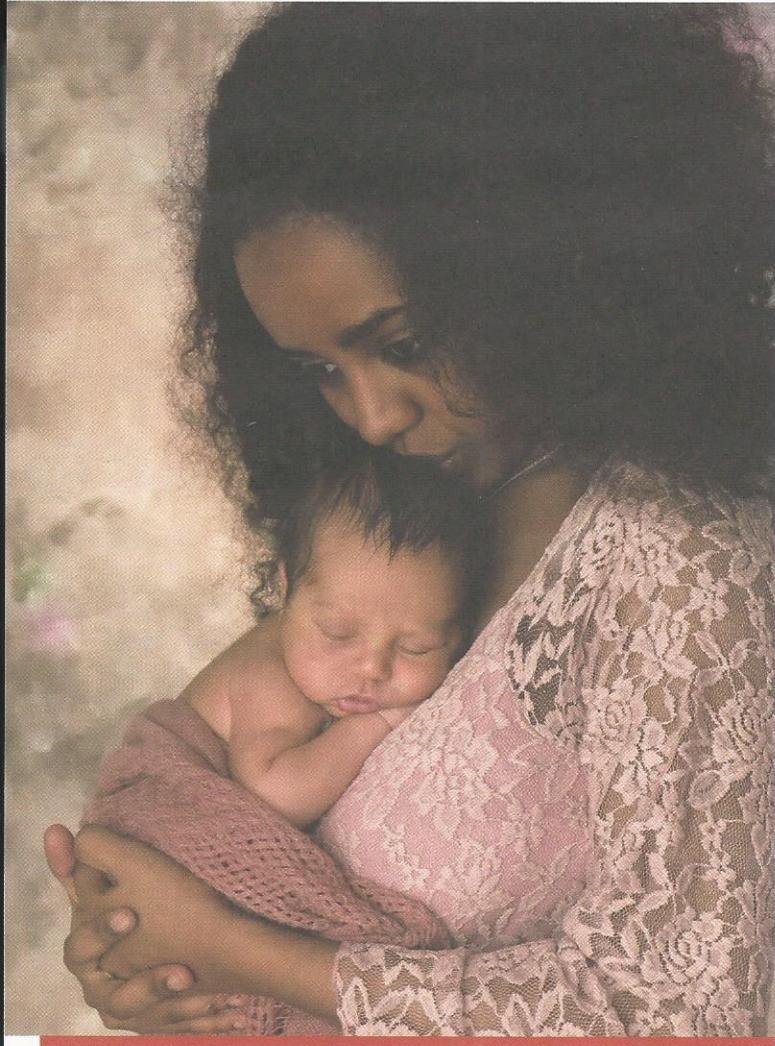


## A mother's love



Heather Smith

*reflects on* Exodus 2:1-10

The distress that must have been felt by the Hebrew mothers whose children were killed on Pharaoh's orders is unimaginable. Unfortunately countless mothers down the centuries have felt the pain of the loss of their children because of war, famine and senseless violence. Moses' mother, whose name we are not told, hatched a plan to save her son. Presumably she intended simply to hide him until the slaughter ended, but events took a surprising turn when Pharaoh's daughter discovered him, decided

to save him, and his quick-thinking sister came up with a suggestion that returned the child to his mother.

Mothers are often very determined when it comes to doing the best for their children and that deep, fierce love is something to celebrate today. It is God-given and like all love ultimately reflects the divine. We are used to describing God as father, implying the male, but of course God is not to be placed in any human category. Today, we might consider divine love as expressed in motherhood. It could give us a tiny glimpse of the love that God feels for each of us. Looked at through the eyes of a mother our world presents the distressing prospect of a family at war, where equally loved children fight among themselves and destroy each other. No wonder God's love, like that of Moses' mother, resulted in a plan for salvation. ☺

**Loving God, teach us how to love one another as a mother loves her children, seeking the best for each other and working for the harmony and peace you desire across the whole of your creation. Amen.**

## National Pet Month

Companions

by Gillian Cooper

*National Pet Month (www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk) runs from 1 April until 6 May. To mark it, Gillian Cooper celebrates our furred and feathered companions.*

We may think that keeping pets is a relatively new western phenomenon. In fact, however, recent research shows that pets have been around nearly as long as we have. Our earliest

ancestors, it seems, kept animals not just for food and work, but also as companions.

Pets must be good for us, or we humans would not have adopted them so early in our development. Despite media stories, there is little evidence that they benefit our health directly, but it feels as though they do. They give us a purpose through needing our care. They keep us fit, and help us make friends. They teach us to greet each day with a simple enjoyment, to live in the moment, and to accept whatever life brings. They comfort us in sadness. They encourage us to pay attention to the world around us. Perhaps they are a gift of God to help us be happier humans. ☺

## April Fool's Day

by Christine Clark

Many countries have an annual day when practical jokes are played. In the UK, the tradition has been traced back to Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, and there have been examples throughout Europe over the centuries.

One of the most successful hoaxes was in 1977 when *The Guardian* published a seven-page

supplement commemorating the tenth anniversary of the island of San Serriffe's independence. It gave an elaborate description of it as a tourist destination and developing economy, with most of its place names and characters as plays on words used in printing. Many readers fell for the joke but others cottoned on, adding to the fun with letters describing holidays on the island.

Last year Easter Day and April Fool's Day fell on the same date – what an ironic juxtaposition! One can't help but wonder if, when the tomb was found empty, the disciples suspected that this was an elaborate hoax. After all, it was all a bit unlikely, wasn't it...? ☺

“For most of us the prayer in Gethsemane is the only model. Removing mountains can wait.”

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) British novelist



# Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORPHIRANDSTENNESS](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORPHIRANDSTENNESS)

**Interim Moderator:** Rev June Freeth 721449

**Locum Minister** Rev Martin Prentice 851139

**Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

**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 or coffee.**

## Intimations

**Tuesday 7-8pm:** Fellowship Lent Study on Justice. All welcome.

**Tuesday 8pm:** Choir

**Thursday 10am – 12noon:** Community Café in the kirk hall

**Blue Door** – 27<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020. We are looking for a volunteer or group of volunteers to take on the planning for this fund raising event. It's never too early to start collecting items - we will need lots, and we will need a dry place to store them. Please contact Nicol or Carol if you can help. Thank you.

**Readings:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21  
Luke 15: 1-3 and 11b-32:

**Hymns:** 63 All people that on earth do dwell  
153 Great is thy faithfulness  
166 Lord of all hopefulness - *tune Slane 500*  
490 Jesus, lover of my soul  
533 Will you come and follow me

## **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.