

Heather Smith *reflects on* Isaiah 11:1-19  
and Romans 15:4-13

Isaiah tells us a shoot is to come from the stock of Jesse and a branch from his roots. Jesse was the father of David, the king who was fundamental to Jewish identity. On the face of it, it is a Jewish story, but scratch the surface and it is not so simple. Matthew tells us in chapter 1 of his Gospel that Jesse is the grandson of Ruth, the non-Jewish Moabite woman who insisted on staying with her Jewish mother-in-law even after her husband died.

Shoots and branches coming from the root and stock of a plant imply going back to the very essence, firmly Jewish perhaps, but Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, sees it as good news for Jews and Gentiles alike. "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles" (Romans 15:12).

As Christians who have known that God accepts Gentile and Jew for centuries, this may seem like old news, but it tells us that God accepts the unexpected. The root that Jesus sprang from is not an exclusive thoroughbred plant. As Paul understood so many years later, it incorporates varied material from those who made a decision to follow God, whatever their background. God accepts us all, whoever or whatever we are. At times when we feel on the edge, or outsiders, that is very good news. 🌱

# Rooted in God

## Advent and Christmas in the hospital

by Ricarda Witcombe

The hospital carol service took place in the midst of the winter pressures. The chapel filled with nurses, managers, visitors, and patients – one lay in a bed, others sat in wheelchairs wrapped in blankets. We began to sing Hark the Herald Angels Sing. I watched

people's faces as the familiar words and music transported them beyond the world of the hospital. There was laughter as we negotiated the male and female parts of Good King Wenceslas and people helped each other to know when to sing. And then something magical happened. As we sang O Come All Ye Faithful, out of nowhere a strong and beautiful descant voice soared over our singing. It was one of the nurses, who had found her way to the carol service that day. It was a moment of sheer and beautiful holiness, pointing us all, again, towards heaven. Emmanuel, God is with us. 🌱

“Worrying is arrogant because God knows what He's doing.

Barbara Cameron, author (born 1949)

God, who accepts all who come to you, assure us of your love for us. When we feel alone or unworthy, remind us that your love extends to all, whoever we are, wherever we come from and whatever our situation. Amen.

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Until December the sheep and lambs eat grass in the fields and although the growth slows down there is usually enough until this month. From now on we supplement their grass by feeding hay which is last summer's longer grass cut and dried and rolled

into bales. Our hay meadow isn't made up only of different grasses, but also contains a lot of wild flowers and herbs which the sheep love when they are allowed to graze it, and equally love when they have it as hay.

It smells to me like really good tea leaves and is soft to handle. So much loveliness in such a simple thing – dead grass – which in its transformation becomes something tasty for the sheep and delightful for us to work with. This, for me, speaks of resurrection, of new possibility, a new way of being able to nourish the world God loves and cares for. 🌱



Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449  
Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice  
Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.  
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**

**Tuesday 10th December - 7-8 pm Fellowship** In this 2nd week of Advent we are looking at Stars. All welcome

**Tuesday 10th Dec - 8pm** – Choir in the kirk hall

**Wednesday 11th Dec – 7pm** – Yarnin' in the kirk hall

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

**10am – 12noon and 2- 4pm** Post Office open

**All day** – voting station in the kirk

**Saturday 14th Dec – 10am to 5pm**

For Christmas, the windows will display a Christmas flower arrangement. If you'd like to lead/do a window arrangement, please speak to Kathryn. The kirk will be open from 10am to 5pm on 14th December to complete the arrangements (No lilies to be used, please.)

**Sunday 15th Dec – 7pm** - Christmas Concert in the Kirk.

**17th December - 7-8pm** . Fellowship The topic is Emmanuel. Come along, join in the discussion and enjoy a mince pie and a cuppa.  
(There will be No Tuesday Fellowship on 24th and 31st December)

**Friday 20th Dec – 2pm** - School Service in the Kirk

**Sunday 22nd Dec – 11.15am** Christmas Service

**Tuesday 24th Dec – 11.15pm for 11.30pm** – Watchnight Service

**27th January - 1st February 2020** Blue Door: Volunteers are required to assist in the shop and to provide home bakes. Please add your name to the list on the wall beside the tea rota. Speak to Carol if you wish more information.

**Readings:** 1 John chapter 1 verses 5-10

Matthew chapter 5 verses 14-16.

**Hymns:**

623. Here in this place new light is shining,

132. Immortal Invisible God only wise

543 Longing for light we wait in Darkness

125 Lord of all being throned afar.

448 Lord the light of your love.

**Doxology** Hymn 786

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.