

Caroline Hodgson
reflects on Colossians 1:15-28

At the beginning of chapter two Paul writes, "I am struggling for you... and for all who have not seen me face to face... though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit". It suggests that he was encouraging and supporting the Colossians remotely, and indeed nobody knows whether Paul ever visited Colossae in person. It's thought that Epaphras, a native of Colossae mentioned in the opening verses, heard Paul preach in Ephesus and became a Christian, before going home and founding a church.

In today's passage Paul describes Jesus as "the image of the invisible God". Christ was God on earth. After his death and resurrection, Paul became Christ's earthly representative. Since Paul, for all his zeal and energy, couldn't cover the whole earth on his missions, Epaphras brought the word to the people of Colossae. So a pattern emerges – a game of tag.

Christians have always known that, having heard the word of God, it is both a joy and a solemn responsibility to pass it on. It's not easy or straightforward. We might be shy and reserved, for example, or plain embarrassed, or

A game of tag



compensate with off-putting over-zealousness. Each of us has our own individual contribution to make – it's called our potential – and that, in the Christian life, can be discerned through prayer, reflection and, importantly, experience – getting out there and getting on with it.

Okay, so you're "it". When are you going to set aside time to pray about it, with the real intention of acting upon God's word to you in prayer? ☺

Lord God, with the examples of Paul and Epaphras before me, I ask you to be with me in spirit as I try to fulfil my God-given potential, and discern how I can be your representative on earth. Amen.

Stained glass

by Heather Smith

If stained glass had a difficult time during the Reformation, it was in for an even rockier ride during the English Civil War. At St Andrews by the Wardrobe in London there is a November 1641 entry in the churchwardens' accounts that reads "paid for taking downe of old glasse and setting upp of new" – the reason: iconoclasm.

This was repeated across the country as a result of parliamentary legislation. In 1644 an ordinance stipulated

that "all Representations of any of the Persons of the Trinity, or of any Angel or Saint, in or about any Cathedral, Collegiate or Parish Church, or Chappel, or in any open place within this Kingdome, shall be taken away, defaced, and utterly demolished". The churchwardens were obliged to carry this out.

But the story is not just one of destruction. Some people attempted to prevent the destruction and save their glass. In Fairford in Gloucestershire they managed to save twenty-eight windows, even though their bishop was an ardent Puritan. ☺

Walking with Poppy

Things happen

by Gillian Cooper

It's hot, and Poppy is not happy. She sits down on the pavement, panting, and looks at me with an expression that says, "Why have you turned the heat up? I'm a good girl, I don't deserve this!"

In the Old Testament Job has a similar issue. Catastrophes

have happened, and he does not deserve them. He turns on God with an accusation: it isn't fair, I don't deserve this! In reply God shows him a vast and complex universe of which Job is not the centre. Bad things happen, God implies, even to good people (and dogs), and the reason is far beyond mortal understanding. There is no point asking why, or blaming anyone, we just have to trust that God is in charge.

The answer helps Job move on. And it is what I say to Poppy, as I try to persuade her to walk as far as the park, where there is shade under the trees. ☺

“Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

Kirk Information

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

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

Sunday 11th August – Communion

Kirk Refurbishment update – Unfortunately, our plans to engage an architect and kirk refurbishment/improvements (windows/heating etc) are on hold for the present time. This situation is unlikely to change until the presbytery plan for the future has been agreed. We will let you know when there are any further developments. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact Rev June Freeth.

Readings:

Philippians 2 v 1-11

John 13 v 1-17

John 18 v 33-37

Hymns

122 Let all the world, in every corner sing

129 The Lord is King! Lift up your voice

279 Make way, make way for Christ the King

462 The King of love my shepherd is

Choir – The Servant King

559 There is a Redeemer

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