

Connecting faith and daily life

Take heart

Heather Smith *reflects on* Ezekiel 36:24-28

The first heart transplant was carried out by Dr Christiaan Barnard in 1967 in Cape Town, a huge step in medical history. While not exactly routine, as many as two hundred heart transplants take place in the UK every year. You may be a candidate if you have severe heart failure – that is, your heart is unable to keep up with the demands on it because it cannot pump blood with normal efficiency.

It can certainly be difficult to keep up with the demands that life places on our hearts. Perhaps you have too much to cope with in your family life or, at the other extreme, suffer from loneliness. Maybe you find it hard to know where to channel your compassionate energies – so many people need help. Perhaps you struggle with issues from your past.

The solution to all our heart problems, according to Ezekiel, is that God will take out our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. “Ah” you might say, “If only my heart were harder I wouldn’t suffer so much.” If you receive a surgical heart transplant things are never quite the same. It may save your life, but you need to take some precautions, including taking immunosuppressants for the rest of your life. If you receive a heart transplant from God, says Ezekiel, it comes with a new spirit. The combination, far from making us less able to cope, may be the key to Christ-like compassion. 🍷



Lord God, put a new heart within me, and direct my energy and my compassion in your ways. Amen.

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

What makes vegetable seeds grow? I understand the science but have you noticed that when you sow a packet of seeds, on a windowsill or in the garden, that almost everything comes up? That’s amazing and sometimes it’s too much! Last year there were

too many tomato plants too close together and some tomatoes fell and rotted. This year those seeds from the spoiled tomatoes grew and will produce fruit in the next couple of months with no care from me. I’ve also planted tomato seeds so there will be a huge surplus again this year.

This creation, of which we’re part, is built for abundance not scarcity, yet we often behave as though there’s not enough to share. Jesus constantly shares food with all sorts of people and that is our model too. If God gives so generously then how can we not share with generosity and joy? 🍷

The Camino

by Rob Hayter

Walking the Camino has many joys – the people you meet and walk alongside, the beautiful countryside, historic towns and villages you pass through, the flora and fauna. There is abundant bird life. My favourites were the storks who build their nests on church bell towers, in trees, and sometimes even on electricity pylons.

The route we took is the Via de la Plata, an old Roman road, dead

straight for much of the way. If you are the kind of person who likes all your roads straight, however, who likes everything “just so”, and has difficulty with twists and turns, the Camino may present challenges. Some of the places you travel through are quite remote and, while many of the albergues (hostels) have modern facilities, others are very basic. A “consumer-society” approach will not work here. The Camino is what it is. I have to adapt to it, not vice versa. It teaches me to be self-sufficient and, ultimately, grateful. 🍷

“A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

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 8 pm: Choir

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

Reading: Acts 16: 16-34
John 17: 20 -26

Hymns: 129 The Lord is King
570 When the Storms of Life are Raging
623 Gather Us In
550 As the Deer Pants for the Water
JP 17 Bind Us Together

Prayer of Intercession: response - *to be sung*

"Lord of life, we come to you

Lord of all, our saviour be

Come to bless, and to heal

With the light of your love"

Doxology:

May the God of Peace go with us, as we travel from this place

May the love of Jesus keep us, firm in hope and full of grace