

A royal wedding

Julia McGuinness *reflects on* Psalm 45:1-2. 6-9

The pomp of a royal wedding inspires many a song, including this psalm. The occasion is more than mere pageantry. Kings in the psalmist's day ruled with sovereign power and military prowess, embodying their nation's hopes for peace and prosperity. As a monarch in King David's line, this king is one of God's chosen rulers. The psalmist's praise is effusive. The king is described as God-like in standing – handsome, gracious in his speech. His bride is a foreign princess and his "ladies of honour" include princesses, emphasising his international status.

But this is no self-glorifying tyrant or power-hungry dictator. The psalmist sets this event in the context of God's ultimate kingship. It is always telling to observe whom or what our human leaders worship. This king bows the knee to God, allowing his own rule to be shaped by divine justice and righteousness.

As the psalmist fulsomely sings of God's blessings, we discern another melody. Myrrh, a perfume fit to scent royal robes, reminds us of the magis' gift to the infant king, Jesus. The bridegroom king is revealed as a foreshadowing of the Messiah, and the permanence of God's blessing on his reign takes on a whole new resonance. The psalm anticipates the glorious day when Jesus the king is united with the Church as his bride. And that really is something to celebrate. 🍷

Lord, we pray for leaders of nations, that they might acknowledge you as King over all. May they humbly exercise the power with which you have invested them, to establish justice and exercise compassion, that your kingdom may come. Amen.

Lesser-known characters of the Bible Hagar

by Caroline Fletcher

Hagar was the Egyptian slave of Sarah, Abraham's wife (Genesis 16 and 21). God had promised Sarah a son, but years later she still had no child. In desperation she encouraged Abraham to sleep with Hagar, for any child produced in such circumstances belonged to the mistress, not her slave. Hagar

gave birth to Ishmael, but tension simmered between the women. After Sarah finally bore a son, Hagar and Ishmael were exiled into the desert. Without divine intervention they would have perished there. Like many oppressed people, Hagar was invisible to others but not to God. No wonder she called God *El-roi*, meaning the "God who sees". Her son was not forgotten, either. God promised that just as Abraham's other son, Isaac, would be father to the Jews, Ishmael would father a "great nation" too. Today many Arabs claim to be descendants of Ishmael, meaning that Jews and Arabs share an ancestor in Abraham. 🍷



A foray into foraging

the elder

by Caroline Hodgson

In the book of Daniel (4:12), King Nebuchadnezzar tells Daniel his dream about a tree: "Its foliage was beautiful, its fruit abundant, and it provided food for all."

Elderflowers provide nectar for a variety of insects, while moth caterpillars feed on the foliage. At about this time of year the lacy flowers turn into deep

black-red vitamin-rich berries, which sustain birds and small mammals through the autumn months. People use both flowers and berries for wine, of course, while the berries can be used for natural dyes and have a whole host of culinary uses, including cordials, wine and jam.

This unassuming tree, which we often take for granted and which thrives in woodland, hedgerows, on scrubland and wasteland, turns out to be an immensely rich source of sustenance for a whole range of creatures.

For more information on safe and responsible foraging go to www.nationaltrust.org and www.woodlandtrust.org.uk 🍷

“I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love... George Fox (1624-1691), founder of the Society of Friends

Church of Scotland

Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice

Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

Service co-ordinator: Elaine 811205

Kirk Information

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit. Switch off phones. They cause interference with the organ. Thank you.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Thursday - 10 -12 Community Café in the kirk hall

Survey – please pick up your copy of the kirk survey today. Completed surveys should be put into the box in the hall. The consultation period is from 2nd September until the 23rd of September (3 weeks). It is important that you have the opportunity to have your view on any possible changes or improvements to the kirk building - so please fill in the survey. Your thoughts and ideas (big or small) are important. Thank you.

Café Transport: If you, or anyone you know would like to come to the Community Café but doesn't have transport, phone Anne Groundwater 811394.

Readings: Romans 5:12-21,
Amos 8:4-8b, 11-12, 9:1, 9-10 & 13-15.

Hymns 197 As we are gathered
547 What a friend we have in Jesus
644 O Jesus I have promised
502 Take my Life, Lord, let it be
257 Singing we gladly worship the Lord

Doxology

May God's blessing surround you each day;

As you trust him and walk in His way.

May his presence within guard and keep you from sin,

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love.