

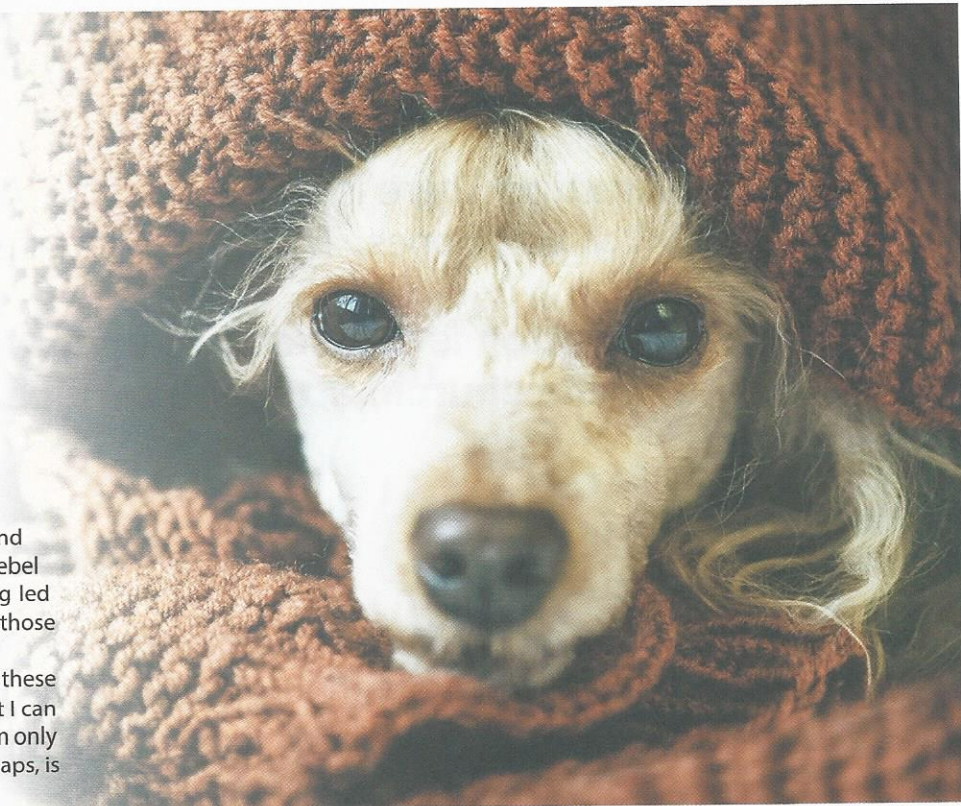
A comfort blanket?

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the best-known passages of the Bible. How wonderful, in time of trial and tribulation, to read and hear this confirmation that God cares for and protects us. The words of the psalm are also familiar as the hymn, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is", written in 1868 by Henry Baker. The tune that most people will know is "Dominus Regit Me", composed by John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876). Together, these familiar words and beautiful music have reassured generations of Christians and, indeed, people of other faiths and none.

But for all its familiarity, the psalm is no comfort blanket, although it can provide great solace when we need it. But there's a challenge here, too – namely to learn to depend utterly on God – something that many of us find surprisingly difficult. We want to be self-reliant, and we rebel against being made to "lie down in green pastures", being led "beside still waters" and "in right paths". We want to find those pastures, waters and paths for ourselves.

Yet another Victorian Christian, Hudson Taylor, wrote these amazing words when he was gravely ill: "I am so weak that I can hardly write, I cannot read my Bible, I cannot even pray, I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child, and trust." This, perhaps, is one of the great lessons of Psalm 23. ☺



Christian Aid Week

by Christine Clark

When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti, Marcelin lost his home, livestock and possessions. His family was living in a disused shower block until Christian Aid gave them the help they needed.

Many churches organise house-to-house collections during Christian Aid Week. I usually take a couple of local roads, delivering the envelopes and returning a

few days later to collect them, often needing to return again for people who were out. Although Christian Aid appears to be a charity that non-churchgoers are willing to give to, every year it seems more difficult. People are reluctant, or out when you call, or make an excuse, or just give less.

Some churches have stopped the house-to-house collections in favour of other fundraising activities. That's all right – it's good to move forward and find new ways. What is important, for Marcelin and his family and others in such desperate situations, is that we do something. ☺

“God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), missionary to China

Good Shepherd, you lead me, feed me and restore my soul. Help me to know deep in my heart that you are with me, and to learn to relax into your love and care, in the sure knowledge that I am held by you, for ever. Amen.

The Road to Emmaus

In his book, *The Road to Emmaus and Beyond*, Fr Denis McBride focuses on Luke 24:13-end

The disciples have already faced dramatic change, something that can throw us off balance. We feel all at sea; we lose our sense of who we are; we are unsure where we are going. The loss of someone we love can seriously injure our own sense of identity

and direction in life: so much of what we considered important now seems irrelevant. The disciples' first loss was the loss of Jesus in a violent death; the second loss will be living in his physical absence now that he has gone to glory with God. The ascension marks Jesus' return to the Father – he will no longer be with his disciples in the same way as he was travelling through the towns of Galilee.

Meanwhile they wait; meanwhile they live in the gap, in no man's land. They are waiting for the gift of the Spirit which will transform them, in the language of Pope Francis, into "missionary disciples". ☺

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 the kirk hall

Sunday 19th May: Ordination of new elders

Sunday 19th May: The Stated Annual Meeting of the congregation will take place after the service.

Reading: Psalm 23
Acts 9:36-43
John 10:22-30

Hymns: 716 Come and find the quiet centre
462 The king of love my shepherd is
694 Brother, sister, let me serve you
557 O Love that wilt not let me go
512 To God be the glory

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.*