

Easter 2019



# GPC Echoes

*News from the Pews.*

## **John 3:16**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (NIV)

## **Luke 23:34**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

## **Mark 16:5-7.**

*5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.*

*6 “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’ ”*

## Easter message from Gary

In Revelation 4:1,2 it is written:

*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.' Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.*

The focus of Revelation 4 is the throne of God.

We live in uncertain times. Things like Brexit (sorry to mention that!), a rapidly changing culture and a myriad of other challenges and conflicts can leave us despondent and feeling helpless and maybe hopeless.

The book of Revelation was written by the apostle John at a time when the Roman Empire ruled over the territory of the Middle East. The emperor who sat on the throne in Rome was a powerful person in world affairs.

Roman Emperors may have expanded the territories over which they ruled and crushed nations into submission, but God's people always knew that God "*is Lord of heaven and earth*" (Acts 17:24), the "*Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth*" (Daniel 4:17; 2:21).

Immorality and corruption abound. God is quickly becoming unwelcome in the public square. The people of God face challenges every day from the forces of Satan. So, what is our response? Shall we despair? Well, God's word says "No", and Jesus, God's Word, says "No". We need not despair - because He is on the throne.

It's so easy to lose sight of the big picture.

It's so easy to forget that God is on His throne.

This truth is something to linger upon.

The Easter story is also something to linger upon.

It's the fulfilment of a promise given by God. We can trace the promise all through the Old Testament. The prophets looked forward with anticipation. We can look back with wonder. The Son of God laying down his life. An act of love. An act with you in mind.

With the resurrection a victory has been secured. As the hymn writer says "death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered".

This truth changes everything. We are children of a new age, a new Kingdom. We serve a new master. We praise Him with a new song.

We don't need to despair. We can trust the One on the throne and share His victory.

Happy Easter.

Gary

## Soup and Sandwich Lunches.

Soup and Sandwich lunches started to be served in our church on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the months of October –May in 2003. Our new log hall was built in 2002. Some of us had been studying the book “Open Doors Open Minds” about a church in the south of England who had opened their church during the week to invite the local community to various events including coffee mornings and lunches.

We felt we had such a lovely new hall that it would be a pity to have it lying empty for most of the week so a group of us started to make soup and sandwiches and traybakes not knowing how many would come. (We still don’t know how many to cater for!) We felt that there might be people in the community who were lonely and would like to come and have a chat with someone else and have a simple lunch. We were delighted that lots of people came to avail of our food and so we started an event which is still going strong today.

Initially we put a charge of €4 to cover the cost of homemade food if those coming could afford it. We began to make a profit and have been able over time to donate a sizeable sum each year to charities, both local and overseas, chosen by the workers. Following our example St Patricks Church of Ireland have taken up the idea (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month) and the Holy Rosary Church (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month) and recently the Y.W.C.A have begun a coffee morning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month so there is always somewhere to meet and chat with others.

Over the years our team has changed from the original one and it is lovely to see people volunteering to help either on the Tuesday morning or by making soup, sandwiches or cakes. We need at least six people to provide food and help on Tuesday mornings. Not everyone is available each Tuesday so we are always open to accept offers! It’s a busy day but we also have lots of fun and meet with lovely people. We sometimes have the added bonus of music beautifully played during mealtimes by our Minister Gary.



■ Kay Bourne, Joyce Lee, Caroline Foster, Karen Doyle, Susan McNamara, Jennifer McArthur, Marie Hughes and Bob Hughes enjoying the monthly lunch in the Presbyterian Church on Trafalgar Road.

Group photo Bray People 14/2/2007

Caroline Foster

## **DISAPPOINTMENT**

Disappointment: defined as a feeling of sadness or displeasure caused by non-fulfilment of one's hopes or expectations.

It would be unusual to know someone who has never suffered disappointment in life. Most of our disappointments in hind sight may not seem unduly serious yet at the time we may be perturbed; like when a parent says to a child "I am very disappointed in you because of ....." an untidy room or homework not done, etc. A parent may disappoint in not trusting their child as grown up enough to go somewhere with friends or to go somewhere unaccompanied. A grandparent may be disappointed who is lonely or needs a helping hand.

Disappointment may be more meaningful like failing to get a job or a house or flat that is sought after. Up the scale is loss of friendship or love of someone dear to us. We can be disappointed as followers of a favourite sports team or an individual player. On a world view many people were disappointed in Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Myanmar (Burma) for failure to help and save the Rohingya Muslim people. Maybe some people are disappointed in President Trump or in Brexit.

Disappointment is too weak a word for the major events of life which make us sad like a loved one becoming ill or a child emigrating (a form of bereavement) or worse still an actual bereavement.

The following poem shows us the disappointment may be God's will for us. Based on Acts 16:6, Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 1:15 and 16.

### **DISAPPOINTMENT**

'Disappointment – His appointment,'  
Change one letter, then I see  
That the thwarting of my purpose  
Is God's better choice for me.

His appointment must be blessing,  
Though it may come in disguise,  
For the end from the beginning  
Open to His vision lies.

'Disappointment- His appointment'  
Whose?-The Lord's Who loves me best,  
Understands and knows me fully,  
He my faith and love would test.

For, like loving, earthly parents,  
He rejoices when He knows  
That His child accepts, unquestioned,  
All that from His wisdom flows.

Disappointment-His appointment,  
'No good thing will He withhold,'  
From denials oft we gather  
Treasures of His love untold.

Well He knows each broken purpose  
Leads to fuller deeper trust;  
And the end of all His dealings  
Proves out God is wise and just.

from "Notes, Quotes and Anecdotes" by A. Naismith, M.A. published in 1963.

Harry Lew

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## **Robert Jermain Thomas: The first Protestant martyr in Korea**



A Welsh missionary, Robert Jermain Thomas (1839-1866), is not that well known. However, in South Korea where I'm from, his name is a household name among Christians as he is the one who first brought the Bible to the nation. I'd like to share one dramatic martyrdom story with you on this Easter.

Robert Jermain Thomas was born in mid-Wales, in the tiny market town of Rhayader, in 1839. As Robert grew up, his relationship with God thrived, being the son of a preacher. Thomas began preaching at age 15. The title of his very first sermon was 'Jesus Christ, The Same, Yesterday, Today, Forever (Hebrews 13:8)'. In addition to preaching, Robert also picked up foreign languages quickly, which would prove to be useful when he became a missionary.

He graduated from New College, London University in 1863 and was ordained, was married, and sailed to China the same year with his newly wedded wife, Caroline Godfrey, as missionaries with the London Missionary Society(LMS). However, after a 4-month voyage to get to Shanghai in China, his young wife died shortly after arrival.

Devastated Robert decided to move from Shanghai, where he had been a missionary, to Chefoo to work as a customs officer. During this time, he confided in Joseph Edkins of the London Missionary Society and Alexander Williamson of the National Bible Society about his difficulties and emotions after the death of his wife. Williamson encouraged Robert by telling him about the need for missionaries in Korea, which was not divided in that era. Williamson introduced Robert to two Korean Catholic fisherman who were eager for their own copy of God's Word. Hearing about the need for Bibles in Korea,

Robert eagerly began planning to take Bible, to the people living in Korea—even though it was only available to them in the Chinese language.

At that time, Korea was dangerous specially to the different looking foreigners. Locals feared Western influence infiltrating the country and viewed foreigners with suspicion. The people were forbidden to trade with foreigners, and if anyone was caught, they could be arrested or killed. Knowing these risks, Robert still took residence in Korea for a few months to distribute Bibles.

Throughout his time, Robert picked up the Korean language and could communicate the Good News with them in a way they could understand. He also wore a Korean hat to make his Welsh heritage a little less noticeable. After some time, Robert departed from Korea because it was getting too dangerous for foreigners to be in the country.

Robert eventually returned to Korea a second time, boarding a trade ship called 'The General Sherman' that waved the American flag. It was 1866, and tensions between Koreans and foreigners were at an all-time high, so much so that at various times, crowds of Koreans would demand the foreigners to be put to death.

Throughout his journey on 'The General Sherman', Robert distributed Bibles. When the ship made it to the Korean city of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea today, locals attacked. Legend has it that Robert jumped overboard with his Bibles and made it to shore, all the while giving out Bibles to the angry crowds and shouting "Jesus, Jesus." He handed his last Bible to the man, Choon-Kwon Park, who captured him and beheaded him. Robert was only 27.

Some who had witnessed the end of Thomas's life and the dignity with which he met his end, were greatly impacted by what they had witnessed. Some felt bad about destroying the Bibles he had so passionately tried to give away and took them home, using them as wallpaper. Eventually, out of curiosity, they started reading the pages. And later some of these people became Christians and were involved in the process of establishing churches in Korea.

The soldier, Choon-Kwon Park, who had executed Robert did end up taking the Bible. He and his sons later became Christians. And his nephew, Young-Tae Lee, became a pastor who made remarkable achievements in translating Bible into modern Korean. Chi-Ryang Choi, a 12-year-old boy who had received a bible from Thomas on the day of his execution, was later to be disciple by Reverend Samuel Moffett who was one of the early Presbyterian missionaries in Korea and became an elder in the fledgling Pyongyang Church.

About 50 years later after Robert's death, a huge revival broke out in Pyongyang where he died. In 1904, about 10,000 people became Christian. In 1906, the number went up to 30,000. The move quickly spread to other cities with many thousands being saved an added to the churches in the greatest



move of the Spirit in the history of the church there. In 1907, there were more than 50,000 Christians in that area. In 1932, a memorial church, Chowangri Presbyterian Church, was built on the spot where Robert's body was buried to honour Robert. This church was the very first Presbyterian church in Pyongyang.

Robert was the first Protestant martyr in Korea and his legacy is still being written. South Korea is now the second largest missionary-sending country after the United States.

**"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."**

- Romans

4:25

God is alive.

Hoseok Kang (Paul)

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***Matthew 20:1-16 The parable of the hired labourers)***  
***(Revelation 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock...)***

He came into the vineyard  
And worked an hour that day  
And those who worked from morning time  
Were given the same pay

Now is that just, or is it not  
Whose right is in to say?  
The ones who worked or the one who hired  
And gave them the same pay?

Those who worked from morn till e'en  
Were given the promised shilling  
And those who got no job till late  
Still showed that they were willing

And when the Master came to pay  
What he'd promised them he gave  
And all were paid the same by him  
However long they'd slaved

"Is it not my right", he said  
"To pay what I would pay –  
How much I want to everyone  
Who worked sometime that day".

I am the Lord, I do not judge  
The same as others do  
My promise is for everyone  
Who comes into my view

Who opens up the door as I  
Knock and await them come  
And I enter in and sit and eat  
And drink with every one

It's not too late for you to come  
And to invite me in  
And sit with me at table  
And know I forgave your sin

And talk with me and walk with me  
And live a life of praise  
Of Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
Filling all your days

*Poem by Rita Ní Ghóilín*

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## **News roundup.**

2018

1st December - a new baby boy, Evan James, was born to Anna and Pat McNally. Evan is a fifth grandson for Valerie and the late Brian Michel.

16<sup>th</sup> December Carol Service. The Church was packed to capacity for our annual carol service. The choir excelled themselves. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Church and it was attended by people of all ages. Gary said we weren't to clap until the end of the service but the congregation couldn't help clapping when Junhyung played the violin so beautifully.

23rd December Children's Christmas Service. The children performed an unusual Nativity Play as it was set in modern times. They all did very well. Gary's demonstration of faith had Jamie falling through "bridges" between two chairs much to the delight and shrieks of the children.

2019

There is no end to the talent of Alan McKee as he has won another trophy. This time it was in the Special Olympics for go-karting. Congratulations Alan.

Funerals

3rd January Brian Michel      26th January Robert Thompson.

We extend our sympathy to Valerie Michel and Marion Thompson and their families.

Dorothy Gibney is looking for people to join the flower rota for Sunday's. You don't have to be an expert flower arranger so if you would be willing to do an occasional Sunday please get in touch with her.

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## **Easter – a special time of reflection on our journey.**

Here's a thought. As a Christian when you understand Easter you realise that we were with Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. On Holy Thursday Jesus bent low and washed our feet. On Good Friday Jesus gave his life for ours on the cross. Having sat at the table with him and having stood at the cross with him, we can now stand at the empty tomb and proclaim, with Mary Magdalene, *Jesus is risen!* Death did not have the final word. Light has overcome darkness; new and everlasting life is offered to all people. “

Consider the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. To paraphrase Gary - His love is for all. His sacrifice is for all.

His atonement is not for the few but for all who are the fallen. And just who is that? Who are the fallen? Is that the other person? I don't think so. It is you and me and it is all of mankind. As hard as we might we cannot achieve perfection though that should not stop us from trying. We are all made in the image of God and Paul says ***“In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor male and female for you are all one in Christ”.*** (Galatians 3:28). In those words the tears of Easter should turn to joy. We sinners are one in Christ. The resurrection of Jesus changes the direction of humanity and that should cause change in us. Our compassion for others should overflow. Being human that is difficult at times but belief, faith and trust in God supports us on the journey of life. Hallelujah!

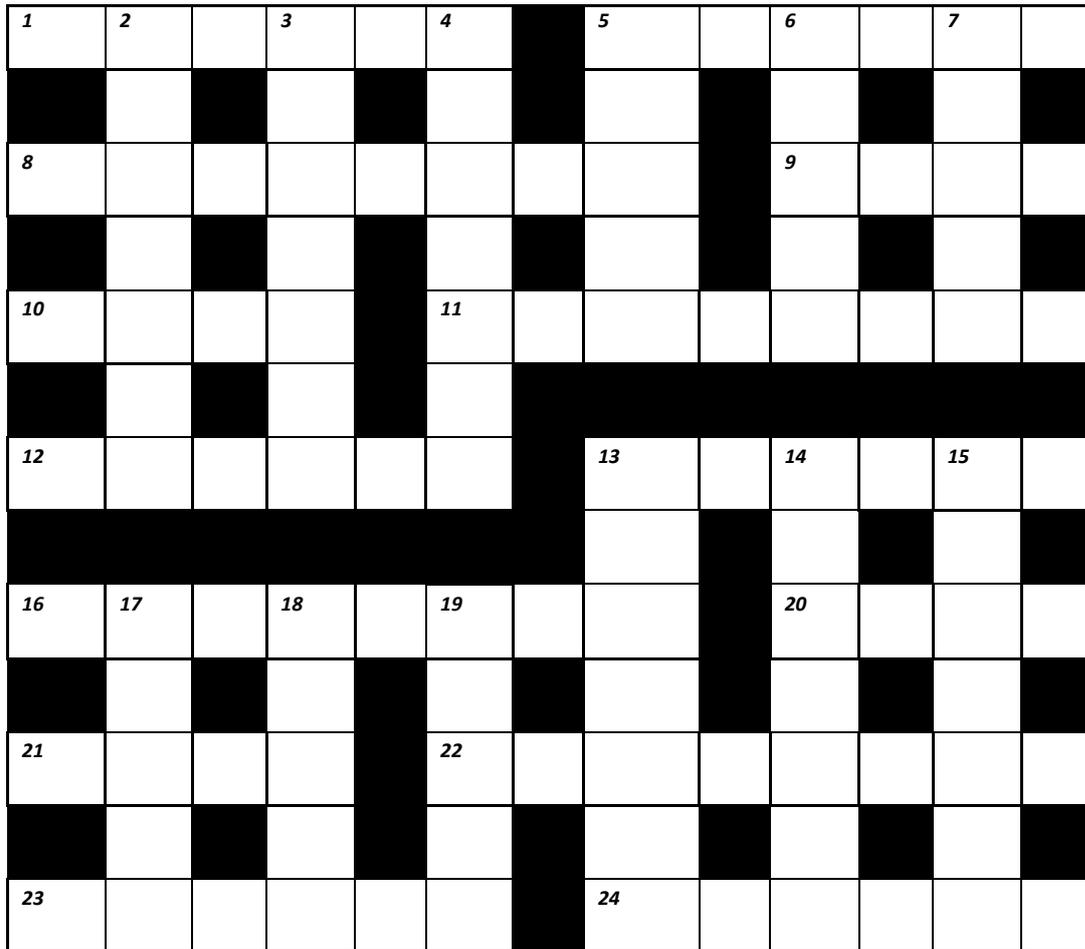
To think otherwise reduces Easter to just another few days in the year.

Paul

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## **Easter Prayer**

For the **Resurrection** is our guarantee that justice will triumph over treason, light will overcome darkness, and love will conquer death. We praise you in this **Easter** season. Change our lives, change our hearts to be messengers of **Easter** joy and hope. We make our **prayer** through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever.



**Across**

- 1 *Could be T or not for round Peg (6)*
- 5 *At last on the beach (6)*
- 8 *Rake peat and mix it for this bird (8)*
- 9 *Short lady singer (4)*
- 10 *Look for and hopefully do this (4)*
- 11 *Check the books and charge for the part (10)*
- 12 *The repast is all mine (2,4)*
- 13 *After 12 across I might feel this (6)*
- 16 *Quite big (8)*
- 20 *Could be hounds or before you go on holidays (4)*
- 21 *A bit of fun (4)*
- 22 *An Italian with a twitch for love (8)*
- 23 *Scowled (6)*
- 24 *Ahem! Do it again (2-4)*

**Down**

- 2 *The best (7)*
- 3 *S/he gets the prize (7)  
It comes in pairs, in your head (7)*
- 5 *It's often over the jumble trade (5)*
- 6 *Light or tunnel (5)*
- 7 *Old and short (5)*
- 13 *Maybe for nostalgic movement or for cooking (7)*
- 14 *Sounds like the old washing aid needs a strike out (7)*
- 15 *There's an order to these hens (7)*
- 17 *Aldi fused with the East is perfect (5)*
- 18 *Go in to the tree in the North (5)*
- 19 *Why would you say "Are we there yet?" (5)*

## Prayer?

Why pray? Scripture offers many reasons to pray. We are to pray for our relationship with God, forgiveness of sins, our friends, family, and others and those who do not know God. We pray for world and local leaders, for wisdom and in acknowledgement of God's provision. We pray for our church. Prayer is highly encouraged and commanded in the Bible. Prayer is evidenced in the life of Jesus. He constantly went before God in prayer to determine God's will and direction, to resist temptation, to ask for courage, to discover what His Father in heaven would do. Matthew 26:36-39 and Mark 14:34-41 describe Jesus being very distressed about His crucifixion. He brings this matter to His Father, seeking His will.

Here are two small prayers which I use when I need help. I visualise the image of Jesus with his hands out stretched towards me.

“Lord in all things, your will be done.”

“Jesus, I place all my trust in thee.”

May you all find peace this Easter.

Many blessings

Paul

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