



Please keep in your prayers. Dorothy Anderson and family, Marjory Bain, Janette Wallace, Pat Souter, Rona Cameron, Edith Mathers, Fred Stewart, Sibby and Sylvia Peebles, Johnny Campbell, Derek and Jean Murray.

SEPTEMBER 2021

**Do you need to contact a deacon? Need help:
just want to chat:**



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Dear Members and Friends

I hope this finds you all well. It's been a good summer. The workmen started the roof of the Hall in July. They have had a lot of work as the lead had to be replaced. They have tried to save all the slates that has been taken off. We have a few spare ones that they can use. Hopefully it will stay dry until they get it done. We are all hoping we will be back having coffee after Church. It's been a long wait.

A Daily Reading by Angus Buchan

If I could take you to my pasture I would show you my horse. He is out there eating grass. Nothing concerns him. He knows that tomorrow morning he will wake up and there will be more grass for him to eat. He knows that I will look after him because I love him. Now I want to tell you that God loves you a lot more than I love my horse. So, why would the Lord neglect you? Why would he forget you? Jeremiah understood this. There is no reason for God to turn His back on you. What we need to do is put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to start to look to Him and then all of a sudden the sun will begin to shine. Every Wednesday morning I pray with two dear friends. The other day we were saying to each other that if we didn't have God, if we didn't have the Lord Jesus Christ to look up to, we would be in a sorry state. If all that we had to hope for was the end of the week and the next rugby game, or soccer match, wouldn't life be ever so boring? But you know something? Our hope is in God. We are looking forward to "home time". You and I are sojourners in a foreign land, my friends. This is not our home. We are not staying here - we are passing through. It is time that we start to count our blessings. Here is a verse and the chorus from an old hymn: *So, amid the conflict whether great or small, Do not be disheartened, God is over all; Count your many blessings, angels will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journeys end. Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your blessings; see what God hath done! Count your blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.* "For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." Do not worry! **E Macdonald**

KNITTING GROUP



Another batch ready to send off. These items are being sent to a maternity hospital in Gambia.

Dear God,

As we enter this next phase of 'Freedom' with fewer restrictions, may we realise that we were always 'free'; free to love, free to care, free to give joy. With the lessons learned from this past year, may we be unleashed to love as you do by being of service to our fellow brothers and sisters with renewed energy and commitment. For in this way, we not only exercise our freedom, but also our faith.

Amen

mandatory, at least in Britain, but almost all mothers do have such a scan) that most parents wait to tell others about the baby until after the scan, and it's also widely assumed that a child with abnormalities (whatever they might be) will be aborted. Sarah is firm in her view that such parents are not to be judged for choosing this path, although it was not what she and Paul chose. But there are some communities in other parts of the world in which the scan is used as a means of terminating a pregnancy, simply because the child is female.

Before Cerian, Sarah assumed that she 'had it all' - a happy marriage, with two young daughters, and success in her career, teaching as an historian at the University of Oxford. Quoting from the back cover: 'it would take someone with none of these things to teach her what matters in life'.

The story of Cerian's short life touched many people, including those who had experienced miscarriages or stillbirth, and those whose children died very young, others who couldn't conceive, and even one couple who had been given a diagnosis of severe abnormality at the twenty-week scan; they saw a copy of Cerian's story in a doctor's waiting room; so they 'decided, come what may, to carry their son to term, only to discover at birth that he was as healthy and robust as could be'.

Finally, some words from Sarah herself: 'The quiet beauty of Cerian's life goes on challenging me: *What does it really mean to be human?* Cerian didn't have any choices, and yet she was perfectly human. The overriding memory of my time with her, the one I will carry with me for the rest of my life, was the glimpse I had, during the moments of her death, of the love and glory of God... God the creator came in in his love to take a vulnerable human being home to be with him. That encounter changed my life. Quite simply, it showed me that there is another way to be in the world... Our need of one another can teach us what it means to belong. Our suffering can enable us to recognize joy. Loss and grief, imperfection and brokenness can help us accept that we are each perfectly human - nothing more and nothing less'.

Revd Wendy Knott

Family News



Mary Logie's granddaughter, Rose, now 11 months old. See how she has grown since her photo in our December issue. Mary's other granddaughter, Isobel, has finished her first year at university in Kent studying the History of Art. She hopes to continue her second year of the course in Kent.

Do you have family news you would like to share?



I would like to thank everyone for the cards, flowers, good wishes and prayers. Thank you all.

Edith Mathers

Nine months with Cerian by Sarah C. Williams. Plough Publishing, 2018
An earlier version of this book, noted on the title-page verso, was called:
The Shaming of the Strong: the Challenge of an Unborn Life.

A beautiful and moving book, about Sarah Williams' experience of pregnancy with a baby that had developed a fatal condition, called thanatophoric dysplasia, a form of severe dwarfism, in which the baby's bones are so fragile that they're crushed during the process of being born (some babies, born by section, survive birth, although their life expectancy is limited). Also, because the developing baby can't swallow properly, his/her mother retains abnormal amounts of fluid, causing not only extreme discomfort, as Sarah describes graphically, but also posing a danger to her own health.

Sarah's book describes the long wait of five years that she and her husband Paul had for a new baby to add to their family of two daughters, Hannah and Emilia, and their delight when she discovered that she was at last pregnant. They named her Cerian (with a hard 'c' as in 'cup'): a Welsh name that means 'beloved'. Almost at once there were problems: Sarah had severe morning sickness, which, so she was assured by friends, meant that her baby would be healthy, but the vomiting became so constant that she had to be put in hospital (the same awful condition that affected Kate Middleton). To her delight, her close friend Janet became pregnant at almost the same time; when she was told about Cerian's fatal condition, Janet's response was to face the news in all its uncertainty and pain: 'We can either walk through this together or we can walk through it separately. We can either choose to share the pain together or we can choose not to. We can choose to love one another's babies or we can choose not to'. Her love and friendship were a huge comfort during the dark times ahead. After the initial shock of the diagnosis at the twenty-week scan, Sarah and Paul wavered briefly about what they should do, but Sarah had an experience of hearing God asking her, 'Here is a sick and dying child. Will you love this child for me?' and Paul had a dream of a little girl running through the meadows. They spoke to other parents who'd experienced the death of a newborn, which gave them comfort for the times to come.

Others were shocked that Sarah and Paul decided against termination; some were angry and hostile, accusing them of being selfish and irresponsible; and some went into denial, telling Sarah that she must pray for healing. The medical staff at the hospital were uncomprehending and unhelpful.

One thing that shocked Sarah and Paul was the discovery that an unborn child has no legal rights, and the parents of a severely disabled child who has survived birth have no say in the treatment the child receives either. Sarah calls it 'systemic injustice' and I too was shocked to learn this. Another shocking thing was learning that Paul was excluded from the decisions about his baby. Sarah describes her anger about receiving an appointment note addressed just to Ms Williams and not also to her husband. The hospital explained that this was policy, to avoid upsetting single mothers, to which Sarah replied that first, she was Mrs Williams, and, secondly, she was upset that her husband was excluded, and suggested that the hospital should look at its policy, as it discriminated against married women and their husbands.

At thirty-five weeks Sarah collapsed. The pressure of the fluid from the baby was pressing so severely on her aorta that her blood pressure was plummeting and she was at grave risk of dying herself. She was rushed to hospital where the medical staff managed to stabilize her enough to be able to induce labour. During the long and difficult labour, on an impulse Sarah asked to hear Cerian's heartbeat: it was becoming faint and she knew that Cerian was dying, and would be spared the horror of being crushed during birth. Then she became very aware of God's presence, and had the same vision that she had had at a church camp some weeks earlier, of a rider at full gallop on a great black stallion: 'I saw the rider as Jesus coming toward me with incredible urgency. I could see it in my mind as clearly as the yellow flowers beside me. He was coming for Cerian... The rider was both warrior and lover, frantic for his loved one; coming to rescue her. I knew without doubt there was something in Cerian that ran with similar spirit to meet him'

One of the serious issues on which Sarah reflects in the book is that the twenty-week scan has become so widely used now (although it's not