

Spring Tron Times

Newsletter | The Tron Church Glasgow | Spring 2013

It has been such a blessing to have Andy and Annie Gemmill join us at Cornhill and our ministry at the Tron. So many of you commented how greatly helped you were by Andy's words to us at our Congregational Meeting in late November, I thought that it was well worth asking him to summarise what he said for the Spring edition of Tron Times, both for those who did not hear him, and indeed for those who did. I warmly commend the penetrating insights and wise words of both warning and encouragement for us as a fellowship at this time. WJUP



Observations from a newcomer

Dear Friends

Back in November I gave a few personal reflections on recent events at The Tron from the perspective of a newcomer. There are so many things that merit mention, but from the long list of possibilities here are four things that have struck me with particular force during the last year since Annie and I moved up to Glasgow.

1. The Tron is a tremendously encouraging congregation to belong to!

No doubt we could all think of aspects of congregational life that are not ideal, not quite as we would like them to be. This is always so in any normal church family. I am also sure that there is anger at the unfairness of losing the Buchanan Street building. I have only been here eighteen months and I feel the loss; goodness knows how one feels if one has been here twenty years (far less sixty!). So, yes there are negatives but, brothers and sisters, the positive things about this congregation more than outweigh all of these. In difficult times it is easy to take one's eye off the good things, so let me remind you of a few of the very best things, things that a newcomer can't help but notice about you.

Your courage has been remarkable. One of the first things that happens when churches lose their edge is that they become risk-averse, more concerned about institutional survival than gospel advance. This

congregation has not been like that. Concern for gospel advance has remained at the very heart of your life together and it is wonderfully encouraging to see. Consider the people who have been baptised and added to the membership in the last few months. This is no accident. It has happened because, under God, you are a congregation that loves to see the gospel grow.

Your unity has been inspiring. It is so easy for Christians under pressure to lose heart and become divided, but as a newcomer I have seen day by day, week after week, your patient, faithful, loving trust that the Lord will work all of this out. You have stuck together and loved one another and it has been wonderful to witness.

The diligence of your leaders has been exemplary. Situations such as these are very draining for church leaders. However you have an Eldership and a Pastor who have kept doing the right things and saying the right things and working hard in the face of great disappointment. I have never come across better, more thoughtful communication between leaders and congregation, between church and wider community, than I have seen here. It is so common for Pastors, leadership teams and congregations not to respond as you have and it has been refreshing to see something unusual going on.

The building loss is a great disappointment, but church is about people, not stones, and buildings can constrain gospel vision as well as being useful for gospel advance.

2. Churches will never be truly evangelical without enduring conflict!

Recently I was asked to speak to a gathering of evangelical ministers on the following question: “Why is it that though there have been many evangelical ministers in Scottish churches there have been so few congregations that have become thoroughly evangelical?”

Of course there is no guarantee that good ministry will lead to every church becoming solidly evangelical in practice, but there is nothing unusual or unexpected about the kind of work that must be done in order for this to be possible. The gospel worker needs to teach the word of God, to do the word of God, and to expect conflict; conflict from within the congregation as the word of God is resisted, and conflict from without the congregation as the word of God is resisted. But it seems many today have not been taught to expect conflict as a normal part of word ministry. Such conflict—contending for the faith, within the congregation, with denominations and with other people who call themselves evangelical—is a necessary part of Christian ministry, as the NT shows plainly. But some evangelicals seem to think that merely being present in number within their denomination will change things for the better. So when conflict comes they are not ready for it, nor prepared for the inevitable losses that will accompany it.

The Tron’s stance opened the door to severe difficulties: rejection by some Christian friends, potential loss of home and livelihood, loss of church building, even legal threats. When the stakes are very high, and the implications so threatening at a personal level, we ought not to be surprised that it’s much more comfortable for people to believe that such conflict should be avoided, and that a church in conflict has behaved wrongly, rather than risk facing similar loss themselves. In short, though difficulties of this sort often arise in ministry, contemporary evangelical culture seems to be specially conflict-averse, and this is one of the reasons the behaviour of some who should have been supportive has been disappointing. But solid gospel churches cannot be built without conflict, and cost.

3. The future may be difficult!

Now that the decision has been made, the building left and some of the hostility has died down, there is likely to be a sense of relief within the fellowship. However there may be some unanticipated difficulties.

There is something energising about conflict. Having a hostile enemy to deal with promotes a sense of unity. It is also exciting to look forward to a big day. But life beyond the big day is often hard to imagine. What will life be like beyond the C of S and will unity be preserved now that the pressure is off? Almost certainly there will be real positives about being free from hostility, and genuine excitement about new possibilities ahead. However there may also be a sense of anticlimax, and lots of hard work and discomfort to come. It is

possible that discouragement and dissatisfaction may begin to creep into congregational life if care is not taken.

So take care!

Take care that your leaders don’t run into difficulty. The conflict they have been engaged in has been very draining and people who shoulder heavy burdens at times of difficulty can find that they pay a price for this when things get easier. Take care relationships with one another don’t run into difficulty. In Philippians Paul exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to agree with one another in the Lord. It’s salutary that these two experienced gospel workers seem to have fallen out with one another over some matter. We are not told what it is, but we do know that the Philippian church faced other stresses and difficulties, so it is possible that the Euodia-Syntyche dispute has been provoked by these in some way. Note that Paul encourages others to help these women through their difficulty. So don’t take your unity for granted, don’t take your leaders for granted and don’t think the evil one will be any less at work today than he was during the hard days leading up to your disassociation from the Church of Scotland. The thing that he most desires is to make you fall out with one another, to become angry with one another. Don’t think that you have ceased to be at battle stations and don’t stop praying in the way you prayed all the time that things were hard. The battle is still on!

4. All of this is normal!

Of course the recent difficulties feel abnormal to us. But in reality, things like this have happened all throughout Christian history and continue to happen all over the world today. For a minister to be threatened with loss of house and livelihood is a perfectly normal thing elsewhere. For a congregation to face the loss of its building is nothing unusual. In these recent difficulties you have simply been experiencing a little of the corporate cost that all those who belong to and follow the Lord Jesus Christ always experience in one way or another. That all this has happened to you does not mean that you have done things wrong or that you are being any less than godly; quite the reverse, you are genuinely aligned with the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide today.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that belonging to this congregation has been more than encouraging—it has been restoring. In setting up home in Glasgow and at the Tron Annie and I have come into contact not only with outstandingly thoughtful and penetrating preaching, but also with a congregation whose message and corporate life has been marvellously influential for good in our own lives. It is a huge privilege for us to be able to belong to you and we are so grateful to the Lord for his kindness in bringing us here.

Andy Gemmill

December 2012 was a momentous time for us as a congregation when we moved, lock stock and barrel, from our former home in Buchanan Street to our new home in Bath Street. We are so grateful to God and to the Cornhill Scotland Trustees that the halls we once owned but are now the property of Cornhill have been made so wonderfully available to us. Church staff and apprentices alike plus a host of volunteers worked hard to ease the move and make things as comfortable and normal as possible. Services conducted upstairs in the Grand Hall are beamed to the two smaller halls on the ground floor and several strong men are always on hand at the front door to assist with access. It has been good to welcome a number of new people since we moved while at the same time being careful not to overlook the absence, perhaps through illness, of some regulars.

We warmly congratulate three of our church families who have welcomed an addition to their family: **Orkurga Nathan** to **Doosur and Mariam Malu**, **Abigail** to **David and Julie Rowbory**, and to **Rupert and Jen Hunt-Taylor** on the birth of their daughter **Evelyn Lydia**. Another joyful welcome was the long-awaited arrival of the **Sandoghchi** family. **Saied's** wife, **Samoye (Sami)** and daughter **Sepidah (Sepi)** arrived in Glasgow at the end of January after more than four years apart. Sadly they could not bring with them all the sunshine they were used to so acclimatising to Glasgow weather will just be one of many traumatic changes

for them. We are mindful of our brother **Stephen Kirya** who patiently waits a response from the Home Office to the coming of his wife and family and of several others who are in a similar position. We thank God for the many internationals who are part of our fellowship and for the large number who meet on Mondays and Thursdays in the English classes and Bible studies. Many nationalities are represented among both students and leaders — Thai, Chinese, Iranian, Spanish and more.

The Tron at Two alternative services now held twice monthly on Sunday afternoons and run by **Terry McCutcheon** have been encouraging with more coming regularly and some coming to other services as well. The Disciple course, run by **Paul Brennan** on Tuesday evenings has been well attended and Christianity Explored is also running headed up by **Duncan Porter**. Release the Word plus the Internationals on Thursday evenings continue to fill every available space and stretch the catering teams to the limit, but **Rupert Hunt-Taylor** and **Katie Piggot (RTW)** and **John Taylor** (internationals) along with a host of other leaders and trainees are grateful to God for what they are seeing in growth in grace and understanding of the word in the lives of many.

David and Julie Rowbory are adjusting to life in their Glasgow flat with three little girls. As time permits David keeps in touch with the work of translation with which he was involved in Nigeria

while at the same time providing invaluable technical help with sound and vision systems in our new church situation.

Several of our fellowship have been unwell or in hospital and we lovingly remember them: **Catherine Kirkwood** had a nasty fall outside the church and is making a slow recovery from a broken ankle; **Jan Watt** has been in hospital but is back home and been able to be out at church; **Alec White** has had surgery and is grateful to God that no further treatment is required; **Betty Beech** is still unable to get out much; **Jean Lennie** is quite unwell; **Nan Bailey** is settling in her new home and has occasionally managed out to church or the Ladies Fellowship; for various reasons **Sophie Lowe** and **Jessie Bellingham** are having to move from their present care home to an alternative residence with all that that upheaval means.

Our church family dinner a few weeks ago was a most enjoyable evening. **Joe Campbell** and his friend were the excellent chefs who produced a delicious meal for about two hundred of us. It was such a good opportunity to meet up with new folk and to meet again some we had scarcely seen since the move. Between courses **Willie** and **Richard** filled us in with plans being made for the way ahead including a Mission Week in the lead up to Easter. Several new members were interviewed and the evening ended with Terry and Katie conducting a bit of talent-spotting and an extremely light-hearted quiz.

Family Album



Doosur and Mariam Malu with Nathan



Saied with his wife Sami and daughter Sepi



David & Julie Rowbory with Rebekah, Elizabeth and new baby Abigail

At home for mission

One of the most powerful tools for reaching our city is the dining table sitting in your house.

Hospitality (n):
i. when people are friendly and welcoming to guests and visitors

ii. the food and drink, etc. that an organisation provides to keep its guests happy.

“In Luke’s gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal or coming from a meal.

He was called a “glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners”. That is why eating and drinking are so important in the mission of Jesus: they were a sign of his friendship with tax collectors and sinners.”

Adapted from Tim Chester’s ‘A Meal With Jesus- Discovering grace, community and mission around the table.’

“Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” Hebrews 13:1-2

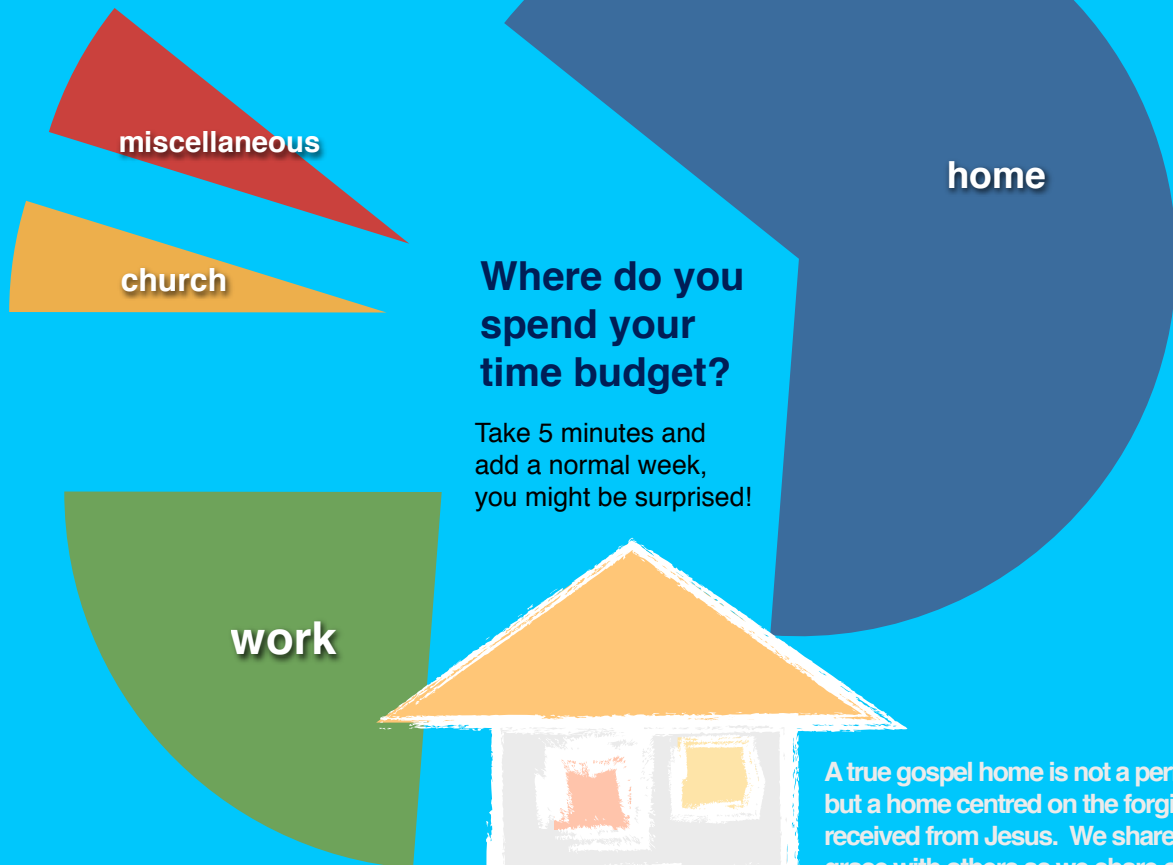
Hebrews includes hospitality as a cardinal element of real brotherly love.

In 1 Tim and Titus it is a requirement for leaders. To not have an open home denies the gospel its outward sign of an inward condition of thanksgiving.

Hospitality, may takes effort but it is to be enjoyed. Many of us go to empty homes which can be very lonely particularly older folks but also students and young workers who have moved to a new city on their own. How much better is it to share?

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” Acts 20:35

Each week God gives us 168 hours to rest, work and praise.



Where do you spend your time budget?

Take 5 minutes and add a normal week, you might be surprised!



A true gospel home is not a perfect home but a home centred on the forgiveness received from Jesus. We share this grace with others as we share our lives, our meals and our time. A gospel home can give those with broken lives a place of refuge and be a model of how to live.

can't cook? won't cook?

Do you worry what people think of your cooking skills? Or do you dread the thought of eating something someone else has made? Both are caused by pride. Use thanksgiving and grace to evict pride.

Our old friend Dick Lucas regularly gives thanks for his cook – Miss Spencer. Instant hospitality on/off the shelf from Ms Spencer, Ms Waitrose, Lidl, Tesco etc etc...

Invest in a slow cooker. Wham, bam, thank you ham! Chilli, and curry in an instant*.

Im-Bru roast ham

- 1 ham
- 1 bottle im-bru
- 1 slow cooker
- *8 hours on 'low'
- Roast for 30 mins brushed with honey and mustard

Serve with lots of veggies.

Feeds 6-8

a pick & mix sunday lunch

Choose three or more off the list for joyful dining.

- children (+parents)
- students
- young workers
- unemployed
- old workers
- retirees
- grandparents
- internationals

Other Ministries

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

Phil and Emma Copeland are gradually adjusting to English life in the Home Counties! Phil teaches the bible to the young people in their town-centre church in Harpenden and they are both involved in loads of activities with them. We still miss them but catch occasional glimpses when they return for the Pastors' Training Course.

News from **Oli Ward** now in Stirling working alongside **Calum Jack** in North Parish Church is encouraging. He is enjoying all the huge variety of work of a community church... but still has time to fit in the odd marathon! Susan and the children have settled well.

Life in Robroyston where **Jonathan Keefe** ministers is nothing if not varied! Creative café, breakfasts, curry night, fit for life, the 'Reason for God' course all feature this term but the joy of seeing people grow in their faith and new people coming provides much encouragement.

Alex Bedford whose inventiveness in his open-air ministry knows no bounds was deeply shocked when some weeks ago a younger gifted colleague, Tam, collapsed and died at home after a spell of jogging. Tam had applied to do Cornhill this year. Alex has ongoing Sunday preaching

engagements and a Christianity Explored course which is just finishing but the longer term for Alex and the family is still unclear.

A new venture of a junior choir under the auspices of New Scottish Arts and run by **Matthew Todd** got off to a good start at **Murdo Maclean's** church in Mount Vernon. Murdo has been encouraged by attendances at the joint evening services with Sandyhills, Carmyle and Mt Vernon and also with his prison chaplaincy work.

It takes time to build up a new church but **James Torrens** reports from Inverness that they are seeing relationships gradually strengthening and new contacts made.

They long that new people who are showing interest will respond positively to the gospel. James and Jane and the children are settling well and James is now chaplain of the children's Gaelic primary school.

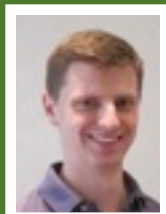
Though still in its infancy Trinity Church Aberdeen continues to make progress and has now appointed a Church Council (Diaconate). They have good numbers of children and young people and an excellent team of teachers and leaders but would now love to exchange their current hotel meeting-place, which has served

them well, for a new appropriate building. **Peter Dickson**, their minister is recovering slowly and meanwhile **David Gibson** his associate, is holding the fort.

We congratulate **Euan and Helen Dodds** on the arrival of **Anna's** baby sister, **Caitlin**. Their first year in Edinburgh at Holyrood Church has been encouraging though Euan finds that most people in the area show little interest in the gospel. He says he sometimes feels like the shepherd who went in search of the one sheep! A recent week of mission, however, brought church family together and made some good local contacts.

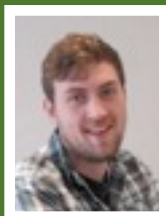


Euan and Helen Dodds with Anna and Caitlin



Paul Brennan studied law in Nottingham and then worked in the public sector until September 2012 when he joined our apprenticeship scheme. Paul is married to Stephanie.

James Latter studied natural sciences at Cambridge and then worked with Teen Challenge for a year. He joined our apprenticeship scheme in September 2012.



Josh Johnston is from Northern Ireland and studied theology at the International Christian College in Glasgow. He joined our apprenticeship scheme in September 2012.

Tron Apprentices 2012-2014

Considering full-time word ministry?

The best way to find out if you are suited to full-time ministry is to have a go. Our **ministry training scheme** is designed for just that. Over two years, trainees attend the Cornhill Training Course part-time to learn how to teach God's Word and are involved in a whole variety of ministry experience – leading Bible studies, helping with activ8, city centre evangelism, preaching, visiting the elderly ... not to mention photocopying and mopping floors. Just ask those who have done it how much they gained!

If you are committed to Bible teaching, desire to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ -and therefore willing to serve the church family – we'd love to hear from you. We're also looking for a **media apprentice** to develop our web ministries and publications.

For further details please contact Richard Henry (richard@thetron.org).

Advertisement

EASTER EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH

Lunchtime Bible Talk
1.15-1.45

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Good Friday Service
1pm
The Mark Drama
7pm

SATURDAY 30 MARCH

The Mark Drama
3pm

SPOT LIGHT on

Nigel and Annabel Mason



Passionate about People

A cold Sunday afternoon, fine coffee and some of the best coffee cake ever tasted. When the Tron Times went to catch up with the Masons we saw and let's say, tasted, for ourselves just how good their famous hospitality really is.

The Masons have been attending the Tron for several decades and that was after Nigel spent many years of his younger life in different parts of the world living in Japan and then the US where his father worked as an engineer before settling in Glasgow.

Nigel and Annabel were introduced to each other by mutual friends and the rest, as they say, is history.

For as long as Nigel has been part of the church family here his day job has seen him travel the world playing violin in the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Nigel joined the orchestra not long after moving to Glasgow from West Virginia and has been a permanent fixture ever since. And as one of our church musicians the congregation gets to reap the benefits of his phenomenal talent each week.

'Being in an orchestra is very different to many other jobs as my colleagues feel a bit more like extended family sometimes, especially when we are out on the road. I have had the opportunity to mix with people I don't normally get to mix with and had some of the most wonderful

times. Musicians can be a cynical bunch so sharing the gospel can be difficult and challenging and I have always found speaking to people and befriending them first to be a crucial step.'

Nigel's wife Annabel is a Health Visitor in Glasgow working predominantly with patients from an Asian background. This experience coupled with Nigel's travelling have given them both a real passion for hospitality, welcoming people, especially international students.

Annabel said, 'We were both involved in the Glasgow International Fellowship which ensured that international visitors to Glasgow were given a warm welcome in our churches during their time here. The Tron was always heavily involved in

“ I have always found speaking to people and befriending them first to be a crucial step ”

this ministry and we were delighted to be part of the work with international students here.'

This work saw Annabel travel to Singapore in January along with younger daughter Esther for the wedding of Hannah Lo one of our former internationals who had been on one of the Skye mission trips and who moved back to Singapore two years ago. Others she met with who had worshipped with

us in the early '90s were Heng Hock Choon and Cynthia Choy. And a more recent friend was Tabitha who just left us last summer and who was looked after by Eric and Kay Macdonald while she was here.

The Masons' hospitality reaches out far and beyond international students but to many across the church. Nigel said, 'We try to bring people together from across the church and outside for fellowship and good times together. It's a great way to reach out and enable Christians to meet up and share together socially rather than just on a Sunday. I'm pleased this is something we have passed on to our daughters. When we came in the other evening Sarah had twenty friends from the neighbourhood, many Christian and some not, in for the evening. In a culture where many are non-churched, building these friendships is a pivotal part of our Christian witness.'

So as we left after that fine cake, coffee and some good fireside chat I was reminded of Romans 12 "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."

Away News

It is always a pleasure to see **Scott Murray** as he comes here each year at the end of January to give a series of lectures at the Glasgow Medical School. He and **Nok** have a multitude of demanding jobs in the Kwai River Hospital. Their children **Cara, Shane and Ray** are all away at school and all three are involved in sport — Cara will travel to Phuket with the basketball team and then to the Philippines with the football team.

Carol Whipp has just returned from Australia to her work with Neighbours Worldwide in Wolverhampton. She has been much encouraged in her visit 'home' through seeing her mother come to faith but she is still unsure about where she should settle in the future.

Roy Murray is trying to focus his time and energy in his 'own' country on those he sees as key people. His new role involves much travelling and he has just begun a five month trip to a variety of places. Many unscheduled meetings and conferences get thrown in and he would greatly welcome a base where he would be able to relax.

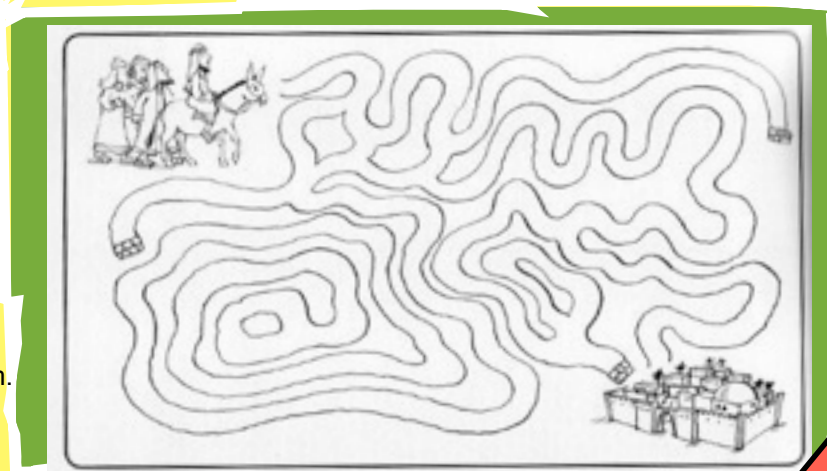
Jonathan and Juay Blyth are now back in Turkey after illness and enforced rest for both of them. Jonathan's business there seems to be steady and Juay, having previously been in administration in their children's school, is now seeking guidance about future work. Meantime **Andrew and Nina** are both very much enjoying student life at their universities in Cambridge and Nottingham respectively.

A trip this summer to Cambodia where they previously worked is eagerly anticipated by **Darren and Susan Wall** and **Elsbeth and Catrina**. Susan's work with Serve Asia is very busy at this time of year as volunteers decide where they would like to go and all arrangements are made. Darren and the Finance Team are presently implementing a new Pension Scheme for OMF members and are praying that it might be done in a timely and efficient way.



IT'S FOR YOU!

Jesus led his disciples from the Mount of Olives into the great city of Jerusalem. Can you help find the right route?
Read this story in **Luke 19:28-41**



Can you number the pictures in the correct order to tell the story of the crucifixion? Where in the Bible do you read about this?

Hint : Look in the first four books of the New Testament but especially Matthew ch 26 & 27.

STOP PRESS ! Wednesday lunchtime Bible Talks 1.15-1.45 from 13 March The Tron Church 25 Bath Street