



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

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Dear Friends,

This summer, God willing, we will be absent from the town for longer than usual. On 17th May we hope to fly to America for Leslie to engage in a six week Presbytery approved Study Leave and to have some holiday time with our two daughters whilst there. We fly to Denver first to spend two weeks with Elizabeth and Bill, our daughter and son-in-law in Colorado Springs (and also to re-acquaint ourselves with Fiona who will have her first birthday on the 19th). After that we will travel to Michigan where Leslie's programme of study will begin.

Both of us will be taking a week long course at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids entitled, "The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry" at the end of which Leslie will be taking in most of a short course on Preaching Apocalyptic. After a few days break he will be travelling to Chicago to attend the American Missiology Society's annual conference. This year's president is Professor George Hunsberger who some will remember preached in St Paul's in 2003 during his visit to Scotland. Soon after returning we will both be living on the campus of Calvin in Grand Rapids as Leslie completes his formal study with a ten day course entitled "Keeping and Talking the Word: scripture memorisation for contemplation, formation and proclamation", then after a week for writing and follow up we hope to conclude our time with a couple of week's holiday with Jennifer and Craig (not to forget Jenna and Caleb). During Leslie's absence George McCann and Milton

Cashman will take care of leading the services and we hope you will give them every support and encouragement as they take on this task, as many of you know they have been particularly busy over the past months acting as locums in the vacancy at St John's.



With a good deal of congregational change going on in the town just now some have been asking what the position is going to be with regard to St Paul's and all we can say at this juncture is that we must wait and see. The Presbytery plan for Galashiels is that there be a future linking or union between the two congregations of St John's and St Paul's, when this may take place we cannot say for that must await the outcome of discussions and deliberations between St John's and the Presbytery. When there is something further to say you will be fully informed but in the meantime what we do know is that our task as Christian believers in the town will remain the same, namely to be God's witnesses to the saving power of Christ in the lives of his people. That's plenty to be going on with and in the meantime let's stretch out our hands to St John's in friendship knowing that our shared witness will coalesce at some time and so let us pray for each other now.

*With every blessing,
Leslie & Lillias Steele.*

AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Visiting the Borders for one night only

A concert will be held in

Old Parish and St. Paul's Church, Galashiels

on Sunday, 29th May at 7.00 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

Special Offering taken for the orphaned children of Africa

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club is going from strength to strength – but we urgently need some more help. We need **car drivers** to assist in bringing some of the people who find it difficult to come without transport. Can **you** give up some time on an occasional Thursday – say between 12.00 and 2.00 p.m. to help us out? Please think about it – the last thing we want to say to people is that because of shortage of drivers we cannot get you to the Lunch Club. If you can help every 4th Thursday on a regular basis – that would be such a help, but if that is not possible, and you are willing to help occasionally, please do let us know. Crisis time is approaching when Leslie and Lillias go to the States (see the Minister's letter) as Leslie and Lillias both help with driving. (Lillias does a great deal in the kitchen too) We are not asking anyone to take responsibility for the cooking, but as some of our helpers are having to do less for various reasons, we are looking for folk to set tables, peel potatoes, prepare vegetables, wash dishes (yes even with the excellent new dishwasher, some have to be hand washed!)

Can you help? It is good fun working in the kitchen on Lunch club days, and very gratifying to see how much the lunch is enjoyed. Please phone Marion Stirling (01578 730591) or Lillas Steele (752320) (before the middle of May) if you would like more information, or think you can offer your help.

News from the church family:

Anne Bain has been working with a church in Keith as a Youth and Development Worker for a few weeks now, and has now passed her probationary period and been confirmed in her post. We send Anne our best wishes – please keep remembering her in your prayers.

Moira Frew continues her work with young people in a group of churches in Bolton. Some of the group who went to Spring Harvest recently met up with her there, and found her in good heart – enjoying her work, but very busy.

Natasha Moir completed the London Marathon in 5 hours 20 minutes. Congratulations! Natasha leaves for Ghana about 2nd May to take part in a care and community project run by Teaching and Projects Abroad.

Remember our young folk as exam time approaches - yes it's that time of year again!

There are several member of the UGC and Youth Fellowship who will be sitting Highers during May and June. Some of the ex-UGC members who are at University are also sitting exams and finishing off assignments and essays just now and some are at college. We would ask you to pray for all of them and for the life choices that they may have to make in their next step towards further study or a career.

Tearfund send thanks for the £165.00 sent as a result of the two quizzes, supported by members of the congregation, which went towards the Tsunami appeal.

African Children's Choir

The Kirk Session of Old Parish and St. Paul's church is pleased to announce that it is hosting the Africa Children's Choir during their visit to the Borders from Sunday, 29th May – Wednesday 1st June. Hospitality is being provided by families from St. Paul's and St. John's Congregations for which we are most grateful. The choir will give a Concert in St. Paul's church at 7.00 p.m. on Sunday, 29th May. Please make this as widely known as possible. We are very privileged to be able to hear the choir in Galashiels. Entrance is free, and tickets are not required. However, the choir relies upon the generosity of those attending to support its work among orphans in South Africa.

The African Children's Choir is a group of 26 children aged 8.-11 years, selected from those most needy in Africa. Audiences are treated to a wide variety of songs accompanied by drums and ethnic instrumentation, including well loved children's songs, gospel melodies and lively spirituals. The Choir has appeared in well over 3,500 concerts since its inception in 1984.

The Choir is using its present tour to shine the spotlight on the 2,700 children living in the Nkomazi region of South Africa who have lost one, or both parents to Aids or other diseases, and are now fighting a daily battle against starvation. Thanks to the young Choir ambassadors, and the generous support from Friends of the Choir, help has been given to many destitute families and orphans, but the need is immense. Every day, another 2,600 people in Africa die horrendous deaths from Aids, without so much as even basic pain medication to help relieve their suffering.

Further information available from Milton Cashman (752711).

Aqua Box for Africa

During the months of May/June, there will be a 40l Aqua Box at St. Paul's. It is not just for decoration – for those able to help **fill** the box, there is a list of items needed e.g. used, unbreakable kitchen and bathroom equipment, old tools etc. The box will be sent to a needy African community that will not only benefit from the items it contains, but will be able to use the box itself to filter fresh drinking water. *Rita Breeding*

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined our fellowship recently:

Mrs. Janet Neilson, 62 Croft Street. (from Kirknewton and East Calder).

Mrs. Jayne Thomson, 10 Balmoral Terrace (from United Reform Church.

Mr. Stuart and Mrs. Jacqueline Toolan 13 Pringle Lane (from St. Ninian's)..

Death

25th April Jean Wood, 3 Easter Langlee Farm Cottage.
We extend our sincere sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to the bereaved family.

Pentecost

Sunday, 15th May is Pentecost Sunday. In John 14:15, Jesus said: "If you love me, you will obey what I command, and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth". The following hymn by Henriette Auber reflects on that bequest.

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| 1. Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed
His tender last farewell,
A guide, a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell. | 4. And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear
And speaks of heaven. |
| 2. He came in tongues of living flame,
to teach, convince, subdue;
All powerful as the wind He came,
As viewless too. | 5. And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone. |
| 3. He comes sweet influence to impart,
A gracious willing guest,
Where He can find one humble heart,
Wherein to rest | 6. Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see;
O make our hearts Thy dwelling place
And worthier Thee. |

A prayer at Pentecost:

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who after His ascension did send upon those first disciples the promised gift of the Holy Spirit: look, we pray, at the present needs of Your church, and grant us by the same Spirit to be endued with power from on high. Open our hearts, we pray, to receive the fullness of His grace and power; that our lives may be strengthened for the service of your kingdom, and we ourselves be transformed more and more into the image of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Easter Project for Local Schools

Following on from the article in the March Newsletter regarding the presentation of the Story Keeper Videos to the Galashiels Primary Schools, the Mission Committee embarked on a new venture: Easter Activity Afternoons.

The main aim of the whole project was to proclaim and explain the message of Easter to a generation who mostly seem to think it is about nothing more than chocolate and bunnies.

Each school was invited to bring a class along to the Church on 29th or 30th of March. About 115 children aged between 8 and 12 years came along with their teachers.

When they first arrived they entered church to some loud modern Christian music! – The fact that Christian music could be so 'trendy' was new to many of them!

With the help of 'the team' (Gordon, Irene, Jim, Gail, Lynn, Liz, Angie, Catherine and Anne), the children were encouraged to look around the church and understand why different things are there. They were given a multi media presentation on the message of Easter. After this they did a drama activity and an art activity in the halls before summing up back in the church.

They left with a little chocolate egg (of which they hopefully now understood the significance of in relation to the resurrection) and an invitation to Sunday School and The Focus Youth Group.

The Mission Committee would like to thank you very much for your prayers for this event and would like to thank the people who helped out on the team. The feedback which has been received has all been very positive and the project has been much appreciated. It has also given us a direct link with young people and their teachers who might not normally consider coming to church and hopefully it achieved its aims.

The Mission Committee

SPRING HARVEST

Spring Harvest 2005 was again an uplifting event for all those who attended. The title this year was 'Sing the Lords Song in a Strange Land' and focused on the book of Daniel. It also brought home to us that we too are singing the Lords song in a strange land as we as Christians go against the flow in our lives.

As well as the excellent teaching by Stephen Gaukroger the swimming pool, shows and the beach provided lots of fun.

It was also great to meet up with Moira Frew who is now living in Bolton and asking for all at St Paul's.

SPRING HARVEST 2006 THE BIG STORY ONE GOD

In our uncertain and fast-changing world the church has some strong truth claims to make – and a BIG STORY to talk about.

Spring Harvest 2006 will be looking at One God – who He is and what like and focussing on how he shapes the way we live out our faith.

Dates will either 3-8 April or 8-13 April. This has still to be decided. Price will be around £98 Place – Skegness.

If you think you might be interested please talk to Ishbel or Gordon Adamson or phone on 756032. To be sure of a place bookings have to be made by 10 June 2005. This event is for young or old, single or married or families.

Christian Aid 15th – 21st May 2005

Christian Aid is 60 years old this year!

Like all 60 year olds, we have seen many changes in the world around us and in ourselves. There is much to celebrate: people who are alive today because of the work of Christian Aid's partners, people who have a sustainable income and a secure supply of food and clean water, women and marginalised people who have found a voice in decision making.

But there is still much that shames and challenges. Overall in the last 60 years, global inequality has increased. While wealth has increased and we have the capacity to cure diseases that were once fatal, still half the world's population lives on less than £1.30 per day and children die every day from diarrhoea.

We have many hopes for the next 60 years. We want the world to be significantly nearer to eradicating poverty by 2065. People throughout the UK and Ireland and around the world are acting, campaigning, praying and giving to make that vision a reality.

To help Christian aid fulfil its hope to make poverty, history I am asking each and every one of you to help in whatever way you can during Christian Aid week. There is much to do. If you can do an envelope collection around the houses or shake a can in B&Q, Somerfield or Tesco or bake for the cake & candy stall at St. Ninians then please give me a ring on 755316. As a certain supermarket says 'every little helps' and an old saying says 'many hands make light work'. Please be part of this effort to help those who are living in unbelievable poverty through no fault of their own.

Angela Miller

We are ready to eat, O God.

*But give us the grace to pause
just long enough to notice our hunger
and appreciate our meal.*

*Give us grace to pause
and think of those who are not hungry
because they have lost their appetite for life.*

*Give us grace to pause
and pray for those who are too hungry
because they have nothing to put on their plate.*

Amen

Congregational Board

At the meeting of the Congregational Board held on Tuesday, 19th April, three new members were co-opted: Carol Grieve, Gail Hague and Stuart Toolan. We are delighted to welcome these people and trust they will enjoy serving the Church in this way.

Treasurer's Report

MARCH 2005

Income

Offerings 4 weeks (Weekly average £827.90).....	£3,311.59
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.....	£657.58
Donations.....	£410.00
	<u>£4,379.11</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone.....	£446.92
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£288.30
Fabric Repairs.....	£2,593.61
C of S – Media Sound System.....	£371.03
Minister's Travel Expenses, etc.....	463.80
Council Tax – Manse.....	2,198.20
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£4,257.80
	<u>£10,619.66</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OFFERINGS

Stipend	£3,262.70	7th	£474.24
Mission & Renewal	£883.10	14th	£633.70
Organist	£80.00	21st	£582.91
Clearners (4wks)	£32.00	29th	£567.74
			£2,258.59
		Paid through Bank	£1,053.00
	<u>£4257.80</u>		<u>£3,311.59</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

		2005	2004	
Jan-Feb	9wks	£7,513.09	£5,869.62	9wks
March	4wks	£3,311.59	£3,745.72	4wks
		<u>£10,824.68</u>	<u>£9,615.34</u>	

PETITION FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS OPEN DOORS

How safe is your journey to church?

On 24th February 2004, in a small village in Nigeria, 20 excited children boarded their local church bus. Little did they know it would be the last journey they would ever make, minutes later it was attacked by a gang of masked men and set alight. The children never stood a chance. They were burned alive.

In the world today, 200 million Christians are suffering terrible persecution just for following Christ. The petition includes the following promise:
I pray that:

- *You will stand strong in your faith and remain steadfast in persecution*
- *Your persecutors may come to know Christ*
- *God will supply the needs of your family*
- *You will have your own Bibles in your own language*
- *You will enjoy the freedom to preach the Gospel*
- *You will be able to teach your children about the Christian faith*
- *You will be free to worship and meet with other Christians*
- *You will know that you are not alone – the Lord is with you now and always*
- *We can all work for justice, that truth and righteousness will prevail*

If you would like to sign the Open Doors petition to let our brothers and sisters know that you are praying for them, please contact Jim Tennant.