

# Cleansed and cleaned

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-end]; Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and Luke 5:1-11

Today's Old Testament reading recounts Isaiah's calling to be the messenger of God. In verse 5 the prophet says something intriguing: "I am a man of unclean lips... yet my eyes have seen the King". His eyes have taken in the sight of the Lord, yet he feels unworthy of this vision, unable to do it justice, unfit to express it. In response the seraph cleanses Isaiah's lips with fire, to which Isaiah utters his simple response: "Here am I; send me!"

The idea of being unworthy is echoed in Luke. When Peter witnesses the miracle of the catch of fish, he falls down before Jesus saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" In response Jesus tells him not to be afraid, and gives him his mission – to catch people.

Often, a sense of superiority is an obstacle to faith. Sometimes, it's a sense of unworthiness, of feeling overwhelmed by God's greatness. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says he is "unfit to be called an apostle". He goes on to say what redeems him – it is "by the grace of God" that he is worthy.

Of course, like Paul, we need to be humble. But one of the first steps towards an active, engaged life of faith is to accept our worthiness and know that, with God's grace, we are indeed up to the task. Without this Isaiah would never have become a great prophet, Peter would not have been the rock upon which the Church is built, and Paul would not have become a tireless and prodigiously productive apostle and activist. ☺



Lord God, through our own efforts we are indeed unworthy, unfit and undeserving. Help us to accept that and move on from it, to a place where we are willing and able to receive your grace, through which we can do your work. Amen.

## Lesser-known Bible characters

### Barnabas

by Caroline Fletcher

Barnabas was an influential early Christian, whose story is told in the book of Acts. The disciples gave him his name, which means "Son of Encouragement".

Barnabas encouraged Paul. The disciples did not trust Paul because he had persecuted Christians. Barnabas spoke up for

him, convincing the disciples that Paul's conversion was genuine. Barnabas also encouraged the spread of Christianity beyond Israel. When lots of Gentiles came to faith in Antioch, Barnabas was sent to find out what was happening. What he witnessed delighted him. He sought out Paul and the two of them stayed in Antioch to teach these converts. This marked the start of Paul's ministry to non-Jews, which Barnabas continued to encourage, working alongside him on his first missionary journey.

Without Barnabas we may never have had Paul's ministry and the Gospel may not have spread around the world as it has. Barnabas truly was "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith". ☺

## Apprenticeship Week

by Diane Sherwood

In the run-up to National Apprenticeship Week, which runs from 4 to 8 March, we look at apprenticeship and learning in a Christian context.

The apprenticeship system first developed in the late Middle Ages. Master craftsmen would employ young people as an inexpensive form of labour in exchange for training, food and lodging. By the early 1900s, large companies such as Belfast-based marine manufacturers

Harland and Wolff were taking on apprentice welders, riveters, platers, plumbers, painters, carpenters and designers. In the 1960s one third of boys left school to become apprentices. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, apprenticeship fell out of favour in the UK. Recently it has seen a revival, as it is increasingly recognised that young people need support and encouragement to enter and flourish in the skilled trades.

"We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ," wrote Paul to the Ephesians. We spend our lives as apprentices in faith, with Christ we grow in faith and understanding. ☺

“He said ‘Love... as I have loved you.’ We cannot love too much.

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951), Irish missionary



# Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

**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 7pm - 8pm:** Fellowship. All welcome.

**Tuesday 8pm:** Choir

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

**Readings:** Isaiah 6 v 1 to 8  
Psalm 138  
1 Corinthians 15 v 1 to 11

**Hymns:** 202 Stand up and bless the Lord  
132 Imortal invisible  
161 O God our help in ages past  
141 Oh the life of the world  
547 What a friend we have in Jesus  
JP42 Father I place into Your hands

## **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.