



Galashiels Old Parish and St. Paul's Church

Newsletter ♦ May 2006

Minister: Rev. Leslie Steele, Manse, Barr Road ♦ 752320 ♦ Leslie@oldparishandstpauls.org.uk

Session Clerk: Hugh Bain, 11 Langhaugh Crescent ♦ 756615 ♦ hugh.bain@virgin.net

Treasurer: David Leckey, Dove Cottage, 69 Melrose Road ♦ 757631

'Newshound': Jim Tennant, 43 Kilnknowe Place ♦ 751003 ♦ godiswireless@btinternet.com

Layout: Peter Sandison, Lynhurst, Abbotsview Drive ♦ 758634 ♦ psandison@aol.com

Dear Friends,

In last month's newsletter I wrote about issues to do with the family. On the Sunday after Easter we took a look at the much-vaunted novel of Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*. Although serious academics don't need a pinch of salt when reading it, it appears that many of the populace are a little short of that commodity. Intriguing sub-plots are woven through the book, the essence of which is that Jesus Christ was not divine: he was an ordinary man who married Mary Magdalene and had children by her; and their bloodline, though covered up by the Church, was secretly preserved down the ages and exists today. The Priory of Sion is a secret society whose members include many famous historical figures who were sworn to protect the secret of this bloodline, which was the real "Holy Grail" of medieval fame. Brown's character avers that "religion teaches us to fear our sexual desire as the hand of the Devil" (p. 412), and lo and behold we find the character who was the latest guardian of the secret lying on his back naked in a secret ceremony surrounded by chanting people; a female robed figure climbs onto him for sex in front of the group in the ancient practice of Hieros Gamos – the old fertility rites of sacred prostitution that filled the ancient world.

Well - surprise, surprise! All the Christian teaching about chastity, faithfulness, the importance of the family, and such like, is all a Christian conspiracy to repress natural desires. It frustrates what we would all like to do, which is engaging in whatever we feel like – especially when it comes to sex. If we were only released from the imprisonment of this restrictive Church-dominated mind-control how much happier we would be!

However much our civilization is trying to plunge down that path, hoping with eager abandon that it will make everything all right, all that can be seen is an increase in irresponsible young men (including sex offenders), multitudes of single girls with children (and therefore children without fathers in the old sense), a lack of housing as families break up, an increase in sexual experimentation (the mnemonic LGBT says it all – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender), a frightening increase in sexually transmitted diseases, and all failing to grasp the contentment and happiness of loving, committed, marriage and homes where children can grow up securely.

It's amazing how things that are so clear and

obvious can become so opaque in a society that has turned away from God and from the truth. As someone once wisely remarked, "When you stop believing in God it's not that you believe nothing but rather you'll believe anything" - even the failing libertarianism all around us.

If you want to read all about it take a look at the book of Romans in the Bible, Chapter 1, verses 18 and following. There's nothing new under the sun!

*Yours in Him,
Leslie Steele.*

Happy "Retirement" to the former Editor!

Margaret Cashman, after many years of editing this Newsletter, has decided to rest her quill. I am sure you will wish to join the new Newsletter team, Jim Tennant and Peter Sandison, in thanking Margaret for her sterling work in single-handedly editing the Newsletter over the years, and wishing her a happy retirement! Jim, who will be the Church "newshound", and Peter, who will be "desktop processing" the newsletter, have been set a high standard to match! Please help us with contributions, comments and suggestions (contact details above).

Christian Aid 1 (see also p. 3)

Christian Aid Week 14th-20th May 2006

James said we are to be doers of the Word, not just hearers. Christian Aid is involved in the Tsunami crisis, the Pakistan earthquake, the African drought crisis, and the Trade Justice campaign, to name but a few. Most of us are unable to go to these countries to help, but we can help to finance operations on the ground. If you can help with envelope collection or the supermarket collections please telephone Robert Fraser on 752375 to book your street or ½ hour slot in B&Q or Somerfield. Baking for the coffee morning on 20th May would also be much appreciated! Tickets for the coffee morning — priced £1—are available from Angela Miller.

Don't just sit back and watch humanitarian crises unfold – they are life and death situations. Please do something and give a little of your time to ease the suffering of the poor, sick and vulnerable!

BIBLEWORLD SBS Studios



This impressive 45 ft. mobile classroom, courtesy of the Scottish Bible Society, aims to present the Good News in a fresh, 21st-century way, and it is coming to Galashiels from 19th – 23rd June. It will be parked at St. Paul's and classes from the local Primary schools are invited to attend the 13 available sessions. Each session lasts for 70 minutes and is designed in line with the Religious and Moral Education 5-14 Curriculum. The presentation takes the form of a film studio where six imaginative and contrasting sets create a colourful, varied atmosphere, providing a stimulating environment with a mixture of high and low-tech activities during which children can explore for themselves something of the world of the Bible. See www.scottishbiblesociety.org for more information.

The cost of this project to the church is £1000. If you would like to help us meet this cost then perhaps you could consider sponsoring a child at £5 per head to come.

Any Questions – Any Answers

On Thursday 1st June at 7.30 p.m. in the Manse, Barr Road the minister will host an open evening for questions (and maybe answers) on all and anything to do with Church, faith and life. Come along and even bring a friend. It is open to anyone - with one proviso – **NON CHURCH-GOERS ONLY**. Yes, none of you Church-goers allowed unless a very timid person wants your hand for company then you might be allowed in. No series, no videos, no hand-outs, no continuation just an opportunity. Interested? Phone 01896 752320 to let the minister know if you are coming.

Baptism

April 9th—Darcy Christina Montgomery, Colmslie Farm, Galashiels TD1 2PB



Christmas Extravaganza

Hi folks, yes it's almost Christmas time again and your Church needs you to get "crafty" and sign up to hold or help on a stall at our **Christmas Extravaganza**, to

Fairtrade Fortnight 2006 (6-19 March)

This year marked the first time that we had Traidcraft goods for sale and, financially, it has certainly



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helped to make an impact on the events. There were four aspects:

- ◆ Prayer – the monthly Tearfund meeting focussed on prayer, using short reflections to think about God's will in these matters, and our response.
- ◆ Giving – as always, support from the buyers (that's you folks) was magnificent, total receipts finished at £547.87 – thank you!
- ◆ Telling – a total of almost 200 leaflets were distributed, including some at the Scottish Borders Council headquarters, where we hope to run a monthly stall – an important opportunity to spread the message.
- ◆ Bible – the fortnight closed with an evening service in the Church, led by Leslie, examining in detail God's word to us; giving thanks for the opportunity to serve Him with all our heart and soul, mind and strength.

The Church will be running a Traidcraft stall in the hall once a month; the next scheduled date is Sunday 14th May.

Jim Tennant



FORE!

The spring golf outing has been arranged for Friday 9th June at Melrose Golf Club. There will be both afternoon and evening tee-off times: please see Jim for details.

Sub-aqua kits should be carried in the golf bag, bearing in mind the number of new water hazards at Melrose since we last played there, two years ago!

be held in the winter wonderland of our big hall on Saturday November 18th – snow is guaranteed!

This will be our next major fundraiser, so we would really appreciate your support, and it will be a fun day for adults and children alike. There will be many and varied opportunities to assist by volunteering: on a variety of stalls, Children's Cinema, feeding Rudolph, and if you can make, create or donate anything for the sales stalls, please speak to me (756023) or Lynn Beswick (756942) and we will let you know what we have planned.

Merry Christmas to you all, and I promise I won't say that again before November 18th. Thank you and God bless!

"We wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New" – oops, sorry!

Louise (Christmas crackers) Johnston

Boy's Brigade



Our final evening of the session was the Annual Display/Parent's Night on Friday 31st March 2006.

The evening was well supported with a large number of parents, friends and members of the congregation attending. As a Company we appreciate this support.

With our Chaplain, the Rev. Leslie Steele, being on holiday, the Rev. George McCann conducted the opening and closing services. George, who was our Inspecting Officer in 1996, is an ex-member of the 232nd Glasgow Company Boys' Brigade and has been associated with the Boys' Brigade for 60 years.

Our Inspecting Officer this year was a member of our congregation, Richard Noble. Richard was a member of the 3rd Galashiels Company, where he attained his Queen's Badge. On leaving school, Richard embarked on a career in the Merchant Navy and now holds the rank of Master Mariner. As Inspecting Officer, he attended in his Merchant Navy uniform. After Richard had inspected all the boys, each of the sections gave excellent displays, showing some of the activities they take part in on Friday evenings. The displays were much appreciated by all.

Richard presented the prizes and awards. My congratulations to all the boys who have worked so hard to attain their various badges, and especially to Andrew Grieve who attained his President's Badge.

The success of each boy is due entirely to the continued dedication of our Captain, David Nightingale, and his Officers and Helpers, and for this I thank them most sincerely!

Although the Company will not meet until September, Robbie Noble and members of the Company Section will again be attending the Crossover weekend camp during the summer. We look forward to hearing how they enjoyed their time under canvas.

Ian Forsyth, President

Celebrate World Fair Trade Day!

World Fair Trade Day is May 13th with this year's theme - Fair Trade Organisations NOW! - focussed on promoting the unique role of Fair Trade Organisations. For more information about World Fair Trade Day, visit www.wftday.org



QUIET TIME

**God of patience and endurance,
Steadfast as the steadfast stars
Stands Thy promise, Thine assurance**

**Unto Thine ambassadors:
I, Thy God, will strengthen thee,
Where I am, there thou shalt be.**

**Lord, we would endure, O sift us
Clear of weakness, make us
strong;**

**Lord, we would endure, O lift us
Into joy and conquering song;
Cause us in Thy peace to dwell
Seeing the Invisible.**

**Let us welcome all life's weather
Whatever it may be,
And, or singly, or together,
Find our heart's delight in Thee,
Our Redeemer, our Adored,
Lover and beloved LORD.**

Anne Mackay

Christian Aid 2 (see also p. 1)

**UGC / Focus Coffee Stall
Saturday 20th May 09.30—12.00**

After many years of doing the sponsored Forth Bridge Cross for Christian Aid there was a break with tradition this year: due to various circumstances we were unable to take part in this event.

As an alternative, we are holding a coffee stall with cake and candy outside the Church (close to the Hall entrance) on Saturday 20th May. We welcome any passers-by as well as the parents of the Manor School of Ballet pupils. We are hoping for good weather and would like to invite any members of the congregation who are passing to join us for a morning coffee. Should it rain, we will have a covered area, so join us no matter what the weather!

We propose to split the money raised between Christian Aid and funds for ourselves, so that we can put money towards a minibus to take us to SAMMYP film awards and a Christian music event called 'Frenzy'.

Ishbel Adamson

Treasurer's Report February & March 2006

	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Income	£	£
Offerings—4 weeks	3,244.61	3,600.26
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.	170.31	907.99
Donations	20.00	60.00
Fabric	-	1,001.01
Total Income	3,434.92	5,569.26
Expenditure	£	£
Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone	832.32	915.73
Advertising, Printing, & Stationary	47.22	433.72
Fabric Repairs etc.	1,332.51	2,369.72
Sunday School, Outreach, etc.	50.00	512.28
Council Tax—Manse	-	2,281.58
Standard Monthly Expenditure	£	£
Stipend	4,348.70	4,348.70
Organist	125.00	125.00
Cleaners (4 weeks)	32.00	32.00
Total Standard Monthly Expenditure	4,505.70	4,505.70
Total Monthly Expenditure	6,767.75	11,18.01
Offerings	£	£
4th	708.84	671.77
11th	533.39	476.12
18th	566.04	881.73
25th	431.34	551.70
Total Weekly Offerings	2,239.61	2,581.26
Paid through Bank	1,005.00	1,019.00
Total Offerings	3,244.61	3,600.26

Newshound's "Corner"



Tearfund's Regional Manager, Julie O' Malley, will be speaking about her recent trip to Malawi in Gala Baptist Church on Monday, June 5th, at the monthly Tearfund Borders Support Group prayer meeting - 7.15 for 7.30 pm.

Please also check out the Tearfund website, which now includes an interactive *Climate Change Pentathlon* under "Campaigning", and an invitation to "Sit and breath with people who have TB – experience and understand": just go to www.tearfund.org.

Jim Tennant

Offerings Update

	2006		2005	
	Monthly Total (£)	Weekly Average (£)	Monthly Total (£)	Weekly Average (£)
January (5 weeks)	3,420.39	684.08	3,958.59	791.72
February (4 weeks)	3,244.61	811.15	3,554.50	888.62
March (4 weeks)	3,600.26	900.01	3,311.59	888.62
Total	10,265.26		10,824.68	

Gift Day Thanks!

Just a note to say that the total donated via the Gift Day amounted to £3934. (Tax to be recovered will need to be added to this). Many thanks to those who contributed so generously!

"Who am I?" - a reflection after Easter

Who am I that I should roar like crashing wave against the shore?

A rushing, tumbling, foaming noise to frighten dogs and little boys,
and captured in the artist's eye beneath a gloomy, darkened sky

should then retreat and swallowed up, drained empty like the coffee cup; washed, dried and turned invert, like new to be re-filled.

Who am I against the Rock, who says, "Be stilled"?

Who am I that I should rage like red ink scrawled on virgin page?

The screeching, violent, tearing pain designed to spoil and waste; not gain,
the unintelligible mumble of brutish fury's warlike grumble,
should rant and rave with pointless need like every glutton's non-stop greed,

and argue black is blue, for sake of self, attention seek.
Who am I against the Word, who says, "Be meek"?

Who am I that I should fight like driving nails with all my might?

This scratching, clawing, biting terror – a little human flesh, in error –
a desperate soul who cannot stay at peace with those along the way,

yet still this frail and fragile frame, a created being with a name does battle with his fellow man and never reasons why.

Who am I against the Peace, who says, "I die"?

Who am I that I should doubt the eternal plan was not worked out? The faithful, loving, promised hope, which furnishes our means to cope,

inside the darkest, evil place he comes to us with smiling face and offers up as sacrifice, a gift of freedom, without price just like a king, forsaking all, his life to give.

Who am I against the Life, who says, "I live"?

Who am I, so dark inside, that you should come and be my guide? A restless soul, all rage and fear, confusing those who dared draw near,

who crushed the love that came his way like a bitter, badly written play,
pursuing darkness through the night until a day revealed a light, which came as a gift-wrapped jewel, from a friend.

Who am I against the Light that knows no end?

Who am I, with no escape to find who stumbled drunk, and cursing blind?

An ugly beast convinced of wrong, not yet transformed by love's sweet song,

when all at once, a butterfly emerged beneath the torn sky, the miracle of God's own hand to beautify his holy land, alighted near a cross, made on a tree.

Who am I that Christ should die, for love of me?

By Jim Tennant