



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

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Dear Friends,

I've always thought that, "I don't need to go to Church to be a Christian" sounds a bit like "I don't need to live with my wife to be married". It's not that it needs to be met with argument but rather with incredulity. What's the point? What's the point of belonging to a family if you don't want to associate with them; to a Church – which is a community of people – if you don't want to relate to them? The trouble is that the Church is thought of as an institution.

I wrote last time about some matters to do with worship and I would like to return to that subject briefly this month. The heart place of the community of the Church is the gathering together in the name of Christ, most centrally around the Word of God in the Bible and around the table of the Lord's Supper in communion. The word "ecclesia" means "called out" or "called together" so to be a member of the "called together" means to be part of a gathering.

What is worship, then? It is the corporate act of devotion to God and it consists of certain core elements the one being the "togetherness" we have spoken about, the others being the Word of God and the Response of the people.

* Devotion to God is expressed in our attendance and in our attitude and intention when we gather. For example worship is not offered if I am at loggerheads with anyone (the Bible tells us that if we come to make an offering to God and find out that we have something in our heart against our neighbour to leave our gift at the altar and go and put that matter right with our fellow and then come again to make our offering.) Worship is not offered either if our intention is to see someone, to enjoy oneself, to get help for the coming week, or whatever. Our attitude and intention must be in humility (God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble) to seek to meet with God and present our lives before Him.

* The Word element is to do with hearing and obviously means attending to what God has revealed of Himself and this is where our minds and

hearts must gather around the Scriptures. The reading, meditation, and expounding of the Bible is therefore at the heart.

* The Response element comes in our prayers – for ourselves or others – our financial giving, our personal response in re-ordering our life, and in our receiving of communion which together with the Word is like the wedding rings which we exchange in making the covenant of commitment between ourselves as the Church and Christ.

Of course whatever form or practice we are used to is often what conditions us in our internal idea of what worship is. To some it is lofty music in a high vaulted medieval nave with measured clerical choreography in colourful vestments, to others it is unaccompanied tonal chant in simple stone buildings, to others it is band-led celebration in auditoriums with electronic and visual input, to others it is sitting in quiet circles with occasional biblical and prayerful input, and to some of our ancestors it was open air gatherings in the hills around a natural pulpit. What we must see about worship though is that no "form" is right that does not have itself centred around Devotion, Word and Response and conversely that which is centred around Devotion, Word and Response is true worship of God to which any believer belongs no matter from where or what tradition.

It behoves Christian people to be part of worship wherever it is and of whatever form. Some people like to declare certain conditions on their participation however – the service of worship must be so long, the music of a particular kind, the seats of a certain shape, the ambience of a known character, etc. What that does is wrest worship away from what it is to "what I want" and thereby, even if I find the "right kind", when I participate in it I won't be worshipping for my commitment to Devotion, Word and Response will have long since been left behind.

Come and worship then,

*Yours in Christ, the Leader of our Worship,
Leslie Steele.*

The Big Day Out

Lindisfarne was invaded on Saturday 24th September! No – there was no cause for alarm – just rejoicing. The Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles Church Without Walls Committee had arranged a day out for all who wished to go. There were representatives from other Borders Presbyteries too, and altogether about 180 people gathered to enjoy a very special day together. Among this number were 19 folk from St. Paul's. The weather on Friday had been wet and unpleasant, but Saturday dawned fine and dry, and so it stayed all day. We are so grateful to God for the good weather and indeed for all the excellent things that took place on the day. We began with an act of worship in the church led by Rev. Jim Campbell from Selkirk with many others taking part. Rev. Marion Dodd from Kelso had organised and rehearsed with a group of singers and musicians who led the worship then and at other times in the day.

We all found our way to the beach then to eat our sandwiches and enjoy each other's company. Some managed to build sandcastles and explore the rock pools as well.

An open air celebration of Holy Communion followed in the grounds of the Priory, conducted by Rev. Andrew Morrice of Duns, son of Alastair and Mary Morrice who were at one time in St. John's, Langlee, but are now ministering in Bishkek in Kyrgestan. It was a moving and impressive service which we all found uplifting.

Then the company divided! – by choice I have to say. One group went on a Pilgrimage around the island, visiting the places of interest and significance. Others chose to go to the Vicarage garden for a Story Telling session about the island, and a third group attended a Seminar in the Church led by Ray Simpson and Peter Neilson, in which they explored the lessons we could learn today from the early Celtic Church. We were challenged to follow the example of those who went out from Lindisfarne to spread the gospel, obeying Jesus' simple command to "Follow me", and relying on his promise of power to all who obeyed. They identified with people where they were and did not expect the people to come to them.

The day ended with a united act of worship in the Church. It had been an inspiring day of learning and fellowship – and relaxing and enjoyable too. *A . Pilgrim*



Close up of two participants



General view of open air Communion



The Guild

Yes – it is October again and the start of our regular Guild meetings. We are looking forward to our opening afternoon on October 5th, when we will be hearing from Mrs. Mary Graham about her Amazonian Adventure in April this year. Mary is a Health visitor in North Berwick and wife of Dr. David Graham, Milton Cashman's successor at Abbey Church there. In April, Mary flew to South America with a group of others and spent a couple of weeks on a special boat on the Amazon equipped to hold medical clinics. She has

a fascinating story to tell, and we would be very happy to see any lady in the congregation who would be interested hear what she has to say and see her pictures. Do just come – you do not have to be a member, or even commit yourself to joining. You will be very welcome.

On 19th October, we will be hearing from a speaker from the Prison Fellowship about the work of that organisation. The Guild Theme for this year is "Dare to Care with Commitment" and many of our speakers will be those who show this caring commitment in their work.

New Organist

From late summer when Eddie Oliver wasn't available after taking ill we were very fortunate to have Mrs Rona Young stand in at the organ on Sunday mornings (and also for a wedding and a funeral) so perhaps it seems strange to say "Welcome" at this point however starting this month Mrs Young having been appointed by the Kirk Session will be taking up the regular role as our organist.

Rona is no stranger to Gala, she came here when she was just 10 although she was born in Aberdeen and spent her early years there. She started organ playing in the old Congregational Church (now United Reformed) in Gala when she was only 16 and all through college years. She also spent a while at Tweedbank Community Church and then latterly was part-time organist at St John's Church before coming to help us out and is now in the process of learning the ropes at our newly refurbished Father Willis organ. Rona is married to John who works offshore in the oil industry and they have two girls, Kelly and Elen. We give a warm welcome to Rona and assure her of a home among us.

St. Paul's Family News

This is the time of year when some of our young people start new courses of study or employment. Please remember in your prayers the following as they take up new challenges:

Natasha Moir has gone to Aberdeen University to study Medicine

Craig Turnbull left school this summer and is now doing a course at Jewell and Eskbank College

Samantha Smith has returned for a second year at Borders College.

Andrea has finished college and has started work in Ethel Austin

Hamish Virtue has gained an HND at Dundee University

Jamie Adamson has gained a BA in Sports Studies at Stirling University
and

Catherine Bain has started work as a History/Modern Studies teacher in Inverness

Our congratulations and best wishes to all concerned.

Deaths

Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

July 25th Elizabeth Dodds, 27 Tweed Terrace, Galashiels

Sept. 4th Davina Brown, Riverside Nursing Home, Selkirk

Sept. 12th Catherine Knox, 33 Tweed Terrace, Galashiels

We extend our sincere sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to the bereaved families.

Eddie Oliver

When Eddie finally wrote to the Kirk Session in the Spring intimating his desire to retire from his position as organist we know it was with great reluctance for he had been thirled to organ seats here and elsewhere for many years. Though Myra had been encouraging him to take the step for a while and his health had been declining nevertheless he wanted to see the summer out before finally taking a pew seat. As we know he wasn't able to do that for after persistent and recurrent heart trouble he had to stop and has been in hospital for a number of weeks now. Our thoughts and prayers continue with him and with Myra also who has been such a faithful supporter over the years.

We surely celebrate with Eddie a lifetime of service to the Church in his playing. Eddie started playing the organ aged 14 at Ladhope Church under Joe Townley who was the organist there. He then played for a few months at Melrose before the war called him away but returned briefly for a year in 1947-48 until Dr Coutts, the minister retired. From 1948-56 he played at St Cuthbert's Church (later St Aidan's), from 1957-58 at St John's Church when it was in St John's Street, from 1958-76 at St Andrew's Church (now the Arts Centre in Bridge Pl) and from 1976 to the present here at Old Parish & St Pauls. He has left the Oliver mark therefore on many keyboards but most of all here in St Pauls.

'Quiet' and 'unassuming' are often much used words about people but with Eddie they fit exactly and it was not because he had a great deal to be quiet and unassuming about for he was a skilled organist and piano player with a gift both as a wonderful sight reader and a marvellous player by ear. How often did Eddie say to the minister about some new little jingle for the children - "just sing it and I'll pick it up"? When he last dusted down Vidor's Toccata one Sunday morning he complained afterwards that he couldn't manage as he used to - well, at 85 perhaps he was allowed that - but nevertheless the congregation enjoyed his talent even if reluctantly we realized that he had to be allowed his well earned rest.

The minister used to tell Eddie the joke about the difference between an organist and a terrorist (- you could negotiate with a terrorist!!) Happily that scenario was never the case with Eddie, always obliging and ready to work with the many in the Church from Sunday School, Boy's Brigade, to Guild who needed his help he has been the most gracious of men. He has so grafted himself into us as a Church fellowship and made that position in the sanctuary his own that "Eddie's door" will continue in the minds of many of us to be just that. However it's not just a place in the sanctuary that Eddie has made his own but also a place in our hearts and so to him we say, "Well done", our grateful thanks for all you have done and for all you continue to be for us at Old Parish and St Paul's.

NEVER ENDING GARDENS PROJECT

26TH JANUARY 2006

Some of you may know that on Saturday 3rd of September 2005, several people from various churches in Galashiels travelled up to Carberry Towers to participate in the Awakenings Celebration.

God was to speak very clearly to some of us, through the words of the speaker Dr Bruce Wilkinson. We were to be given the opportunity to be part of the answer to the devastating hunger faced by millions of people in Africa. Dr Bruce Wilkinson in response to his desire to provide hope and solutions to the issues plaguing Africa formed a faith based humanitarian organisation called Dream for Africa (www.dreamforafrica.com).

The initiative we are to participate in is the Never Ending Gardens Project. Volunteers will travel to Africa on the 26th January 2006 and work with local communities planting gardens. Each garden provides 12 immune boosting plants and covers a small plot of land the size of a front door, enough to feed one person for a year. Never Ending Gardens is an answer to hunger. Over 100,000 gardens were planted in 2004 providing lasting food for over 500,000 people. This is a great and challenging opportunity for the 10 people who have answered Gods calling to go from Galashiels.

To help finance this project, the group will be carrying out various fund raising activities in the next few months. One of the fund raising events is a Sponsored Walk which will take place on Saturday 8th October where we will walk from Yarrow Ford to Yarrow Ford Hill (approx. 11 miles).

We will also be hosting a Ceilidh in the large hall on Saturday 26th November 2005 and a Praise Evening in December (Venue and date to be finalised).

Treasurer's Report

AUGUST 2005

Income

Offerings 5 weeks (Weekly average £867.35).....	£4,336.77
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc	£1,842.73
Donations.....	£510.00
From Fabric Fund.....	£582.50
	<u>£7,272.00</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone.....	£217.92
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£34.72
Presbytery Dues	£530.00
Fabric, etc	£624.81
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£4,257.80
	<u>£5,665.25</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OFFERINGS

Stipend	£3,262.70	1st	£440.02
Mission & Aid	£883.10	8th	£707.80
Relief Organist	£80.00	15th	£550.75
Cleaners (4wks)	£32.00	22nd	£673.32
		30th	£650.88
			<u>£3,022.77</u>
		Paid through Bank	£1,314.00
	<u>£4,257.80</u>		<u>£4,336.77</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

		2005	2004	
Jan-July	30wks	£25,016.90	£22,424.89	30wks
August	5wks	£4,336.77	£3,610.97	4wks
		<u>£29,353.67</u>	<u>£26,035.86</u>	

If you would like to make a financial contribution towards this project then please come and see me to sponsor me on the walk as I am one of the 10 people who will travel to White River, South Africa to participate in this project in January 2006.

If you would like to find out more about the project, please come and see me.

Robbie Noble

MISSIONARY WEEKEND

29th and 30th October

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARIES NOW OF THE DATES.

We are looking forward to an interesting and challenging weekend when our guests will be Mark and Helen Laing who have worked in India for a number of years. Mark is studying for further qualifications at present and they are living with their three children in Larbert.

Saturday, 29th October at 6.30 p.m. in the Hall.

Curry and Cake Supper – but don't be put off if curry is not your favourite – there will be an option!

Afterwards, hear Mark and Helen share their reflections on their work in India, and their vision for global mission.

All Welcome – please come and bring a guest.

Sunday, 30th October

Mark Laing will preach at the Morning Service at 11.00 a.m.