majority of guests are male****

If you are able to provide any of these items- thank you! Please put them in the labelled box at the back of the church. The box will be available until **Sunday 18 December**. If you have any questions about items needed, contact Hannah Rankin (hannahlrankin@icloud.com).

Bethany seek to put Christian love into action and demonstrate the transforming impact of the Gospel in all they do. Please be in prayer for the staff team and the guests they are caring for. To find out more, visit their website: <https://bethanychristiantrust.com/>

Book Group – Saturday 26th November

The next book group will take place on Saturday 26th November at 3.30pm at Anncri's. This month we're reading Living Sacrifice by Helen Roseveare. For more info, contact Anncri Roberts (anncris@gmail.com).

Men's Event – Saturday 3rd December



A great opportunity for the men in the church family to get together. Saturday 3rd December 2022 from 3-5pm for an afternoon of pickleball (if you don't know what pickleball is, here's a quick [introduction](#)), table tennis, and pizza in the church.

Contact Joe for more information (joecbarnard@gmail.com) or Alasdair Roberts for table tennis coaching...

Carols by Candlelight – Tuesday 13th December

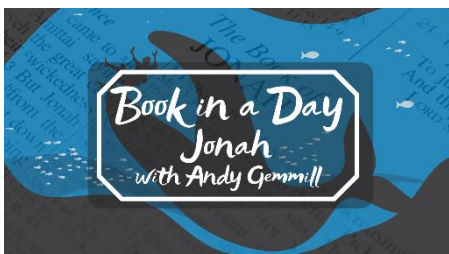
We're looking forward to Carols by Candlelight with the Salvation Army in Montgomery Street Park on Tuesday 13th December from 6.30pm. It will be a great opportunity to gather the community together and more information will follow over the coming weeks.

Douglas Kelly's Sermons

Patrick Kelly (Doug's son) is working to archive his father's sermons from 1970 to the present. Does anyone have audio recordings of sermons (likely on tapes) of Doug preaching through on Jonah at Holyrood back in the late 1980's? If you can help with this, please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org).



Cornhill Scotland – Book in a Day



Andy Gemmill, Director of the Pastors' Training Course, will lead us through the well-known but often poorly understood **Book of Jonah** on Thursday 1st December (9.30am to 4.30pm) at 25 Bath Street, Glasgow. Andy has thought about, and taught the book of Jonah over a long period and it will be a very stimulating and sharpening day as we think about this important minor prophet.

The day will be a great opportunity to learn key Bible handling skills and to grow in your understanding of the book of Jonah whilst enjoying warm fellowship with like-minded brothers and sisters. Our Book in a Day events will be really helpful for pastors, elders, women's workers, lay preachers, Bible study leaders, youth and children's workers or anyone wanting help with reading the Bible for themselves. We would love to have you with us. Booking is open [here](#).

Riding Lights Theatre – Nearly the Goat

Riding Lights are performing a Christmas play [Nearly the Goat](#) on Friday 25th November at 7pm (probably aimed at 5- 8s) in St Thomas' Church, Corstorphine. For more information and tickets contact Rose on 0131 285 8782.

Christians in Sport Youth Event – Saturday 26th November

Christians in Sport are planning an evening of sports challenges and activities for young sports people in S1-S6. There will be a short talk on how Christianity and sport can connect. It will be held at Grace Church Leith on Saturday 26th November 7-9pm. Please book [here](#).

Origin Christmas Special – Saturday 3rd December

Celebrate the season with Origin Scotland, and a host of musicians and singers in a magical evening of Christmas music in the Usher Hall on Saturday 3rd December at 7.30pm.

Free admission! Pay what you think it's worth when you book. Join Origin for this brand new Christmas experience and put the real message of Christmas at the heart - and the start- of the season.

For more information and to book, go [here](#).



Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group at 10am; Co-ordination Group at 7pm on Zoom.
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm.
- Thursday: Men's Discipleship Group at 10.30 in the church; Session meeting at 7pm in the church.
- Saturday: Tearfund Quiz at 7.30pm in the church
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Craig Anderson preaching.
 - Choir Practice and Litter Pick Up after the morning service
 - Evening Service at 6pm. Bob Akroyd preaching.
 - Joint Youth Event at 5.30pm at Grace Church Leith



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