

Leaflet

Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES
Congregation No: 010036
Scottish Charity No: SC011325
No 579 March 2008

Pulpit Diary

Mar 2

9.30am First Sunday Service led by Springboard

10.30am Morning Worship followed by Meeting of Kirk Session and Congregational Board

Mar 9

10.30am Morning Worship followed by Annual Business Meeting of Congregation

Mar 16

10.30am All Age Worship for Palm Sunday (End of second term for Springboard and Spectrum)

Mar 17-21

7.30pm United Holy Week Services at Greenbank

Mar 23

9.30am Easter Communion

10.30am Easter Celebration with special activity for children

Mar 30

10.30am Morning Worship

Apr 6

9.30am First Sunday Service led by Guild

10.30am Morning Worship (Start of third term for Springboard and Spectrum)

For information about church organisations, please contact the Church Office (Mon–Fri, 9.30am–12.30pm):

Mrs May Brown

e-mail: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

The pastoral team can be contacted through the Church Office:

Rev Alison Swindells

email: alisonswindells@blueyonder.co.uk

Mrs Anne Oxbrow

Minister's Log

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter three journeys are very much in my mind. In a few days time I leave for North India. This will be my first visit to India. I'm looking forward to encountering a very different culture from our own and discovering how within that culture the Church plays its part in God's mission to the world. Our schedule is very full and involves a lot of travelling. We will be meeting Church leaders and talking to them about building links between the Church in India and the Church in Scotland. I hope that there will also be an opportunity to see some of the work that the Church is doing at grass roots level.

The second journey that is in my mind is that of our own congregation. Since the beginning of the year two steps have been taken in relation to the development of our own church life. The first is a decision by the Kirk Session to recruit ministerial assistance with a focus on youth work. The advert for this post will be appearing very shortly. The second step is that we have now begun planning for a holiday club for children of primary school age during the last week of the school holidays. You will be hearing more about these developments in due course.

The third journey that is very much in my mind in this season of Lent is Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Traditionally Lent has been regarded as a time of self-denial. *What are you giving up for Lent?* is a question often asked. In recent time it has perhaps been most frequently answered by the word *chocolate*. But there is much more to Lent than giving up chocolate. Self-denial is costly. Jesus told his friends to take up their cross and follow him. If we are going to give up chocolate, then the question arises "What will we do with the money we save – spend it on some other self-indulgence or give it away?"

But there is another way of looking at Lent. Jesus didn't only tell his friends to take up their cross. He added the words "Follow me". And when you read the Gospels, one thing that you discover is that Jesus loved life. His time on earth may have been short but he lived it to the



full. He lived it with passion and compassion, loving God and loving his neighbour. Just before Lent began we distributed to families in the congregation the *Love Life Live Lent* booklet, which offers plenty of ideas as to how we might be good neighbours in our Church, in our community and in the world. I hope you are enjoying carrying out at least some of the suggestions in that booklet.

One final thought comes from an American writer (Father Ron Rolheiser), who suggests that the story of Cinderella can help to point us in the direction of another understanding of Lent. The name *Cinderella* means literally the young girl who sits in the cinders. Some Churches have a tradition of putting ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday. These ashes symbolise a reflective, penitential approach to the season. To wear them is a sign that you are grieving for some of the things you have done or lost, a sign that some important work is going on deep inside you. Many ancient traditional stories tell of having to sit in the ashes before one can be transformed. As the story of Cinderella makes plain, before the glass slipper is placed on her foot, before the beautiful gown, ball, and marriage, there must first be a period of being humbled.

The journey of Lent not only involves self-denial. It is also a time for living life to the full and, paradoxically, that usually includes a period of sitting in the ashes, waiting while some silent spiritual growth takes place among us. May you all know God's blessing as we travel through Lent and celebrate the transforming joy of the resurrection at Easter.

Yours sincerely,

Alison I Swindells
Your Friend and Minister

P.S. If you have given up chocolate for Lent and are looking for a good cause to which to donate your savings, our Lenten appeal this year is to support the work of Roy and Jane Dodman – more details elsewhere!

Appeal to members to review giving to Church

Enclosed with this *Leaflet* is a copy of the *Management Report and Financial Commentary* for the congregation for 2007. I am pleased to report that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £32,707 and this sum has been transferred to the Centenary Project Fund. It is now realistic to anticipate that the deficit from the Centenary Project will finally be repaid during 2008.

So far, so good! However – if you look at the numbers in more detail you will see that whereas our income increased by £4,600 during the year, costs rose by almost £10,000. In addition to this we have taken on a further loan to fund the necessary work on the Manse. There are virtually no reserves (less than £28,000 set aside in the Fabric Fund) and no immediate prospect of adding to this.

We have a lovely set of new halls but we have spent very little on the fabric of the main church building, either internally or externally, for a decade. The Finance Committee is of the view that our reserves are inadequate in relation to the size and age of the buildings we are responsible for, and that inevitably some major expenditure will be required over the next few years.

A further consideration is the impact which the reduction in basic rate Income Tax will have on our Gift Aid claims from April 2008 onwards. When the tax rate is reduced to 20%, the amount which can be recovered under Gift Aid will fall from 28p to 25p in the £, a reduction of more than 10%. This equates

to a drop in income of around £4,600 a year for us, based on the 2007 figures.

In view of the above, I am asking you to review your giving to the Church and to **consider whether you could increase your contribution by 5% or 10% or by £10 a month.** Please bear in mind that if you are a tax payer (and that includes tax on dividends and pensions) then you will be better off as a result of the forthcoming tax cut. We last held a stewardship campaign in 2005 which resulted in additional annual commitments of some £35,000 – three years later I am appealing to your generosity again.

Many people give by Standing Order so I have enclosed a blank mandate should you wish to amend your existing details or to start giving in this way. Completed mandates should be returned to me in the enclosed reply paid envelope which can also be used for correspondence, forwarding cheques etc. All existing Gift Aid declarations continue to apply unless you inform me that you wish to cancel the declaration. If you wish to give a Gift Aid declaration for the first time, forms can be obtained from me or from the Church office.

I hope that you will respond generously.

Fiona Watt
Congregational Treasurer
 (fiona.watt@blueyonder.co.uk)

Princes Street Easter Play – 4th year

Christ in the Heart of the City at Easter

Held in the heart of our city, the Princes Street Easter Play will be accessible and free of charge to all who wish to come. In the tradition of Mystery Plays it will be an outdoor event on the move, with the play progressing through locations within West Princes Street Gardens.

Easter 2005 saw the first performance of the play, to an audience of over 3,000 people. In 2007 over 4,500 people came to be a part of this tremendous experience. This year Cutting Edge Productions will produce the play with the support of the Easter Play Trust. The project is supported by church leaders and by organisations across Edinburgh.

The play will take place in **West Princes Street Gardens on Saturday 22nd March 2008.** The performance will start promptly at 2.30pm just west of the Ross Theatre and finish approximately at 5pm. There will be no seating, apart from available provision for elderly or disabled

All of the play is performed outdoors and is not under cover. We suggest you wrap up warm and bring waterproofs in case it rains.

The action of the play

The play starts in the middle of the story of Jesus. He is 33 years old, and has been moving around Israel teaching, healing and performing miracles as he goes. Crowds of thousands of people follow him to listen and learn. His is a radical teaching – a sweeping away of the old laws and an introduction of a new way of thinking which angers the Establishment.

As the play progresses, we see the tension mount and plans unfold to destroy Jesus and his work. Always aware of his task on earth and the outcome, Jesus carries on teaching despite growing opposition.

We see him with his Disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus must choose life or death; see him before the Priests of the time, then before

Pilate and ultimately watch him face death but be triumphant over that final test.

Taken from the play website, at <http://www.easterplay.org>

David Shannon & Editors

CHRISTIAN AID – A date for your diary

**SPRING FAIR on Saturday 24th May 2008,
10am to 2.30pm**

in Braid Centre, Morningside Parish Church

**Usual Stalls etc. with the addition of a Good Quality
Toys and Games Stall**

More information in the April and May Leaflets

QII IN PERU

**NOT-SO-SILENT AUCTION
CENTENARY HALL**

SATURDAY 15 MARCH, 7PM – 10PM

**TICKETS: £2 (INCL. RAFFLE ENTRY &
GLASS OF WINE) ON SALE NOW**

MUSIC & REFRESHMENTS

ALL AGES WELCOME!



Lent Appeal 2008

During Lent appeal this year there will be an opportunity to support the work of Roy and Jane Dodman in Kingston, Jamaica. Donation envelopes, which include a Gift Aid declaration, will be in the Church pews from **Sunday 2nd March**. Cheques should be made payable to "Greenbank Church".

We hope to welcome Roy and Jane to Greenbank in the late Spring/early Summer of this year.

Alison Swindells

Help the Homeless



Fresh Start collection

Many thanks to the very generous contributions to Fresh Start in February. Starter packs are providing a valuable assistance to those who have previously been homeless, and are moving into fresh accommodation.


The next two collections will be on Sundays **16th March** and **13th April**. Donations of **Sheets** are particularly needed.

If you have any questions about donations to Fresh Start, please do see me in the Main Hall on one of the collection dates, or contact me (Tel 447 2634, evenings), and I will be happy to help. Alternatively, Fresh Start can be contacted directly during office hours (Tel 476 7741).

Alison Ambler

Food Box

March winds shall blow – the rest you know. So, PLEASE keep up the supply, this next four weeks can be among the bitterest of the winter, even though we are nearly half way to summer. Specially welcome are tinned meat and fish, as well as the pasta, etc.

A very special thanks to the kind knitter who provides a steady supply of really lovely warm 'beanies' – I deliver them  to The Sisters of Mercy at St. Catherine's and to the Cowgate Centre, alternately. Big John at St Catherine's says they are "just the job".

Thanks again,

Colin Stirling-Whyte

PS To the knitter of the beanies – please contact me so that I can thank you personally.

Book of the Month

Love Conquers Death

Meditations on the Garden, the Cross, and the Tree of Life
by John Arnold, published 2007, Zondervan, £8.99

At the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury to produce his official Lent Book for 2008, John Arnold, Dean Emeritus of Durham Cathedral, took addresses, meditations and sermons delivered over several decades and rewrote them to give us this book of just under 200 pages. Despite the author's claim that there is no one plot or single theme, in a foreword Rowan Williams describes the book as a powerful statement of Christian hope.

That is certainly where the book ends – on a note of hope. Turning to the very last chapter in the Bible, the vision of the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, Arnold reminds us that there is something to look forward to, both for the individual and for society, and he suggests that it will surpass our expectations, our imaginations and even our vocabulary.

The book begins in the Garden of Eden. It moves rapidly to a comparison of Adam and Eve with Jesus who occupies centre stage in the second chapter. This includes a thought-provoking section arguing that the crossing of boundaries and the breaking down of divisions were characteristic of the ministry of Jesus.

The five chapters reflect the author's early training in the Russian language and its rich literature. With the help of the writings of Boris Pasternak and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn he shows how human suffering can be transformed in the light of faith in Christ. Those who are familiar with these writers may find fresh insights; those who have not read them will be introduced gently to these giants of 20th century literature and their relevance for Christians.

The final section of the book includes an extended treatment of the "Words from the Tree", the Seven Last Words of Jesus. Again and again Arnold succeeds in taking his readers from the obvious to a deeper level of understanding, making the death of Jesus both easier to visualise and harder to bear. Particularly helpful are the reflections on the prayer "Father, forgive them..." and on the cry of dereliction, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

At the end of each chapter John Arnold poses questions, some searching, some challenging and all of them not so much demands for answers as the raising of issues.

Although compiled with Lent in mind, this book can be a book for any time, well worth reading through from start to finish but also a treasure trove of material for occasional reflection.

Peter Graham

District Visitors

The arrival of our new Minister provided an excellent reason for holding meetings of the District Visitors and District Elders. Three meetings were held, when various topics were raised as well as there being much discussion over refreshments at the end of each evening.

As usual there were several changes of personnel among the District Visitors during the past year 2007. We are very indebted to two of our longest serving Visitors, Anne Innes and Myra Johnston who both recently retired, having been Visitors since 1984. We thank Anne and Myra for their long and dedicated service. Taking over from them, we welcome Anne Watters to District 16 and Susan Beaumont to District 38.

Moira Small, the Visitor for District 56 and Margaret Forsyth, the Visitor for District 9, have both retired due to other commitments and we thank them for their ten years of service. We are very pleased to welcome Alan Ramage as the Visitor for District 56. Sue Black, who was the Visitor for District 27, kindly agreed to take over District 9, while we are obliged to Sharon Harrod for taking over Sue's District 27.

Thanks also go to Sandra Farrar, who moved away from District 41A. We now welcome Margo Gillon as the Visitor for that District.

We also wish to thank all the other Visitors for their continuing unstinting work over the years.

John Mowat



The Guild

The Guild met in the afternoon of 29th January when we had a very interesting talk about Conan Doyle. On 5th February we had a speaker from the Leprosy Mission as it is the Project we are supporting this year. 19th February sees Lady Marion Fraser talking about her time as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly, and on the **5th March** we are having our ABM followed by Simon Crutchley on *The Queen Mother's Memorial Garden*, a talk he had to cancel in October.

The World Day of Prayer Service takes place in Greenbank this year and is on **Friday 7th March at 10.30am**. The speaker will be Kathleen Forsyth – a former Guild National Convenor. Please come and join us and remember it is not only for women!

25th March sees the final evening of the session and is our fund raising event – see advert below. We are looking forward to welcoming *The Southern Light Seniors* and hope that many of you will come along to hear them. Lastly the Guild is taking the *First Service* on **Sunday 6th April at 9.30am**, a fitting end to our session. We would like to thank all who have supported us throughout the year and hope to see you at our Coffee Mornings over the summer months.



Ann Pirie

Scripture Union Holidays – calling parents!

Did you know...?

- Many of the children who go on Scripture Union Holidays for the first time already have a church connection.
- Many children from church backgrounds find their time on an SU Holiday – with its teaching and contact with other young people – to be an important factor in their growth and development, and a help in getting to know more about Christianity.

SU is an interdenominational Christian organisation with many years of experience in providing holidays for young people from Primary 5 through to Secondary 6. In addition, there are all-age and family holidays. The aims of SU holidays are to give an excellent holiday, and to present the Gospel in a relevant and interesting way.

The holidays offer a wide range of activities, and time to explore the Christian faith – through drama, music and discussion. Leaders are experienced, and the teams are carefully chosen and subjected to the statutory checks. Training and support are provided from SU HQ.

If you would like more information, the Scripture Union brochure for 2008 is available from me or from SU Scotland (Tel 0141 332 1162; web <http://www.suholidays.org.uk>)

Alison Ambler

Letter from Roy & Jane

We have received a letter from Roy and Jane Dodman dated January 2008. A copy has been posted on the hall corridor noticeboard.

The letter's theme is a government vision to make *Jamaica the place of choice to raise families, live, work and do business* by 2030; the educational work in which Roy and Jane are both involved contributes to this vision.

However, the reality of life in Jamaica is that in 2007 there were over 1,500 murders, a country with a population of fewer than 3 million people. It is generally accepted that these appalling statistics can only be addressed through improvement of educational and social programmes in the affected communities. The church remains a focal point in many communities.

Roy & Jane will be on furlough, based in Edinburgh, from mid-April to mid-July. They will be celebrating 25 years in Jamaica on 24th February, and add these words: "We appreciate the care, concern and support that we



have received from you during these years. Our retirement is only a few years away, but we look forward with hope and confidence, and with your continuing support, to continuing our important work with the United Church and the IUC."

Editors

Communion Services in March and April

Members of the congregation should note that, because Easter is so early this year, the Communion Services due to be held on Sunday 16th March have been postponed until **Sunday 27th April** when they will be at the usual times of 9am, 10.30am and 3pm, with the usual pre-Communion service at **7.30pm on Friday 25th April**.

As is our normal custom, there will be a short Communion service held at **9.30am on Easter Sunday, 23rd March**.

David T Reid, Session Clerk

Bookstall

There will be a **Bookstall** in the Main Hall after the 10.30am service on **Sunday 30th March**. The *Book of the Month*, reviewed on the previous page of this *Leaflet*, will be available.

We will also have copies of *Greenbank United Free Church, An Illustrated Memento, November 1927*, the history of the early congregation at Greenbank and the opening of the 'new' church, and *Gift of Hope*, a selection of poems written by Gillie Davidson MBE, founder of Scottish Love in Action.

Next Bookstall: **20th April**.

John & Joan Ritchie

Work Party

The Work Party Coffee Morning will be held on **Thursday, 6th March at 10.30am** in the Main Hall. There will be a *Bring and Buy Stall*. All are very welcome.



Doris Laing

**GREENBANK
CHURCH GUILD
PRESENTS
THE SOUTHERN
LIGHT SENIORS
ON TUESDAY 25TH MARCH
AT 7.30PM IN THE MAIN
HALL. TICKETS £8
AVAILABLE FROM THE
CHURCH OR TEL 447 6001
WINE AND SAVOURIES
IN AID OF THE LEPROSY
MISSION**



Congregational Register

Omitted from the on-line version of the *Leaflet*

World Mission

Fair Trade Fair

We are again holding a *Fair Trade Fair*, on **Saturday 8th March from 10am to 12 Noon**. Why not come and visit us, have a *free* Fairtrade coffee and view the varied products available? There will be references to Peru...

Fairtrade progress appears to be being made as the number of Fairtrade items sold in supermarkets is gradually increasing.

Some shops have tills specially for people bringing their own bags, rather than using new polythene bags each time they shop. (Unfortunately the tills are not always busy.) Bring your bags to our Fairtrade Fair, or buy a new permanent bag. In this small way we can help the environment.

One World Stall

Our next One World Stall is on **6th April** in the Main Hall after the 10.30am service.

Kay Ellis

St Columba's Hospice Shops Ltd

Please give your time – volunteer in one of our shops at Morningside, Leith, West End, Stockbridge
Sorting, Pricing, Stocking Shop, Assisting Customers
For more information please contact Gail MacGregor
(Tel 555 0625, Email gailmacgregor@btconnect.com).
Registered Office: 352 Leith Walk, EH6 5BR
Web: www.stcolumbushospiceshops.org.uk

4th Morningside Scout Group

Annual Jumble Sale, Saturday 5th April, 2008

Once again Jumble Sale time is approaching. As you know, the success of this event depends greatly on the large number of ex-scouts, parents and friends who rally round every year! Should you feel able to assist again this year, we would be very grateful if you would contact our co-ordinator: Colin McCulloch, 27 Greenbank Crescent.

David Easton, Group Scout Leader

Please deliver material for the April *Leaflet* to the Editors' pigeon hole by 10.30am on Sunday 16th March, or to 17 Jordan Lane, EH10 4RA or by email to alison.murison@googlemail.com or j.murison@ed.ac.uk by 6pm on Tuesday 18th March.

Duty Teams

- 2 Mar (First Sunday)** Roger Bland, Richard Dunbar, Clifford Hastings, Chris Horne, Doris Laing, Enid Mowat, Keith Winton, Eileen Campbell and Robert Nimmo.
- 9 Mar** John Rutherford, David Allan, Richard Denison, Kenneth Htet-Khin, Caroline Kehoe, Anne Kinnear, John Mowat, Jean Roynon-Jones and Colin Winchester.
- 16 Mar** John Ritchie, Eric Brown, Stewart Coghill, Ralph Davidson, John Htet-Khin, Susan Inch, Gill Sweetman and Ian Thomson.
- 23 Mar (+ 9.30 Communion)** Tom Walker, Stewart Hunter, Frank Hutson, Alison Murison, Valerie Macniven, Paul Maxwell, Bill Frazer, Fiona Grant and Leslie Stokoe.
- 30 Mar** John George, Kenneth Aitken, Alistair Hunter, Hazel Macaulay, Kathleen Patrick, Jill Powlett-Brown, Dorothy Whitehead and Tony Foster.
- 6 Apr (First Sunday)** Alan Armit, Edith Armit, Patrick Cadell, Iain Davidson, David Ferguson, Michael Pearson, Neil Ross, Malcolm Watters and Elizabeth Mackay.

Coffee Rota

March

- 2nd No coffee – (Spectrum 3 Lunch)
9th No coffee – (Annual Business Meeting)
16th D59B – Alasdair Swan
23rd D61A – Clifford Hastings
30th D67 & D68 – John Mowat & Louse Coghill

April

- 6th Prayer Link



Crèche Rota

Supervisor

March

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 2nd Frances Wallace | Catherine Webb |
| 9th Cathie Maclennan | Fiona Trew |
| 16th Sandra Farrer | Christine Wallace |
| 23rd (9.30am) Liz Foster | |
| Janet Walker | Flora Pollock |
| 30th Shona Murray | Catherine Webb |

April

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 6th Pamela Neilson | Fiona Trew |
|--------------------|------------|



Helper

Church Flowers

Provided by

March

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 2nd Gina Millar | Alison Berrill |
| 9th Liz Gordon | Irene Rutherford |
| 16th Anne Mason | Alison Murison |
| 23rd Alice Schaupp | Caroline Kehoe |
| 30th Jean Denison | Margery Goodban |

April

- | | |
|-----|-----------------|
| 6th | Elizabeth Smith |
|-----|-----------------|



Delivered by

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to die...

Forty years ago, on 4 April 1968, Martin Luther King, the leader of the American Civil Rights movement, was shot dead in Memphis, Tennessee. King had gone to Memphis to support garbage workers in a protest against low wages and intolerable working conditions. As he stood on his hotel balcony, his thoughts were probably more about the industrial dispute than about his impending death. It was then that the fatal shot was fired. As news of his assassination spread around the world it was greeted with surprise, shock and horror. But in some respects his death was not really surprising. King had lived with the possibility of such a death for a long time. His white enemies claimed that the vast crowds he drew together were beyond his control. No matter how loudly he proclaimed his own adherence to non-violence, he was creating the conditions from which violence must erupt. And his militant black critics regarded his advocacy of change through non-violence and civil disobedience ineffective, incapable of delivering social and economic freedom. For Martin Luther King there was a time to die.

For Martin Luther King, there was always a risk of assassination. He was by no mean unique: many prominent and outspoken critics of the dominant culture, of the government of the day, whose teaching and example upset those in power, have been victims, potential or actual, of their enemies. King had accepted that it was highly likely that he would meet a violent end, although its time, place and manner were unknown. In one sense, the shot that rang out that Spring evening in Memphis was sudden and unforeseen; in another it had long been anticipated.

On the eve of his death King had told a crowd about threats on his life. Even the plane on which he had flown from Atlanta had been searched because of a rumour about a bomb being on board. Then he said, "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will..." King knew that some of his staff were still hesitant about their commitment to non-violence. The next day he spoke to them about his hero and role-model, Gandhi, the Indian whose philosophy of non-violent resistance had been so influential on King's thinking and action. Ironically, Gandhi had himself been killed by a Hindu fanatic who resented his tolerance of all religions and races. And he spoke too about Jesus and the meaning of his suffering.

What happened to Martin Luther King may shed light on our understanding of what was going on in the life of Jesus as he made his way to Jerusalem for what was to be the last week of his life. Throughout his life he had dedicated himself to the doing of God's will and there could now be no turning back. He was well aware that he might be killed; there

had been threats to his life even in Galilee. For Jesus there was a time to die, to be killed.

Jesus has been depicted as one who went to Jerusalem knowing in detail what would happen to him there. For Jesus his death was clearly foreseen and accepted as part of the work he had come to do. He saw himself and his life's work in terms of the suffering servant described many centuries earlier, the one "despised and rejected by others, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... wounded for our transgressions... crushed for our iniquities". According to the traditional view Jesus knew what lay ahead of him and was able to give specific predictions, not only about his sufferings and death but also about his resurrection.

This view raises some problems. What kind of human being foresees in detail his future? If Jesus did foresee his sufferings and death and – more importantly – his resurrection, would this not separate him from the rest of humanity? Would the ability to predict the future in detail not turn Jesus into a supernatural figure rather than a wholly and totally human being? Such a Jesus is surely too superhuman to have much significance for ordinary mortals.

How did Jesus himself understand the outcome of his work?

Was he so naïve that he was taken completely by surprise by what happened to him? Did he arrive in Jerusalem imagining that his protest movement would overthrow the rulers of the day? Did Jesus really believe that his revolutionary teaching would find widespread acceptance? Was it likely that he would survive for very long if he insisted on telling people what life would be like on earth if God were king and the kings and emperors of this world were not? We can never know what was in the mind of



Jesus as he went up to Jerusalem for what turned out to be his final visit. Perhaps he had hopes of making some impression there; perhaps even in the last few days he had the all-too-human hope of divine intervention; perhaps to the end he hoped for a reprieve. But no matter how strong his hope Jesus must have been fully aware of the dangers in going to Jerusalem – just as Martin Luther King was aware of the risks in going to Memphis forty years ago. Jesus courageously kept doing what he was doing even though he knew it could have fatal consequences.

For Jesus there must have been swings backwards and forwards from hope to uncertainty. Although with hindsight the early Church was able to see God at work in what Jesus did and in what happened to him, at the time it was far from obvious, not least for Jesus. This is the recognisably human Jesus. This is the Jesus on whom we can rely, this Jesus for whom the future was as much a mystery, a dread and a hope as it is for us. This is the Jesus, open to God and committed to humanity, whom we can follow through life and into death, when it is our time to die. For the cross of Jesus is not just an event in time but the Christian symbol par excellence, serving as the focal point of Christian worship, Christian believing and Christian living.