

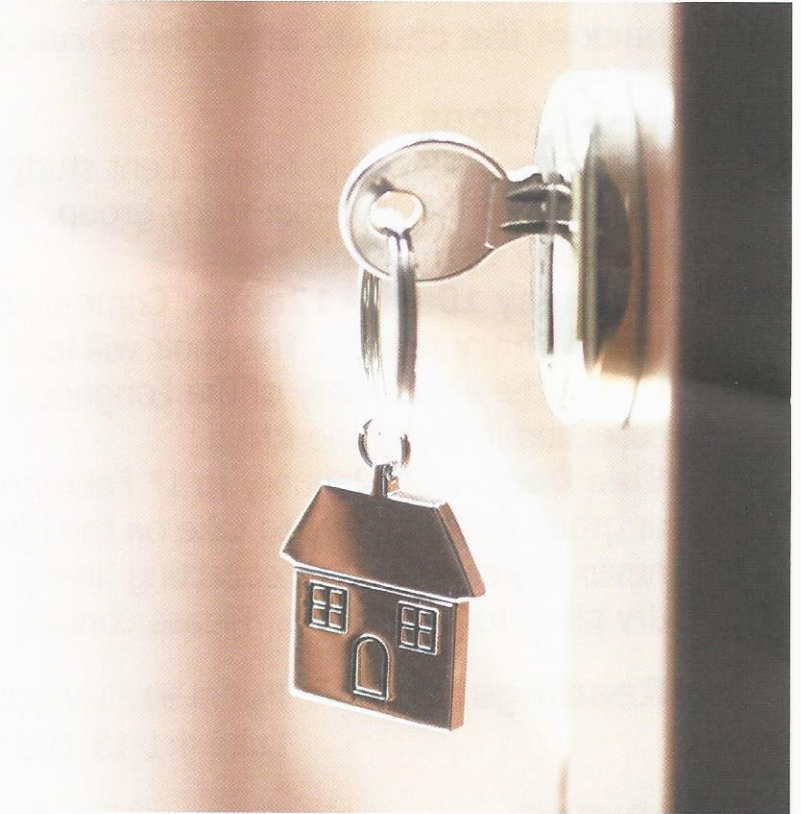
Home at last

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

Today's reading from Deuteronomy finds Moses, now an old man, addressing the Israelites. After forty nomadic years, finally the Promised Land is within sight. After scrabbling around in the desert for food and water, pitching tent and striking camp, worshipping at makeshift, moveable altars – how desperate the people must be to cross over into the “land flowing with milk and honey” and to celebrate “all the bounty”. At last they will be able to grow and harvest food and give thanks to God before a real, solid altar – it's an almost Disneyesque idyll.

So perhaps it's unsurprising that the passage contains such strong words of entitlement – “inheritance... possess... settle”. Over three thousand years of history have taught us, however, that when you settle land you generally displace someone else, and that if you want to maintain your chocolate-box lifestyle, sooner or later you'll need to establish borders and build barriers. The people addressed by Moses might have been horrified to know that we still live in a world where so many are homeless, displaced and dispossessed, fleeing conflict, cruelty and deprivation, only to find themselves stateless and rootless, without access to food, water, shelter and sanitation.

Today's reading from Luke is also set in the wilderness, where we find Jesus “full of the Holy Spirit”. In this instance it's a place of deep spiritual enrichment. This Lent, can you learn the lessons of history and the wisdom of the wilderness? And, importantly, is there anything practical, however small, that you can do to alleviate the suffering of someone who is yearning for a place to call home? ☺



Lord God, we hold before you all those who are in need of shelter and stability. This Lent, we pray for compassion and generosity to work for the glory of your kingdom, our one and only true home. Amen.

Ember Days

by Julian Smith

Wednesday, Friday and Saturday are Ember Days, when we are encouraged to pray for those preparing to be made deacon or priest. Ember Days occur four times a year – in Advent, Lent, late June and late September – and have long been part of the church calendar.

There are many challenges facing anyone who chooses to be ordained – especially so, perhaps,

if it's a career change. Those on stipends may have to leave a family home for a “tied” dwelling, or move into a new community, while non-stipendiary priests and deacons may face financial insecurity in order to answer God's call to ministry. And it's not only the person being ordained who faces these challenges, but the whole family. From novelists and naval commanders to page-three girls and prime ministers, many “vicarage kids” have left their mark one way or another. So this year in particular we might pray for the children of the men and women who are preparing for ordination. ☺

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:3-4

Letters from a medical student

by Tabitha Leask

Dear *Sunday Link*,
The diversity of my fellow students' backgrounds is amazing. My course is one of the biggest graduate-entry courses in the UK, and they accept people from any discipline. I find it so refreshing to be with nearly

two hundred other students, who haven't all done the same thing in their lives up until now. Some have come straight from university, one worked in banking for ten years, one in the media.

For me this is a God-given vocation, and it's so interesting to find out what has brought everyone to this point and to learn about other people's priorities in life outside of medicine. Because we are all working towards a common cause – striving to be the best future doctors we can be, and help each other while we're at it. ☺

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: Fellowship 7-8pm. Lent study - Justice and the Old Testament. All welcome to this informal study group.

Tuesday 8pm: Choir

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

Preliminary notice. The choir will lead a lifeboat service on Sunday 17th March, the anniversary of the Longhope lifeboat disaster. There will be a retiring collection in aid of the RNLI.

Blue Door – 27th January to 1st February 2020 . We are looking for a volunteer or group of volunteers to take on the planning for this fund raising event. Its 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: Psalm 91: 1-2 and 9-16 Assurance of God's Protection
Luke 4:1-13 The Temptation of Jesus

Hymns: 146 From all that dwell below the skies
338 Jesus tempted in the desert
556 I need the every hour
354 O love how deep, how broad, how high
458 At the name of Jesus

Prayers of Intercession - responses

L: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

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.