

Weekly Newsletter

3rd February 2026



Reflection: You are seen

By Lorna Ferguson

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." (Genesis 16:13)

"I feel seen" is a phrase we hear quite often today. People usually mean that they feel understood, validated, and accepted for who they are. As Christians, we know that we are seen by God. One of his names in Scripture is *Elohim* - the God who sees. But what does that really mean?

Some of us might have grown up with a sense that God is watching us, waiting to catch us out. At primary school in Japan, one of my sons and his friend were caught running in the corridor and told off. The second time, they were sent to the vice principal who told them that the gods of the school were watching and reported bad behaviour to him. I think the intention was to scare the students into obedience, although it didn't work with that son!

To understand what it means to be seen by God, let's look at Genesis 16, where God is given the name *Elohim*. The context is of a rather dysfunctional family. God has promised Abram and Sarai a son, but ten years have passed and nothing has happened. So Sarai decides to take matters into her own hands and gives her Egyptian slave, Hagar, to Abram as his wife. However, once she becomes pregnant, Hagar begins to despise Sarai who in turn mistreats Hagar so badly that she flees.

Alone, pregnant and homeless in a foreign land, Hagar stops by a spring in the desert – and there the Lord meets her. God sees her distress and calls her by name. Sarai had only referred to Hagar as "my slave" but God addresses her as "Hagar", a person with a name, someone of worth. He asks her a question, listens to her and has compassion on her.

God is omniscient. He already knows what Hagar has done and what has been done to her and could have confronted her with that knowledge. Instead, he asks her questions, coming alongside gently and giving her space to speak and be heard. God shows Hagar that he sees her, and that she matters to him. But his love is not mere validation. Rather he challenges Hagar to return to Sarai because he has a plan for her and for her son. It can't have been easy to go back, but knowing that she is seen gives Hagar the strength to obey.

This is the first recorded conversation between God and a woman who was an outsider, not part of God's people. Up until this point, Hagar had surely felt unseen. She would have had no expectation that God would see her, a pregnant slave running away. Now she knows that God sees her and that, even though her life is messy, God has a plan for her and her family. Being seen by God is so significant to her that she gives him the name *Elohim*. She has now seen the One who sees her.

This is the only time in Scripture that the name *Elohim* appears, but it is not the only record we have of God seeing people who are suffering. When the Israelites were being mistreated as slaves in Egypt,



God told Moses, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them...” (Exodus 3:7-8). God sees, and what he sees moves him to act.

We see this in Jesus too. Jesus saw people that society overlooked, avoided or despised. He saw Zacchaeus hiding in the tree (Luke 19:1-10). He saw the woman desperate for healing who wanted to touch his cloak unnoticed (Luke 8:43-48). He saw the ten men with leprosy standing at a distance (Luke 17:11-19). He saw the woman at the well, coming alone in the heat of the day (John 4:1-42). And Jesus didn’t just see each of these people, he met them with compassion at their point of need. He was present with them, spoke with them and showed that they mattered. And because he loved them, he also challenged them, giving them direction.

Perhaps some of you feel unseen at the moment. Perhaps you are going through a period of suffering, confusion or doubts. Be assured that the *El Roi* who saw Hagar all those years ago, sees you too. God sees each one of us. He meets us in our mess and gives us a voice. And he gently gives us direction or a challenge, because he has plans for us too, to bless us, restore us and give us hope. Like Hagar, may each one of us be able to say, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”

Christian Institute Scotland Tour – Guarding Lives

We are hosting the Christian Institute **tonight (Tuesday) from 7.30pm – 9pm** as they seek to raise awareness and persuade MSPs not to legalise assisted suicide. They have identified key MSPs who may be open to changing their vote at Stage 3 and urge us to come along to this meeting. Tea and coffee will be served.

Meals and Prayer Meeting

Tomorrow (Wednesday) evening we will be having a meal together before the prayer meeting. Come to the church from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we’ll pray together from 7-8pm. It’s a great opportunity to share a meal, catch up with church family and pray together.

We’re looking forward to the team from Tranent Community Church joining us. Jen and Morag (who we supported in our Christmas Appeal) will be giving us an update on their work. Please join us!

Save the dates! We are also planning to have meals together on 4th March, 6th May and 3rd June. There won’t be one in April because of the Easter holidays and please keep the dates free.



Cornhill Scotland – Book in a Day

Come and join our Cornhill class for the day as we spend time digging deep into the book of **Jeremiah** together on **Thursday (5th February)** from 09:30-16:30 at 25 Bath Street, Glasgow.

Our '**Book in a Day**' events are a great opportunity to learn key Bible handling skills, to grow in your understanding of the Bible and all whilst enjoying warm fellowship with like-minded brothers and sisters. These days will be 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 further details and to book go [here](#).

Christians in Sport



This Saturday (7th February) we are hosting a Christians in Sport event for all young people in S1-S6. Come along from 7-9.30pm to make friends, play sport and explore the connection between sport and faith.

Cost is £3 and to book go [here](#).

This Sunday

Joe is away this weekend leading a spiritual retreat for men in the Highlands. We're very grateful to Connor Kennedy (from Musselburgh Baptist) and James Amour (from Charlotte Chapel) for preaching at our services on Sunday.

Our YouTube Channel

By Mark Malaczynski

Many of us benefit from being able to watch our livestreamed services but did you know that it is also a fantastic outreach tool? In 2025 our videos had almost 9,500 views and a total watch time of over 2,000 hours!

While we can give thanks for this the unfortunate side effect is that YouTube now sees us as popular enough to place adverts within some of our videos and that is something over which we currently have no control until we gain more subscribers and views.

If you haven't already subscribed to our YouTube channel please do so and ask your friends and family to do the same! We currently have just over 400 subscribers, and if we can reach 500 then we are



able to filter the adverts which are shown on our YouTube broadcasts, if we can reach 1000 we can remove them altogether.

We also need to reach 3,000 viewing hours per year so please encourage your family and friends to watch our recordings too - we have recently started adding shortened videos of the sermons lasting around 30 minutes to be more accessible to a wider audience, these can be found on our main channel page <https://www.youtube.com/@HolyroodChurch/>

Note if you previously subscribed to the Holyrood Evangelical Church channel you will automatically be subscribed to Holyrood Church.. Thank you for your support!

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Christian Institute – Guarding Lives Tour from 7.30 – 9pm
- Wednesday: Meal from 5.45pm and Prayer Meeting from 7-8pm
- Thursday:
 - Women's Bible Study from 10.30am-11.30am
 - Session Meeting 7-9pm
- Saturday: Christians in Sport Youth Event 7-9.30pm
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am – Connor Kennedy preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – James Amour preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

