



Magazine

No. 180 March 2023

Dear Friends

Speaking to a number of people in recent months it has struck me how many people seem to be running on empty. Whether or not you've had Covid, I am left with the strong impression of a general weariness amongst many. I'm also noticing a change in attitude about 'going out'. Have we not overcome the nervousness of being in public places with larger numbers? Have we grown accustomed to 'staying in' – so much more convenient than finding a parking space, working out bus timetables and so on. Of course, given the cost of fuel, it's ruinously expensive to stay 'cosily at home'! Or are we just getting old?

What do we do with those times when we feel as if we are 'running on empty'?

I suspect the right answer, though not always the possible one, is to stop. To make and take the time to be at rest. In the poetic imagery at the beginning of the Book of Genesis where we read about the 'why' rather than the 'how' of God's involvement in the story of Creation, even God took a break. Shouldn't we? Shouldn't we take what another generation used to call, 'a time of refreshment'?

Of course, it's not always easy to stop. Jobs need done. Children need feeding. Gardens need tending. Meetings need attending. Visits need made. Reading needs completing. Meals need making. Buses need catching. Journeys need to be taken. Perhaps in

reading this list we begin to see our problem. The question is, how do we prioritise our living, so that we are not left exhausted, depleted, and running on empty.

The Christian season of Lent is a time inserted into the year of faith to make us confront a number of things. The over-fullness of our lives. The over-dependence on material things for happiness. The over-reliance on being busy to justify our existence.

Not everyone can slow down, and not everyone likes the slower, quieter, reflective and sometimes solemn pace of Lent. We might rather prefer the jolly up and cheering up approach to life, and in truth, there are times when we do need to be brighter amidst so much darkness in the world.

Nevertheless, I think we miss something if we run hell-for-leather and fail to slow down, or pause, and reflect, and wonder. What are we afraid of: the silence? the jumble of our lives? the inconsistencies in our thinking and behaving? the shallowness of our faith?

The good news is God knows all this. And still loves us. Through the quiet and reflectiveness of Lent, through the hysteria and pain of Holy Week, and into the bright joy of Easter.

Very Revd Dr Derek Browning



FEBRUARY KIRK SESSION

From its meeting in February:

Warm Spaces - in the Church during January
- The numbers who had used the facility had been small and possibly more were grateful for the opportunity to view the sanctuary than were using it as a warm space. There had been some who had taken the opportunity of coming for coffee on Wednesday and this facility will still be open to them.

Presbytery Reform - The Moderator reported that Presbytery had still not received the formal approval of the Plan from the central Church. 96% of the plan is agreed but, while there had been frank and robust debate, no agreement had been reached between Presbytery, the General Trustees and the Mission Implementation Group in respect of a cluster of 5 congregations in the Corstorphine area. Further discussions will follow in the hope that approval can be secured in time for approval of the Plan, possibly at a special meeting of Presbytery in March.

Concerns were expressed as to the future of the Church of Scotland if /when the proposed closures take place. Ready access to a place of worship will not always be available, not just in rural areas but in many large housing developments around Edinburgh. It was recognised that many new houses did not necessarily lead to many new worshippers and to build a new church might be unrealistically expensive. However new ways were being considered to address the problem, perhaps by holding services in other local facilities. It was noted that the drop in church attendance was not something new but had been the pattern for over 50 years but now the age profile was possibly at its worst level. Behaviours have changed and a reluctance to have regular commitment was not confined to church attendance but was also experienced by many other charities, clubs and sporting groups. It was agreed that Session could not ignore the trend and consideration should be given at a future Session meeting or a special meeting to

consider this important topic of reducing numbers. It was not easy to determine what could be done – and as the Moderator commented if it had been easy, it would have been done.

As a first step, the Moderator advised that the Ministers and Session Clerks from our church, Greenbank, Fairmilehead and St John's Colinton Mains forming the group created by the Presbytery Plan were due to meet on 9 March with a Facilitator to see what might be done together to promote the work of the Church in the area.

Worship – Douglas Paterson, convenor, reminded Session that a year ago the conduct of worship was still very much restricted by the impact of the Covid pandemic. In that context it is very encouraging to record just how much has been recovered in recent months during which Communion services, unmasked singing and the participation of children in the offering collections have all been restored. The Christmas season provided a celebration of the progress with a return to a full diet of services. Highlights included the all-age Christmas service, the contribution of the choir and organist in Lessons and Carols service as well as congregational singing in the well-attended Christmas services. He commented and Session agreed that while the easing of restrictions made things possible, we owe much to the talents, effort and commitment of the Moderator, the Revd Alistair Keil, and the organist, choir and others.

Education - Kenny Robertson, convenor, had reported that the focus of the Education Committee has continued to be principally upon the Sunday Club (including the operation of the crèche) and adult education.

He reported that, in the twelve-month period since the last report was provided, activities have been restored, by and large, to pre-pandemic activities. While several children have moved on from the typical age range

attending Sunday Club while Covid restrictions were in place, the number of children attending generally has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The children have resumed the range of activities undertaken, ably led by Norma Wilson and Rona McLaren, including supporting all-age services.

In relation to the children's participation at the Services, the children continue to feedback that they enjoy their more visible role and, rather than having to cajole them to take part in readings and prayers, if anything they are keen to be involved as much as possible.

The Committee formally extended its gratitude to Norma and Rona, both of whom invest huge amounts of un-seen time and energy to make Sunday Club an educational, fun and engaging experience for the children. Session also warmly expressed their appreciation.

Members of the Committee also continue to be engaged in adult education through support for activities such as the Autumn lectures and Church membership courses.

Session asked if anything was needed to assist the leaders in their work and in response they asked if a consideration might be given some new IT equipment.

Appointment of New Elders - the Moderator advised that five new elders will be ordained on Sunday 12 March at the 10.30 service. The new elders are Sally Brown, Kerry Elgey, Dorothy Mushet, David and Jennifer Rimer.

Used stamp appeal – in her absence Session considered a paper submitted by Lorna Graham. She had been co-ordinating MPC's used stamp collection for several years now and would like to ask for approval to change the recipient. Originally stamps were donated to the Church of Scotland World Mission appeal and then the decision was made to support Crossreach. They have now discontinued this and although the World Mission appeal is still running this necessitates taking the stamps to either the volunteer co-ordinator in Wishaw or Glasgow Presbytery office.

Session agreed to support the RNIB appeal, recognising that sight loss can affect all groups in our community and there is a Sight Scotland school and home within our parish.

Review of the Roll – Fiona Stewart, Roll Keeper, had advised that since Session last met there had been three deaths. Ms Charlotte Brownlie has asked and Session agreed by Resolution that she be admitted as a member. The Roll total will now be 357.

The Review of Districts is ongoing.

Presbytery Elder's Report – the Clerk's report had been tabled and was taken as read. Much of it related to the Presbytery plan which had been dealt with earlier. However, it confirmed that the new Moderator of Presbytery was the Revd Moira Macdonald of Corstorphine Old Church, Dr Hazel Hastie, elder at Drylaw Church, had been appointed as Presbytery Clerk and Reuben Addis who did part of his training at MPC was to be ordained as an Ordained Local Minister.

Letter to MSPs re proposed Scottish Government Land Reform legislation – the Clerk had received a request from the Solicitor to the Church of Scotland that Session Clerks should obtain the authority of Session to write to the MSPs for their area requesting amendments to The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land) Regulations 2021.

The proposals require Trustees holding a controlled interest in land to be identified on the Register. Elders meet that requirement so their details would have to be registered. However, the reality is that with 6,000 affected buildings the administrative burden of supplying and keeping up to date such information would be enormous. There is no suggestion of trying to avoid the requirement but simply to suggest that the necessary information can readily be obtained elsewhere – not least by the fact that most churches display contact information on notice boards outside the premises. Session authorised the Clerk to send letters on these terms on their behalf.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER: 3 – 9 APRIL 2023

The joint Holy Week services with Greenbank Parish Church will be held, this year, in Morningside Parish Church.

Services will be held at 7.30pm. Monday to Wednesday with the congregation seated in the chancel area; Thursday to Saturday with congregation seated in the nave. On Maundy Thursday there will be communion. On Good Friday there will be some choral input in the services. On Holy Saturday there will be a service of readings and music.

Easter Sunday is 9 April. On that day there will be no 9.30am service, and one service at 10.30am in the Church.



HOME COMMUNION

With the March Communion season upon us, if anyone who is unable to get to Church for the Communion services on 5th March would like Home Communion, please let the Minister know. Equally, if you know of anyone who might like communion at home, check with them and then confirm with the Minister.

The Home Communion service is based around the communion part of the service (so no hymn singing or long sermon!) and is a lovely, intimate time of sharing and remembering. Home Communions are possible in private homes, care homes, hospitals and, if someone is able to come to church but simply missed the Communion Sunday, in church by arrangement with the Minister.

BELIEVING AND BELONGING

Would you like to explore, or re-explore, some of the questions of faith and doubt, what it means to be a Christian, or ask questions that have always been on your mind about what Christians believe but never quite go round to it? The Believing and Belonging series might be for you! A thoughtful and reflective four evening gathering in March, on Wednesdays 8, 15, 22 and 29 at 7.30pm in the St Andrew Room.

The four topics for study:

1. *Who is Jesus?*
2. *Learning to love.*
3. *But what about...?*
4. *Belonging to the Church*

Believing and Belonging is open to people of all ages, to those who might be thinking about becoming part of the Church, to those who want to top up their faith, and to those who simply have questions they want to explore. Come along if you're interested, or if you know someone who might want to take their questions about faith further, do let them know.

Contact the Minister for further details. Tel 0131 447 1617, or email derek.browning@churchofscotland.org.uk



ROLL CHANGES

Please give a warm welcome to our newest member,

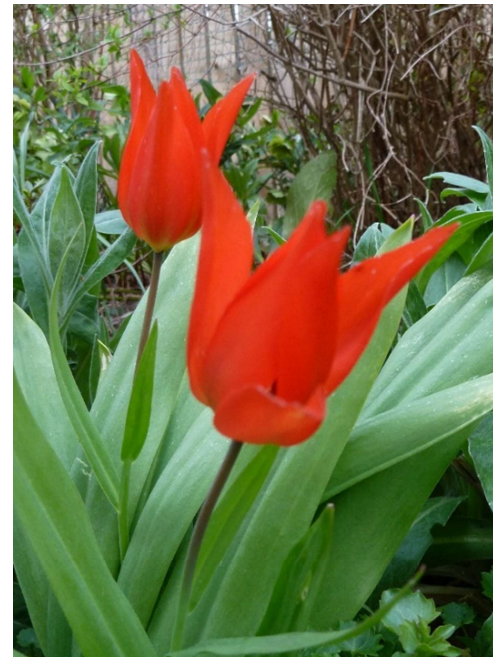
Ms Charlotte Brownlie

Please remember in your prayers the family and friends of
Wallace Bell, who died on 19 February 2023.

FLOWER COMMITTEE

The flowers in March have been donated and will be arranged as follows:-

		Donated by	Arranged by
Mar	5	Nyria Bailey	Joan Burnet
	12	Fiona Stewart	Irene Wilson
	19	Florence Patton	Eleanor Watt
	26	Hazel Nicolson	Marjory Watson
Apr	22	Ruth Henderson	Ruth Henderson



I would like to thank all those who have offered to donate money for the flowers over the coming year. The cost is £45 and cheques should be made payable to 'Morningside Parish Church Flower Fund'. If you are a UK taxpayer and can give by Gift Aid, please fill in one of the Gift Aid envelopes or advise me if you are registered with the Gift Aid Convener. Monies can be put in the Flower Committee pigeon hole, given to me on a Sunday or sent to the church office - clearly marked for my attention. If you would prefer to pay by bank transfer, please contact me direct for bank details for the Flower Fund on irene_a_wilson@btinternet.com ; tel: 449 2866

Irene Wilson, Convener - Flower Committee



ANOTHER CHOIR SCHOLAR INTRODUCES HERSELF: **Soprano Thalia Marriage:**

I am currently a third year student at the University of Edinburgh reading Ancient and Medieval History. Aside from singing, I also play the violin, and have done so from a very young age; participating in multiple orchestras and choirs both within and outside of school. I'm also a keen footballer, and play for one of the university's teams during the week.

(Thalia is front row on the right in the photo)

We hope to have introductions from other choir scholars in the next magazine.



Morningside Hope



This is the umbrella name that we're using for the projects being made possible by the generous grant received from TOR Christian Foundation and the matched funding from the church itself.

MARCH DATES:

HEART FOR ART: workshops for those with dementia and their partners/carers

Held every Tuesday in St Matthews' Hall 11am - 1pm



MUSIC AND MEMORIES IN MORNINGSIDE

workshops for those with dementia and their partners/carers

Held in the Cluny Hall, 2- 4pm. Monday 6 and Friday 24 March:

Extra Date: Monday 20 March – guest group, Nigel's All Stars, leading us in Scottish traditional songs

GENTLE EXERCISE CLASSES These continue to be dementia friendly *but we have decided that this year we will open the class up to anyone aged 60 or over so that more people can get the benefit of what are really lovely classes.* Many exercises can be chair based and the class is tailored to the needs of those who attend. Feel free to join us just to try it out and see if it's for you.

The class itself will last 40-45 minutes, followed by tea, coffee and the chance to chat.

Held on Mondays in the Cluny Hall 2-4pm 13 & 27 March

GAMES AFTERNOON: open to everyone, these afternoons are a chance to meet up with friends old and new, play our favourite board games, jigsaws etc. and have a coffee and a catch up.

Held once a month on a Wednesday afternoon, 2-4pm 15 March

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CONCERTS

Open to everyone, our **next concert** will be on **Saturday 25 March** at 2pm and will feature our very own Morley Whitehead, church organist and choir master. Entry is by donation – all welcome!

PASTORAL SKILLS COURSE an Introduction: running over two evenings, Tuesdays 21 and 28 March 2023

Caring for one another is the responsibility of each and every one of us and so we are offering a brief introduction to Pastoral Skills running from 6 –9.30pm each evening, hopefully starting with a light supper.



There is a maximum of 16 places on the course which is open to anyone interested in finding out more about pastoral care, without the necessity of making any commitment beyond the course itself.

The course will look at topics such as:

- Communication & listening skills
- Self-awareness & self-care
- Boundaries and why they matter
- Dementia /or bereavement (dependant on those attending)

The training will be hands on/experiential in nature and the aim, to make it an enjoyable experience for those attending. There is no charge for the training and CPD certificates will be provided.

We are taking names for this course so please do get in touch if you wish to attend or would like to discuss in more detail what is involved.

PASTORAL SKILLS COURSE Part 2: running over two evenings, dates in the autumn to be confirmed.

Open to those who have completed the introduction course above and want to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Interested in attending? Please come along to any of the above, you will be made most welcome.

Interested in volunteering? If you would like to help with any of these activities please get in touch, we need a lot of willing hands to enable this exciting project to happen.

Or if you are simply **interested in finding out a little bit more**, just contact our Pastoral Assistant, Jacqui Lindsay, on: 07834 364 628 or e-mail: pastoralassistant@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

- **Connecting to God in Nature:** Thomas Baldwin learns about the growth of groups taking church outdoors.
- **Intergenerational Church:** In the third of the series, Suzi Farrant and Darren Philip consider mutual relationships and learning
 - **Joyful Generosity Amid Uncertainty:** The National Stewardship Team reflects on exercising Christian stewardship in times of economic challenge
 - **Being Open to Change:** The Moderator explains why the Church has to be prepared to change
 - **'Let Justice Roll':** Ruth Harvey considers the call of the prophet Amos that justice is a matter of extreme urgency
 - **Plants of the Bible:** Jackie Macadam looks at the plants, food and scents of the Bible
 - **View from the Pulpit:** The Rev Shuna Dicks offers an 'encouragement for creative thinking'
- **Youth Column:** Rebekah Lennon explains why she made a Profession of Faith on her 16th birthday



LENT 2023: TIME FOR A CHANGE? TRANSFIGURATION TODAY

Before the Church leaps into Lent and its darker faith colours and thinking, there is a Sunday that is called Transfiguration Sunday. It sets Jesus with two of His disciples on a mountaintop and affords us a view of what Jesus might look like in glory. He is *transfigured* or *changed*.

The Church of Scotland is currently going through a time of change at every level of our Church, local, regional, and national.

We should also be aware that our personal response to Jesus and to our faith will also be something that changes throughout our lives. There will be moments of transfiguration when we find ourselves 'moved on' from one understanding to another; from one form of activity to another. Our faith, and the way we think about it and put it into practice, is meant to be dynamic, not static.

The Minister will be leading two studies in March at the manse (20 Braidburn Crescent, EH10 6EN) which will reflect on the ideas of change and transfiguration in the Church and in our lives today. Both evenings begin at 7.30pm, with refreshments served from 7pm.

Not everyone will be free to attend these nights, so here are the two Lent studies.

Time for a Change? Transfiguration today

21 March 2023

Prayer

Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

17 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart.

² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.

³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli'jah, talking with him.

⁴ And Peter said to Jesus "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah."

⁵ He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe.

⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."

⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."

Reflect

According to the Bible, the Transfiguration marks one of the few overtly mystical experiences in Jesus' life. He had been talking to His disciples about what it means to be a true disciple, (take up your cross, follow Me), and was now on His way to Jerusalem where He would challenge the religious authorities, be arrested, and then crucified. On the mountain (commonly believed to be Mount Tabor) God *transfigures* or *transforms* Jesus. We are given a glimpse of Jesus in His resurrected form, and also as the fulfilment of the Old Testament laws (represented by the appearance of Moses, who also encountered God on mountains) and the fulfilment of the Old

Testament prophecies (represented by the appearance of Elijah, who also encountered God on a mountain). Whatever actually happened to Jesus on the mountain, and to the accompanying disciples, Jesus found strength to go back down the mountain, continue with His life of healing, teaching and challenge, and fulfil the prophecy that spoke of Him as the Suffering Servant (Isaiah).

Think

1.
 - a. What is the significance of “the six days”?
 - b. Where else do mountains/hills/high places appear in the Bible and what is their significance?
 - c. What is the significance of the word “apart” in the Bible passage?
 - d. Are there times when you have been, are, or would like to be ‘apart’?
2.
 - a. Brightness is used to describe the transfigured Jesus, and also the cloud from which a voice is heard. What do you think this might mean?
 - b. In life, in the world, in the Church, where is brightness to be seen today, and why?
3. After the moment of transfiguration what does Jesus do? Why is this important?

Act Look for brightness in the days ahead. Notice those times when you yourself are ‘bright’!

Time for a Change? Transfiguration today

28 March 2023

Prayer

Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

Reflect

Not only should we notice Jesus in this story, we should also notice the disciples and what they did. First of all, they followed Jesus up the mountain, to spend time with Him. Peter’s response on seeing the transfigured Jesus with the images of Moses and Elijah, was to build three shelters. Did he anticipate a long conversation? And what were James and John doing at this time?

The next thing we notice about the disciples is that in the midst of the ‘bright cloud’ they heard a voice. We presume it was God speaking. They heard, and then they were overwhelmed at the awesomeness of what was happening. But Jesus reached out, and told them not to be afraid. The disciples then looked up, and Jesus had changed, again.

After this they return down the mountain, and, because signs like transfiguration are not easy to translate or relate, the disciples are told not to share the vision they had witnessed until after the time of Jesus’ resurrection. Then they could apply their experience of the transfigured Jesus to their experience of the risen Jesus. Transfiguration, like crucifixion and resurrection, for Matthew and the community he is writing for, confirms Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, a sign of hope.

Think

1. Peter wanted to build three shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. How might it be seen that an act of reverence and protection might also be an attempt to limit and control? Are there ways in which the Church today on purpose or by default, seeks to limit and control God?
2. The disciples, with Jesus, ‘return down the mountain’. What is the significance of this journey, and what might it say to the Church, and people of faith, today?
3.
 - a. Jesus is transfigured/changed. Are the disciples transfigured/changed?

b. How do you think the Church might be transfigured or changed, and how?

c. How do you think you might need to be transfigured or changed?

Act Think of three things you want to be thankful about in your life today, and one thing that you will seek to change in the coming weeks.

TURKEY & SYRIA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Thousands of women, men and children have died or are injured in the aftermath of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. It's not too late to save lives. **Please donate what you can today.**

Even before these devastating earthquakes, there were more than 4 million people in need of aid in north-west Syria. Now extreme weather events and spiralling food and fuel prices are making the situation even worse.

By donating today, you can give warmth and hope by helping us to provide winter survival kits that include blankets, mattresses, food parcels and heating material.

How to donate:

Hand in your donation to your church representative

Call **020 7523 2269** to donate by phone

Visit **caid.org.uk/TurkeyEarthquake** or scan the QR code to donate online



CHRISTIAN
AID
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People desperately hunting for survivors in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey.

Scan me



Thank you



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£30 provides shelter and vital supplies

£50 helps to build shelters against the winter weather

£109 helps to remove debris and organize rescue efforts

Edinburgh:Morningside Parish Church of Scotland: Scottish Charity No: SCO34396

USED STAMP NEWS

Thank you to everyone who continues to collect used stamps for our charity collection.

Crossreach, our recipient in recent years, no longer accepts stamps so with the approval of Session I will now donate our stamps to **RNIB** (Royal National Institute of Blind People).

RNIB tells us:-

By collecting stamps you're helping to break down the barriers that stop people with sight loss living life to the full. Stamps are sold by weight and we raise £20 per kilogramme of stamps, so it's a brilliant way to raise money.

Here are just a few of the ways that your donation could help make every day better for blind and partially sighted people:

- **£5** could help us to be there for a blind or partially sighted person when they contact our Helpline.
- **£10** could cover the cost of 100 blind and partially sighted people tuning into RNIB Connect Radio, run by and for people with sight loss to promote independence and reduce social isolation.
- **£15** could provide free Talking Books to someone for a month, so that they can relax with a great read.
- **£20** could help someone feel more confident about living with sight loss, with personalised support on a topic like reading, technology or their eye condition from our expert Advice Service.
- **£50** could help someone feel more positive about the future after losing their sight, through a one-to-one phone or online counselling session.
- **£83** could help us to reach out to blind and partially sighted people in their homes for an hour through our RNIB Connect Radio station, run by and for people with sight loss.
- **£100** could help us to be there for 20 blind or partially sighted people when they contact our Helpline.
- **£160** could provide free Talking Books to someone for a year, so that they can relax with a great read.
- **£375** could help someone feel more positive about the future after losing their sight, through eight one-to-one counselling sessions over the phone or online.
- **£532** could run our Helpline for one hour, so that blind and partially sighted people can contact us with any questions they might have.
- **£1,500** could make a new children's book available in our Talking Books library.
- **£2,500** could make a new adult book available in our Talking Books library.

They accept all stamps: new or used, first or second class, foreign, first day covers, presentation packs or albums.

They ask that stamps are trimmed to approx 1cm paper margin around the stamp and are separated into UK + foreign (Channel isles + Isle of Man are classed as foreign)

Stamps can be left in the box below the elders' pigeonholes. Thank you for your ongoing support - as you can see, every stamp really does make a difference.



Lorna Graham

APRIL MAGAZINE

Material for the April issue of the magazine should be with the editor, Alison Riddell, by **Friday 10 March 2023** and it will be available by Sunday 26 March (**a week earlier than usual because of Easter dates**). Please email your contributions to editor@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk.

DAFFODILS WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake,
beneath the trees,
Fluttering and
dancing in the
breeze.*

*Continuous as the
stars that shine
And twinkle on the
milky way,
They stretched in
never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*



*The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:*

*I gazed—and
gazed—but little
thought
What wealth the
show to me had
brought:*

*For oft, when on
my couch I lie
In vacant or in
pensive mood,*

*They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

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Join us for worship in Church in person at 9.30am or 10.30am each Sunday or click on the link on our website to join us online either live or at a later date.

www.morningsideparishchurch.org.uk