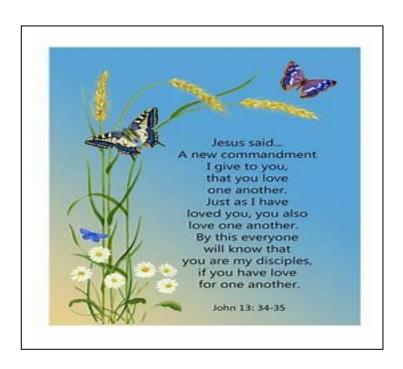
ST TERNAN'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH MUCHALLS

September 2023



Sunday Service 10.30am

The church is open for private prayer during daylight hours

From our Minister

The other day, Mike and I went for a walk up Cheynehill Wood and beyond on to what I would call heathland. (You go up Slug Road from Stonehaven and before you get to the first wee bridge there are a couple of places to park). The beginning of the walk is a bit of an incline but soon you come to open countryside covered in heather. Now we go up there for a walk fairly frequently and I had my suspicions that there might just be wild blueberries or blaeberries, like you would find in Atlantic Canada, and there were. I had gone prepared with a box!

As kids, come the end of August, we would be dispersed into the countryside to pick berries. Mum or Dad would have a pail and we would be given mugs to pick into, sensible as there is nothing worse than having to try and recover spilt blue berries from the undergrowth. For those of you who have picked them, you will know that it is no easy task, they are little and quite fiddly to pick, you end up with deep purple hands, midges etc etc and of course there is always the temptation to sample as you go. (In northern Canada there is also an issue of bears who are filling up for their hibernation) Bending over I realised that the elders of my family had quite a good thing going as little people are much closer to the ground. I wonder now if mum and her pals actually picked or did, they just sit and have a good natter. Payment for the picking might on a good day have been stopping for ice cream on the way home.

It must be said that there were a great many boring tasks that we would be called upon to do. My dad for example had a war on dandelions and would pay 5 cents a hundred for the yellow blossoms, that needed to be picked before they went to seed. But we didn't mind, not really, although I am sure we complained. The rewards as far as blueberries went were great, there is nothing as wonderful as blue berry pie.

Chores were a normal part of our lives, tasks that were meant to teach us the value of money, responsibility etc etc. Our hard-earned pennies would be carefully kept, regularly counted and eventually spent. All well and good.

It is quite hard to transpose those memories into the reality of children in other parts of this world working out of necessity, in danger ridden workshops, perhaps scavenging on rubbish dumps. As our own young people head off to school, as a new year begins, consider that in Afghanistan girls are simply not allowed to attend secondary school. It is almost impossible to imagine what it would be like to remember your childhood toiling for long hours or being denied the opportunity to experience school life. From our place in the world it is hard to imagine who we might have been if perhaps we had an industrial accident at a very early age, or never learnt to read or write.

I know that there are many, many issues within Scotland affecting families and individuals, there are many families that struggle to afford school uniforms, that there are concerns about access to health services, concerns about addiction etc. etc. but! The news reports have a way of wearing me down, such stories, and so my own goal for the month ahead is to actually stop at noon each day and pause to count my blessings, and in small ways to do what I can for others.

O Lord our God, source of all goodness and love, accept the fervent prayers of your people; look with compassion upon all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.



Mary

Saint Matthew the tax collector - Canon Paul Hardingham

Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him. (Matthew 9:9).

This month we remember Matthew's call as one of Jesus' 12 apostles. It consisted of a simple invitation, 'Follow me', and an immediately response. The resulting meal at Matthew's house also helps us to understand the challenge of His call.

Jesus' welcome:

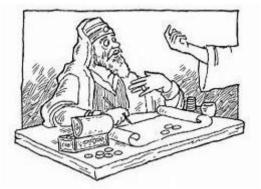
At the dinner many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples (10). Jesus welcomed each person unconditionally, in a way that most Jews would not! In the same way, Jesus welcomes us and shows us how we should welcome others. Our welcome cannot be conditional, expecting people to be like us or to behave as we expect.

Jesus' challenge:

When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' (11). The Pharisees were upset and avoided sinners, because they believed only the pure and untainted could have access to God. However, Jesus reminded them that they were witnessing God's love in action: 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill.' (12). When God is at work in the lives of those we don't expect, we need to let Him open our hearts to embrace and encourage what He is doing.

Jesus' compassion:

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (13). The Pharisees were so committed to keeping the law, that they had forgotten God's heart of compassion. Our religious practice is meaningless without love and mercy towards others. In what ways can we express love towards others, especially those outside the community of faith?



Prayer for September 2023 by Daphne Kitching

Dear Father in heaven,

September is a time of change, a change of season, changes in many areas of our lives as a new term begins and new opportunities present themselves. It can be a time of challenge and uncertainty for many of us as well as excitement.

Thank you Lord, that You never change, Your promises never change, Your Holy-Spirit inspired Word never changes. You are constant and rock-solid, always.

Help us to remember that You make all things new when we put our trust in Jesus, You give us new life and new ways of understanding, but help us also to remember that You never contradict Your revealed self. Help us always to check out our thinking with what You say in Your Word. Help us to be faithful to You as we take each step forward, each new day.

In Jesus name, Amen

Reflecting faith – pews and chairs - Revd Dr Jo White

Most of us think of pews as having been installed at the same time the church building was built, with occasional upgrades over time. But that's not the case.

Originally church floors consisted of little more than stone flags or beaten earth on which grasses or rushes were lain as a renewable winter covering for cleanliness and insulation. Each year, in late summer, the old and rotten rushes were cleared out and new ones taken to the churches in carts. There are still a number of English towns, in particular in the north of England, that celebrate 'Rushbearing' each year.

The people stood for all the services. However, it was recognised that the infirm and elderly needed support, and stone benches - often backless – were placed by the walls for them. It was not until the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s that wooden pews were introduced for everyone to be able to be seated.

Naturally, people being people, there were pews and then there were *pews*!

Society was organised in classes or hierarchies and the richer and more important folk had the best seats near the front so they could hear what the priest was saying and watch the service.



One's place to sit was arranged by your place in Society, so the poorer and least important were at the back.

Sermons alone could be lengthy; two hours was not unusual, and if you could pay for privacy to doze off and some form of personal heating for winters, then clearly that made sense.

A grain of sand at a time

This autumn, do you feel overwhelmed with all the things that you need to get done?

Then think of your life as an hourglass.

There are thousands of grains of sand in the top of the hourglass; and they all pass slowly and evenly through the narrow neck in the middle.

We are like that hourglass. When we start in the morning, there are hundreds of tasks which we feel that we must accomplish that day. But if we do not take them one at a time, and let them pass through the day slowly and evenly, as do the grains of sand passing through the narrow neck of the hour glass, then we are bound to break our own fragile physical and mental structure.

Do not attempt more than God designed you to do.

How not to be a Grumpy Old Man (or Woman) - Ven John Barton

Marvel. Marvel every time you see a child learning to walk and speak at the same time. Share in their delight. Wonder at the dawn of each new season: sunshine and shadows, falling leaves, frost, sudden new growth. You are still alive to take it all in. That's an unexpected bonus.

Appreciate. Have a look around your living room and concentrate on items designed for your comfort and entertainment, which your forbears never had. Think of someone you don't like; now ponder a couple of their good points. Try to desire their welfare more than their downfall.

Forgive. (That's a condition for being forgiven). You may have to do it over and over again for the same person. Unearth grudges which have been lying under the surface. Are they worth preserving that much? Think of the damage they are doing you.

Married or Single? Don't envy. The grass on the other side of the street isn't greener, it's just different. Count your blessings - some will be uniquely yours. Be concerned for the welfare of someone whose circumstances are unlike yours.

Deal with disappointment. If you have become grumpy it's probably caused by a deep-down dissatisfaction with yourself. Stop raking over past failures. Each morning when you wake up, say with the Psalmist, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Change. No, it isn't too late. It will only be too late to change when you are in a coffin. In the meantime, there's still room for manoeuvre. Remember John Henry Newman's words, "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

Feel the tug

Have you ever wondered how you can be certain about who and what God really is? One Christian put it this way: "I'm reminded of the story of the little boy who was out flying a kite. The wind was brisk and large billowing clouds were blowing across the sky. The kite went up and up until it was entirely hidden by the clouds. Then a man came by and asked the little boy what he was doing, staring up at an empty sky. "I'm flying my kite," he replied.

The man replied: "What kite? How can you be sure it is still there? You can't see a thing."

The little boy agreed that he could see nothing, "but every little while I feel a tug, so I know for sure that it is still up there and is connected to me!"



When it comes to God, you don't need to take anyone else's word for it. You can find Him for yourself by inviting Jesus Christ into your life. Then you too will know, by the warm wonderful tug on your heartstrings, that though you can't see Him, He is up there, and that He lives in you. You are connected!

Spiritual Disciplines: Service - *Canon Paul Hardingham*

'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.' (John 13: 14-15).

We are all familiar with those requests for more to 'serve on a team' at church, whether the coffee rota or with the children. However, these can hinder our understanding of the spiritual discipline of service.

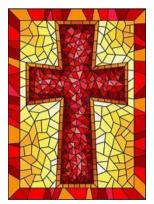
The discipline of service involves learning from Jesus' example, when He washed the disciples' feet. Like His disciples, we are all called to take the place of a servant and be willing to serve those around us. Richard Foster in 'Celebration of Discipline' contrasts 'self-righteous service', human effort wanting to impress others and be rewarded, with 'true service', which is rooted in our relationship with Jesus and delights in the service itself.

In his book, Richard Foster highlights the value of small, everyday sacrificial acts of service which flow from the place of being a servant: 'service is not a list of things to do, though in it we discover things to do. It is not a code of ethics, but a way of living.' He goes on to highlight a number of acts of service, including: hiddenness (working behind the scenes); small acts of service; guarding the reputation of others; being willing to be served ourselves; practising hospitality; listening and bearing the burdens of each other. We need to pray for wisdom and discernment, so that we know when to say 'yes' and 'no' to serving. If we say 'yes' too much we can easily find ourselves becoming bitter or burned out!

Why not make it your prayer each morning: 'Lord Jesus, if it would please You, bring me someone today who I can serve?



God can use everything we give Him



The story is told of a man in charge of building a great church, who was pestered by an apprentice who wanted to design the glass for one of the windows. Finally, he agreed that the apprentice should be given one very small window. BUT – the apprentice would have to provide all the materials himself.

Undaunted, the apprentice carefully swept up all the stray bits of coloured glass that had been discarded and set to work. Slowly, and with great care, he pieced together a window of rare beauty. When the church was finally opened, many people stopped to stare in wonder at his small, but so beautiful, iridescent window.

Our lives can be like that - no matter how small we may feel, or that we have only scraps to offer to God, He can still help us use every bit of time and energy and love we do have, to build a life that is beautiful, and which will reflect the glory of God to others.

How to fight back against artificial intelligence - Revd Peter Crumpler

I've been writing Christian comment columns for newspapers and radio for more than 30 years – but I had a shock when I asked an artificial intelligence computer programme to write one for me.

The question that I posed was simple. Could an AI programme produce a column that would match up to one penned by a team of writers who regularly produce articles for a local newspaper in St Albans, my home city north of London? These are all people who know the area and have a living faith.

The answer? The AI fared pretty well and – worryingly – it produced several insights that could have been written by one of our experienced team.

My experiment with artificial intelligence gave me a glimpse of what AI can already do, with — looking ahead — the potential for 'systems with human-intelligence' to make radical changes to society, including taking away people's jobs and making 'fake news' much easier to invent and distribute.

Many people are worried. A group of technology leaders have called for a pause in development while we study AI's potential impact.

But what 'my' AI-generated article lacked – and, of course, it would – was a living faith that would inform its writing. For anyone who is a Christian communicator – from the pulpit, online, in print, via video or drama or in our personal lives – this is a vital lesson. In an age when AI can generate sermons, write articles and design compelling graphics, those of us who seek to speak about the faith, and bring others to it, will need increasingly to 'bring ourselves' into our messages.

Like John the Baptist, we need to be pointing to Christ – always – but it'll become increasingly vital that we bring our own lived experiences, our testimonies, into how we communicate.

That's the challenge for all Christian communicators, and anyone seeking to share their faith. Words and arguments that could be drawn from a text-book or the web can easily be replicated by AI programmes.

Actions of love, and sharing our personal story will always be the most persuasive way of presenting Christ's gospel of sacrifice and love.

And AI – I pray – will never be able to match that authenticity and truth.



These exchanges were taken from real-life Courtroom cases...

Attorney: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I

sent to your attorney?

Witness: No, this is how I always dress when I go to work.

Attorney: Do you recall the time when you examined the body?

Witness: The autopsy started around 8:30 PM Attorney: And Mr Denton was dead at that time? Witness: If not, he was by the time I finished.

Attorney: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

Witness: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

A Time to go Looking for God- at The Cathedral of Chester

All of us will have been affected by the terrible stories coming from Chester over the past months and years culminating in the conclusion of the trial of the nurse involved. So, I thought it only right to pause my journey around the Places of Worship that I have visited and talk about what has been happening in Chester Cathedral itself over these past few weeks.

For the third year in a row something very special has been happening during the school holidays in the main body of the Cathedral. Were it nearer I would urge you all to pay the three Pounds admission charge and go and see for yourselves! (The Cathedral Treasurer would be most grateful.)

If we had the ability to shrink ourselves to between three quarters of an inch and a full inch we could stand on Platform 1 of Milton Keynes Central station and catch the 10.30 Pendolino train heading North. On Platform 5 an Avanti West Coast Class 221 Super Voyager, newly painted, is awaiting the guard's permission to depart Southwards. On Platform 2 a Class 37/4, (fondly known as a Deltic), sits thundering quietly in the background with a bright yellow BR Test Train waiting for the green signal to resume it's none-stop hunt for uneven tracks, worn points and worn rails.

Being on the West Coast Main Line all the tracks have overhead power lines above them, properly spaced working signals, and the 64 feet layout has a scale distance of over a mile so the representation of the station itself is accurate in all respects and looks first class. Each train is sound fitted with it's own tiny loudspeakers and is controlled by a computer chip no bigger than one's thumb. As you would expect headlights and taillights all work as well as the overhead and table lights in the coaches which never look as crowded as in real life!

The period being shown represents the years between 2006 and 2023 so will be familiar to the very young and the not so young. The sight of a nine coach Blue Pullman storming through the centre Fast Line heading for London will bring back many memories of posh uniformed waiters serving snacks and meals on the Midland Pullman service of years past. For everyone involved in the fun be they Visitors, Builders, Operators, Planners or Suppliers it has been a huge opportunity to create a world where people can lose themselves from the world of reality and just create some magic for each other. Ask nicely and anyone can,

under supervision of course, drive the trains, stop them in the station, make the sound of doors opening and closing and of the guards whistle when ready to leave. What child under the age of 99 wouldn't enjoy that!

It is thanks to Pete Waterman OBE and his dedicated team of Railnuts that for the past three years each "Making Tracks" layout has taken shape and been operated six days a week for the summer holidays. Pete was a record producer and now enjoys spending his fortune on all things railway. He founded his own Heritage Trust to own some full-size engines but his main love is in creating fabulous smaller layouts. A very approachable man he exudes a cheerful can-do attitude that makes each year's layout better than the last.

Indeed, the plan for October this year is to show Making Tracks 1 and 2 and 3 all joined together in Milton Keynes at the Great Electric Train Show. The combined layout -the biggest ever portable layout will stretch 152ft from end to end – a scale distance of two and a half miles!

Sometimes I think the world is divided only into Builders and Destroyers. This summer the Builders have moved into a great Cathedral and shown us all that the power of good people, sharing their dreams, in a House of God, can lift all of us and reminds us that by our meagre efforts maybe we can put a smile on God's Face too!

Geoff Bell





PS To see videos of Making Tracks just search on Google or Facebook.

Nigel Beeton writes:

'To refer to the second coming of Jesus using the metaphor of a crime is, perhaps, surprising, but Jesus Himself uses the allusion first as recorded in Matt 24:43 – if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have allowed his home to be broken into. Paul in 1 Thess 5:2 and John in Rev 16:15 return to the theme. I wondered why this example was used and not another unexpected event such as an accident or a natural disaster, which can be equally unexpected, but the point is, I think, that the thief knows when he is coming, but does not choose to give advanced warning of his plans. The date and time of the second coming is known, but Jesus tells us (Matt 24:36) that not even He knows that information, but we must live from day to day and from moment to moment in readiness for His return:

A Thief in the Night

We must live our lives each day
As disciples of the Way
And we'll walk ev'ry day in the light;
Because Jesus will return
And the Bible will confirm
He will come like a thief in the night!

And so no-one knows the time
Be sure none can see a sign
And each person who tried was not right!
So we must not be misled
But believe His word instead —
He will come like a thief in the night!

Yes, the Bible is so clear That we must hold Jesus near (For we live, anyway, in His sight!) And we'll not be surprised When He's there – before our eyes And He's come like a thief in the night!



Bloopers in the church notice sheets - those moments when the message did not come out quite right!

- \sim The young curate had been fervent in her recent prayers for the families of the congregation. Let us each continue to pray at home, for our unloved saved ones.
- ~ Free this evening? Come out and join us for a time of prayer and sinning!
- ~ A worm welcome to all who have come today.
- ~ Sermon Outline:
 - I. Delineate your fear
 - II. Disown your fear
 - III. Displace your rear



Last Month on the Facebook Page

30th July 2023



I heard this part of the bible in a recent sermon and the preacher reflected on it in a way that struck a chord with me. They pointed out that it does not say makes your enemies your friends so that you can love them. It says just to love them. They may always be your enemies, but you can still love and pray for them. Now, that is a real challenge. That is the great things about the bible especially with a good preacher, you at challenged to be something so much better. Not sure how easy this is going to be, but it is worth a try.

6th August 2023

I have an apple tree in my back garden. I am not much of a gardener, and I don't do much more than look at it, but every year it produces fruit. However, the fruit is bitter and only good for crumble. I believe that is I put more effort in and fed it, it would produce sweeter fruit. The sad truth is I am too lazy for that. It put me in mind of the parable of the Vine and Branches. This talks about how God is a good gardener, sparing no effort to tend the vine, so that it produces only the best fruit. I guess we are lucky that God spares no effort in tending us and helping our spirts grow. Luckier than my apple tree, that's for sure.



13th August 2023

I find it difficult sometimes to fathom God's plan. When I say sometimes, I mean most of the time. I find myself with a set of expectations. The things I think want, the things I think I need, then bang, it



all goes pear shaped. It can feel like things are spiraling out of control and I am barely holding on. Those are the moments I really need to reach down deep to trust God. I do that knowing that at some point, it will make sense. I will look back and see that even the bad stuff, had a purpose, because it made me stronger. It is difficult to see that at the time, making more important that I trust in God. The one thing I can be sure about is that God loves me.

20th August 2023

We don't visit the Songs of Solomon much, if all, in church. That is perhaps because it is unique within the bible. It doesn't talk about the Law or the Covenant or the God of Israel, it doesn't even teach wisdom. Instead, it celebrates the love between a young couple, a very earthly kind of love as it happens. Have a read of it if you have the time, it is more than a little suggestive.

For me it is a reminder, that love is beautiful, that while we are looking

Like a lily among thorns is

my darling among the young

women.

Like an apple tree among the

trees of the forest is my beloved

among the young men.

Song of Song 2.2-3

upwards to God, we should also be looking to the side, to those that love and support us. If you are fortunate enough to be able to look to the side and see that special person that lights up your life, then take a moment to appreciate that, perhaps even tell them how special they are.

Steven Coull

'He gave us eyes to see them': Flowers – the beauty of the Lord- Michael Burgess

In this month of September, we give thanks for God's blessings in all that the earth yields us. Those blessings are focused in this wonderful painting of Jan Davidsz de Heem. He was born in Utrecht in Holland in 1606 and studied art under his father's guidance. De Heem then moved to Antwerp, where for the rest of his life he created paintings of such beauty and depth that one of them — a portrait of Prince William III surrounded by blossoms and fruits - received the highest price ever paid for a painting at that time.

In the 'Vase of Flowers' de Heem has gathered together a bouquet of variegated flowers and plants for our delight. Time stands still in his painting in two ways. First, these thirty-one blooms could never have flowered at the same time, but through the magical touch of the artist, they do for us. Caught on canvas, they are as fresh and vibrant as the day they were painted in 1645.

But there are signs that the gifts of nature do wither and die, as we look closely and see on the marble slab a snail. Nearby is a salamander eyeing his next meal as a spider hangs on a thread from one of the flowers. In the centre, another snail looks at his food, the beautiful and rare red and white tulips. Yet we look again and see also signs of new life: the reeds of wheat are symbols of the Eucharistic bread; the caterpillar and butterfly on the striking white poppy at the top are signs of resurrection; and the peas in their pod and the blackberries mark out the fruitfulness of creation.

The artist shows us a glorious range of flowers - some well-known, others more exotic and brought back to Holland through the colonial expansion of the 16th century. Tulips and poppies dominate, but to the left are some small-scented roses. Each is a testimony to the beauty and goodness of the world we live in.

A 100 years later, Christopher Smart wrote in 'Jubilate Agno': 'For the flowers are great blessings...for the flower glorifies God...for the flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.'

And 200 years later Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: 'I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.'

And we, in our own century, can echo poet and painter as we praise God, the author of such flowers and plants that make up a world of 'all things bright and beautiful.'



Jan Davidsz de Heem, via Wikimedia Commons'

Art is here because God meant it to be here. - Hans Rookmaaker



A Strong Hold

Should I slip and lose the way The Lord will hold me fast, Should I choose to walk away I'm firmly in His grasp.

Though I walk through death's dark vale, His rod and staff are there I would not dare to walk this path Without His loving care.

Although my hold on Him is light His loving arms are wide, What He's begun He will fulfil Till I am safe on Canaan's side.

What God is this who loves us so?
Our future He has planned,
We're ever safe in His embrace
And none can snatch us from His hand.

By Megan Carter

Revd Canon Mary Jepp Tel: 01569 762917 George Masson Tel: 01569 739283



ROTA 2023

Date:	CELEBRANT Assistant Address	Readers/ Intercessions:	Readings:	Sidesperson	FLOWERS (cleaning) Teas
03/09/23 PENTECOST 14 Sunday after Trinity	STEVEN COULL Irene Butler Reflections: Carol Herbert	Michael Price John Usher Andrew Herbert Sheila Usher	JEREMIAH 15: 15-21 ROMANS 12: 9-21 MATTHEW: 16: 21-28	Sue Selway	Sue Manson Carol/Andrew
10/09/23 14 th Sunday after Trinity	REV CANON MARY JEPP Sheila Usher Address: Rev Mary Canon Jepp	Kaeden Mackay Carol Masson Dee Foulds Sue Selway	EZEKIEL 33: 7-11 ROMANS 13: 8-14 MATTHEW 18: 15-20	Irene Butler	Sheila Usher Sylvia/David
17/09/23 15 th Sunday after Trinity	REV MARTYN PERCY/ REV EMMA PERCY Dee Foulds	Carol Masson Steven Coull Michael Price Dee Foulds	GENESIS 50: 15-21 ROMANS 14: 1-12 MATTHEW 18: 21-35	Sue Selway	Sue Selway Katy
24/09/23 16 th Sunday after Trinity	REV CANON MARY JEPP Steven Coull Address: Rev Mary Jepp	Sue Selway George Masson Dee Foulds Sue Selway	JONAH 3: 10-4, END PHILIPPIANS 1: 21-END MATTHEW 20: 1-16	George Masson	Rhona Vassilikos Carol/George
01/10/23 17 th Sunday after Trinity	JOHN USHER Irene Butler Reflections: ?	George Masson Carol Herbert Andrew Herbert Sheila Usher	EZEKIAL 18: 1-4, 25-32 PHILIPPIANS 2: 1-13 MATTHEW 21: 23-32	Irene Butler	Sheila Usher Carol/Andrew