

EDITORIAL

There are three liturgies in this issue of 'The Record'. The first is 'A Same Sex Marriage Liturgy' to accompany recent legislation which makes it possible for ministers and deacons to solemnize same sex unions. The liturgy provides a useful template as well as giving confidence to those called to minister to same sex couples in this way.

Reviewing the signs of the times - the decline in vocations to the ministry and the renewal of worship generated by members of the congregation, there is an example of an Agape which could be led by ministers and lay people alike. The liturgy is imbued with silence and an attractive simplicity.

Looking towards our Study Day on Pilgrimage, there is a short liturgy connecting some holy sites in a very small rural village. Mapping out the Holy Land onto our own parish can be readily achieved and encourages us to give our common heritage another look. It stimulates the imagination and nourishes the inner life.

Things are clearly happening in the Kirk. Four of our major articles are the fruit of practical exploration and training. There are two articles on the use of technology in our worship. These were born out of our Study Day in February. There is a third article on training elders to conduct funerals. And a fourth exploring the Psalms at a day event in St. Andrews.

Funerals appear twice. As well as a timely initiative to train elders to take funerals, there is a review of Professor Ian Bradley's book, 'The Coffin Roads'. In addition, there is a review of all the agapes which Douglas Galbraith has produced for a Kirk revitalized by exploring old patterns in a contemporary context.

One of our members has been working with the World Council of Churches and shares his experience with us whilst there is also an exploration into the possibilities which art provides in enriching our worship not least in these days when so much visual material is readily available.

In this issue you will find a minister who has conducted more than 7,000 funerals, a musician incorporating the teaching of the Psalms into a University course on Scottish music and a member of the Kirk who sent his minister a lovely hamper because he looked so ghastly and obviously needed cheering up!

There is an Errata for last year's issue of 'The Record'. It comes with the editor's apologies to Robert Mackenzie and the late Ian Fraser. Ian's authorship of Hymn 238 was omitted from an article about how music makes worship. The words resonate in our contemporary context and are worth taking to heart:

*Creation groans, travails,
futile its present plight,
bound – till the hour it hails
God's children born of light:
that we may gain our true estate,
come, Lord, new heavens and earth create.*