



Galashiels Old Parish and St. Paul's Church

Newsletter ♦ February 2007

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Letter from Leslie

Dear Friends,

It seems that those who have risen to the top as our political masters just don't seem to understand the realm of faith at all. The recent issue of adoption by gay couples which the Catholic adoption agencies could not go along with is a case in point. The Government seems to think that issues of morality and ethics can be planned and decided on in a similar way to matters of trade, i.e. on the basis of majority consensus and then legislation which everybody should then obey. Not so. Just imagine if the United Nations decided one year that although the ethic of not stealing had been historically useful it was no longer helpful; poor nations were getting poorer and rich nations richer and there was no way to correct this looming crisis that didn't come up against the no stealing ethic. So a vote was taken and it was agreed that stealing would be alright. Would that make it OK? What would happen if some nations thought that it wasn't OK? Ah well, they would have to toe the line, there could be no opt out because that wouldn't be in keeping with the democratic decision taken at the United Nations - they would have to toe the line like everybody else... Do you get the point?

Let me give you another illustration of this topsy-turvy world. I wrote to our MSP asking if faith-based adoption agencies in Scotland would be forced to act against their will in this matter of adoption. I was assured that no such thing would be required, all that would be required would be for such an agency to pass the client on to one which would assist in gay adoption (this assurance is now in doubt though). The MSP could not see the difficulty with this. Imagine a person coming to you with the request "I want to go to bed with you". You reply by saying, no, you believe in the sanctity of marriage and could not possibly agree to such a request - however in keeping with the modern ethic you would be happy to pass them on to someone who would. How ridiculous as though ethics were like a commodity to be supplied - "I don't do that but I'd be happy to pass you onto some one who does".

Our political masters think they understand ethics, morality and religious belief but they are quite as blind as bats. There is a numbness that is hard to believe and yet that is where we have come to today. Mark my words, we have not seen the end of this clashing of the blind and the committed.

Yours Sincerely,

Leslie Steele.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." - Hebrews 4:16

Dear Christian Friends,

In his book *Prayer Works*, Brother Andrew challenges us to approach the Lord boldly, knowing what He's like and what He has promised and purposed. He tells how Corrie Ten Boom "was a passionate intercessor, and her urgency and excitement were quite infectious. 'Lord,' she would say, 'you must do something! There's no time to waste!' And then she would tell the Lord very specifically and very straightforwardly what she wanted Him to do. She spoke just the way she spoke to me, her old friend."

Sometimes she would weep or laugh, sometimes she would argue her points quite fiercely, but always she was herself - and always she was totally honest. She held nothing back from God, and He seemed to hold nothing back from her.

Many times, in the midst of those lively prayer sessions of ours, she would quote God's own Word back to Him, to remind Him of His promises. She would lift her Bible into the air, point to the verse and say triumphantly, 'Here, Lord - read it yourself!'

"I always loved that," Brother Andrew writes, "and I'm sure God did, too. I don't know of anybody's prayers that had more influence with God than Corrie's. She was not deterred by false piety or legalism or a need to be anyone but herself. So she never hesitated to tell Him what to do ..."

Of course, Corrie Ten Boom was a woman who was in deep fellowship and intimate relationship with the Lord, much of which was acquired only through the deep suffering she endured in the Nazi time. So her boldness was born out of that intimate knowledge of God and depth of humility before him rather than a shallow presumption and arrogance.

Brother Andrew writes, "He loves it when we know him well enough to talk to him that way" (pp. 88-89).

But of course, we can only do that if we know what God is like and what he has promised. Peter spoke of God's "**very great and precious promises**" to us (2 *Peter* 1:4). In his *Annotated Reference Bible* Finis Dake lists 250 New Testament promises (pp. 316-317). How many can you think of, without opening your Bible?

From the Prayer Vigilantes Team.

Deaths

14th December 2006: Mrs Jessie Pollok
"Wellwood", Scott Street, Galashiels

25th December 2006: Mr James Melrose
"Byethorne", Abbotsford Road, Galashiels.

14th January 2007: Rev George McCann
"Rosbeg", Abbotsford Road, Galashiels

We lost three long-standing members of our congregation over the winter, and as we give thanks for their fellowship, we commend their families to God.

Jessie Pollok

Jessie was born outside Glasgow, but soon moved to Tulliebardine, at Auchterarder, where she was brought up and had her schooling and early days. After school she worked as a secretary to a local lawyer and then as P.A. at one of the nearby estates. However, when she married Arthur she saw her life take on a different role as Doctor's wife, which brought her with Arthur to Galashiels nearly 50 years ago. Jessie early decided that her highest calling in life was to be a homemaker for her family, and that she proved in her dedicated role as wife to Arthur and mother to four children, Robert, Susan, Andrew and Douglas. Together with Arthur she was a regular attender and supporter of Old Parish & St Paul's Church until health declined, her presence and support probably unknown by the many infants of past years who left after baptism with little posies specially made by Jessie. We commend Arthur and the family to God's grace and peace.

James Melrose

Jim Melrose was born in Gala, the youngest of nine children, all long since passed on, Jim himself being 92 when he died. He went into the building trade when he left school and initially worked with Sandy Hall. Eventually going into business himself he had a little yard and workshop off St Andrew Street. He was married twice first to Eppie Lough, who came from Eyemouth and with whom he had three children, James, Sheila and Ian, who was tragically killed, aged

5, crossing Abbotsford Road to go to school at St Peter's. He was widowed in 1975 but six years later married Jean with whom he had a silver wedding last year. They lived at Scutchamore at the end of Tweed Road for many years Jim looking after his large garden there but failing health brought them into the Abbeyfield Home in Abbotsford Road in recent years. Faithful supporters of the Church for many years we pray God's blessing upon Jean and his family in their loss at this time.

George McCann

It was with shock and sadness that we learned of the death of our brother George McCann on Sunday 14th January after a heart attack at his daughter Barbara's home in Edinburgh.

George was born on 15th October 1935 in Firhill to Samuel, an ironmoulder, and Donella, a secretary. Two years later the family moved in with George's maternal grandmother in Possilpark. He studied at what was then called the Royal College of Science and Technology, which later became Strathclyde University, and was the first family member to go to University.

After National Service he worked with British Nylon Spinners in South Wales, but he soon moved into the educational world, first at Lauder College, Dunfermline, and then in Gala, at the Scottish College of Textiles, where he worked for 23 years.

A faithful member of Old Parish & St Paul's, he became an elder, and then Session Clerk for many years, before leaving to take up a call to Auxiliary Ministry, which he worked in from 1994 when he was ordained, first in Selkirk, and after retirement filling many pulpits and doing Locum work in Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys, and also in St John's in Galashiels. He will be much missed by many, not only in our Fellowship, but across the Borders, for his faithfulness and steadfast encouragement of many. We commend Barbara, Barbara Jnr. with Bruce and family (Rachel and Jennifer), Donella and Ruth to God's care and keeping.

Leslie Steele

Thank you! (1)

Just a brief note of thanks to all who supported the Tearcraft catalogue again this year. The total sales figure is £853.48, a really superb amount alongside all the other fund-raising that has been going on!

Tearcraft exists to benefit skilled craft workers from some of the world's poorest countries, and during January some of my Tearcraft colleagues will have returned from a visit to Thailand, to see how the workers live (and living with them for a few nights), and the difference that Tearcraft makes to their lives, by helping them to create and market products of the highest standard while ensuring they receive a fair price for the goods they produce.

Thank you! (2)

While we are on the subject of thanks, alongside sales figures, thanks also to the support given to the Traidcraft stall in the Church. Since it was launched last

year during Fairtrade Fortnight, the total sales have amounted to £809.11. The effect of these sales on producer Celia Gonzales, a bee-keeper from Chile mean that her family could enjoy a Christmas celebration like ours, knowing that she could provide for her five children.

"Today, I don't need to beg to anyone and am not under a lot of pressure because of a lot of debts. I have the security that every month, I will have enough money so that our family can live in a simple way, but happy", Celia says. "In the last years, thanks be to God, I have always been able to give to every one of my children a little gift for Christmas. It is a very simple thing, but it is full of love from their mother."

Happy New Year, Celia, from us all.

Look forward to some new ranges of goods on the Traidcraft stall in the coming months, especially during Fairtrade Fortnight, this year running from 26th February to 11th March.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2007

CHANGE TODAY. CHOOSE FAIRTRADE.
Munch it! Wear It! Taste it! Choose it!



“Change Today - Choose Fairtrade” is an urgent call to people in the UK to engage with the Fairtrade Foundation’s vision of an even bigger movement for positive change on unfair trade, including making the switch to buying Fairtrade. This is the theme of Fairtrade Fortnight 2007 (26th February – 11th March), the annual promotional campaign of the Fairtrade Foundation which encourages people to buy products carrying the FAIR-TRADE Mark.

Fairtrade sales increase by around 40% every year in the UK, giving hundreds of thousands of producers in developing countries the chance to build a better future and to compete in cut-throat global markets. But Fairtrade Foundation Executive Director Harriet Lamb wants the movement to go further: “Fairtrade has demonstrated its potential to help producers improve their livelihoods, strengthen their businesses and benefit their communities, but compared with what is needed in the poorer countries of the world, we’ve really only begun to make a dent in the struggle against poverty and unfair trade.”

“With more local campaigns, products, shops and companies in Britain and Ireland involved in Fairtrade, we all now have the chance to play an even bigger part in helping bring about much more significant change,” she adds.”

Throughout 2006, there has been a host of major developments for Fairtrade in the UK. One of the main successes has been an increase to 210 in the number of Fairtrade Towns – communities where active Fairtrade networks pledge to promote Fairtrade in their towns, villages and cities. There are also 50 Fairtrade Universities and 3,000 Fairtrade Churches. A Fairtrade at Work campaign was launched in the autumn, championed by major companies including Co-operative Financial Services – the parent organisation of the Co-operative Bank and Co-operative Insurance – to encourage workplaces to offer Fairtrade products such as tea, coffee, fruit juice, sugar and biscuits to employees in the staff canteen, in meetings, or throughout corporate catering.

“With everything from peppercorns, cinnamon and vanilla pods, to avocados and grapes to rum and wine, to yule logs, and blueberry muffins, there is something for everyone in Fairtrade,” says Harriet Lamb. “Many people still only think of tea and coffee when they think of Fairtrade, but there is now a huge range of products, and a huge range of choice within each product category. So there is something for everyone among the 2,000 Fairtrade retail and catering products - and Fairtrade Fortnight 2007 is a great time for people to make the change and choose Fairtrade.” See http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved_fairtrade_fortnight_2007.htm for further details.

Please pray for the events planned in our area for this year's Fairtrade Fortnight:

- Sunday 4th March: Evening Service at Gala Baptist Church**
- Monday 5th March: Tearfund Borders Support Group, Gala Baptist Church, at 7:30 pm**
- Thursday 8th March: Fairtrade Stall at SBC Headquarters**
- Saturday 10th March: Coffee Morning at Trinity Church halls, from 10 – 12 am**
- Sunday 11th March: Evening Service at Old Parish & St Paul's at 6:30 pm**

Annual Church Meeting

The Annual Meeting for the congregation will be on Tuesday 20th March at 7.30pm, and as some very important decisions need to be made, it is essential to have a good attendance. Remember this is YOUR Church, and this meeting represents the best place to have your say in the direction which the Church goes in.

Please do make every effort to be there: as you will have gathered from some of the articles in the last few newsletters, there are some urgent issues to be addressed, and your thoughts, opinions and prayers are a vital contribution to the long-term future of our spiritual wellbeing and ongoing work.

Treasurer's Reports (£s)

	November	December
Income		
Offerings - 4 weeks	3,540.95	4,521.37
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.	1,891.92	111.83
Donations/Fundraising	2,613.04	4,173.28
Income on closure of Reserve Fund	9,423.36	-
Transfer from Fabric Fund	-	878.31
Total Income	17,469.27	9,684.79
Expenditure		
Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone	719.95	710.79
Fabric & Insurance for Church & Manse	9,416.12	-
Minister's Travel	-	406.00
Advertising, Printing & Stationary	108.98	53.46
Photocopier contract, etc.	118.09	-
Sunday School Materials	-	127.78
Fabric	-	3,289.61
Computer / Music License	-	1,079.04
Standard Monthly Expenditure	-	-
Stipend (October)	4,182.70	-
Stipend (November)	4,348.70	-
Organist / Relief Organist	145.00	125.00
Cleaners - 4 weeks (Nov.) / 5 weeks (Dec.)	32.00	40.00
Total Monthly Expenditure	19,071.54	5,831.68
Offerings		
6th (Nov.) / 4th (Dec.)	553.02	621.57
13th (Nov.) / 11th (Dec.)	587.06	956.96
20th (Nov.) / 18th (Dec.)	620.00	859.98
27th (Nov.) / 27th (Dec.)	773.87	1,075.86
Total Weekly Offerings	2,533.95	3,514.37
Paid through Bank	1,007.00	1,007.00
Total Offerings	3,540.95	4,521.37

Offerings Update (£s)

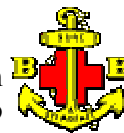
	2006	2005
January - October (44 weeks 2006 / 43 weeks 2005)	34,523.64	36,211.30
November (4 weeks)	3,540.95	3,294.20
January - November (48 weeks)	38,064.59	39,505.50
December (4 weeks)	4,521.37	3,138.53
Total (52 weeks)	42,585.96	42,644.03



Church Concert

Roll up, roll up! Calling all singers, dancers, jugglers, acrobats, even anyone who can sing in the bath: the second Church fundraising concert will be held on Saturday 26th May. If you would like to take part, there is no need to audition, just get in touch with Neil Miller (755316) or Jim Tennant (751003).

BOYS' BRIGADE



Our Boys' Brigade Carol Service was held on Friday 15th December 2006. Our thanks to Lieutenant Robbie Noble for organising this event, along with our Chaplain, the Rev. Leslie M. Steele. The service was different from previous years, with the music for the carols being played on guitars and drums by members of the Company Section accompanied by Rona, our organist. Again, thank you to Rona for her support on the night and for helping with rehearsals. The boys from the Company Section read the various readings from the Christmas Story and also performed a short drama entitled "No room at the Inn". Captain David Nightingale and Andrew Grieve read prayers. Our grateful thanks to all members of the congregation, parents, relatives and friends who supported the evening and contributed the sum of £95.30p towards The Boys' Brigade (Church of Scotland) World Mission Fund. The Company will be adding to this sum and sending £100 to the fund. This money will greatly help towards the success of this year's project, which is the Play Away Appeal for visually impaired and blind children at Al-Shurooq School in Palestine. The evening was concluded with a time of fellowship in the Hall, where mince pies and refreshments were served. All the boys are now working hard at their programme of Badgework. I hope that all their hard work will be rewarded at our Annual Display/Parent's Night which will be held this year in the Large Hall on Friday 30 March 2007, commencing at 7 p.m. Please make a note of this date in your diaries as a warm welcome is extended to all.

Ian Forsyth, President

Scripture Union Commissioning Service

The commissioning service for Esther Bailey, Scripture Union Regional Worker for the Borders, will take place on Saturday 17th February in St. John's Langlee at 7 p.m. The guest speaker will be Andy Bathgate, Chief Executive of Scripture Union Scotland. All are very welcome, and refreshments will be provided.



What you won't read in Genesis ...

In the beginning, God created the earth and rested.
Then God created Man and rested.
Then God created Woman.
Since then, neither God nor Man has rested.