



Old Parish and St. Paul's Church of Scotland, Galashiels

Old Parish and St. Paul's Church of Scotland, Galashiels, is a Charity registered in Scotland, No: SC010389

Newsletter ♦ Dec 2011-Jan 2012

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Letter from Leslie

Dear Friends,

Christmas is a great time. It is full of expectation, busyness, and short days (short light, at least) and fun. Yes, I know, we find it stressful, too, but we generally agree that the best thing is the rest that comes when it's all over; when all the shopping is done, the presents are given and received, all the cooking is over, the meal is eaten and there is nothing better to do than to sit in front of the TV and hopefully keep awake while watching other people doing the entertaining. It's a little bit like the person who was asked why they kept banging their head against the wall, to which they replied, "It's great when you stop". It's the stopping, the ceasing, the rest, that is so great when Christmas finally comes.

Of course, we never think we have got things properly completed; we keep wishing we had that little bit extra time or that extra opportunity to do or arrange something, and we never do. However, even though things aren't right or complete, Christmas still comes and we still enjoy the rest, and that's just wonderful.

Continued overleaf

Christmas Services 2011

~ Come and join us! ~

<i>Friday 16th December</i>	<i>06.30 p.m.</i>	<i>Boys' Brigade Carol Service ☼</i>
<i>Sunday 18th December</i>	<i>11.00 a.m.</i>	<i>Christmas Family Service ☼</i>
<i>Sunday 18th December</i>	<i>06.30 p.m.</i>	<i>United Service at St. John's ☼</i>
<i>Saturday 24th December</i>	<i>11.15 p.m.</i>	<i>Candlelight Service</i>
<i>Sunday 25th December</i>	<i>10.30 p.m.</i>	<i>Informal Family Service</i>

☼ = followed by refreshments

There will be no Evening Services on 25th December 2011 and 1st January 2012

Letter from Leslie (continued)

It's a little experience of what it's like when we finally rest in the arms of God, having ceased from all our striving and struggling with life. We struggle in our lives to try to bring out something right, something nicely finished, something we can be proud of, but the truth our hearts tell us is that it's never like that. There's dirty little secrets, untruths, squalid memories, failed aims. Christmas (and what follows, Easter) is about something that happens that is quite out of our control and over which we have no part to play. It comes along as the initiative of God, who tells us that our failure is bought and paid for in Christ, and our invitation to His Christmas Party is there for us to accept. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling" said Toplady in his hymn "Rock of Ages". The Philippian jailor in the Book of Acts, in the middle of an earthquake, the lights going out, his prisoners escaping, his whole life falling about him, calls out in the dark turmoil of his soul, "What can I do to be saved?", and the Apostle Paul's rejoinder is simply "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved". Rest comes there.

There are only two things worth doing in this life: the one is to confess that we are the dirty rotten scoundrels that we had so hoped we weren't, and the other is to believe that Jesus' death on the cross was for us. When we do that, we know that Christmas is good news. Don't struggle with it, accept it.

A Very Happy and Blessed Christmas to all readers,

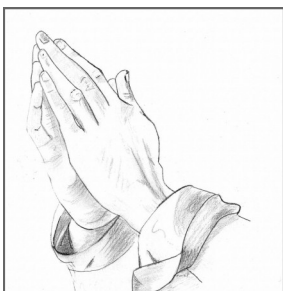
Leslie Steele.

Death

28th October

Robert Williams, 5 Abbotsford Road, Galashiels

Praying Hands



Not the celebrated artwork illustrated here (based on Albrecht Dürer's famous drawing), but a reminder from my daily Bible reading notes on Paul's first letter to Timothy, "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing" (1 Timothy 2:8). I had this point underlined when reading a partner organisation's monthly magazine; and the article included the following from a church leader in Egypt. All you need is your hands, or your fingers, to be precise.

1. **Thumb** – your thumb is nearest to you, so pray for the people/ neighbours/ community/ town/ country nearest to you, depending whether you are praying locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.
2. **Index finger** – our "pointing" finger reminds us of those who stand out for sharing their faith, or who conduct themselves in a way that they act as "signposts" to Jesus as Lord, so pray for high profile people at home and abroad, especially in countries where persecution is worst.
3. **Middle finger** – our tallest finger reminds us of church leaders: we can never pray enough for those whose daily calling puts them in the spotlight, at the centre of attention, or in worst case scenarios, literally in the firing line.
4. **Ring finger** – this reminds us of families and in-laws, of our nearest and dearest, often the most difficult to share the Gospel with! Please pray for the broken relationships, the refugees, the unemployed, those living in fear or living in poverty, the sick in body or soul or mind and their tireless carers. Especially remember families who are separated because of different religious laws and dogmatic rules and regulations, often by miles, sometimes by continents.
5. **Little finger** – our "pinkie" is the smallest digit, so please never forget to pray for our young people and children – they are the future of this and every other church: in this neighbourhood, in this town, in the Borders region, in Scotland and all over the world, "to the very ends of the earth."

If Church leaders in Egypt can have such confidence in God, given their current situation and circumstances, then why can't we? There is really no need for prayer diaries, no excuse for poor memories, no reason to cancel appointments, just "lift up holy hands" and pray; I also like the idea of open hands spread out heavenwards in anticipation of not only offering all that we have to God, but also expectantly anticipating all that he will send in return, to be received with thanksgiving.

The Guild



Many thanks to all who were able to support the Guild's Soup and Sweet Lunch on the 6th November, when £184 was raised for Guild funds (the Guild fund-raises only to give away the money to Christian projects).

By the time you read this, we will be almost halfway through the session (!) with an open meeting on the 30th November and the Christmas Party to be held on the 7th December.

All meetings are open to anyone who would like to come, whether just once or twice, or regularly – why not give us a try?

David and Evelyn Baines



David and Evelyn who visited us in September last year are now living and working in Edinburgh with Wycliffe Bible Translators. David's work is computer-technology based, so he doesn't have to live in another country. His work is in Language Software Development while Evelyn has a new role – working "remotely" (from home) with the Translation Services team in French-speaking Africa. She translates various documents into French, including material used to help train colleagues in these French-speaking countries so they are better equipped to teach, develop literacy materials and start to translate the Bible in their own language.

As David and Evelyn lived and worked in Chad they were aware of the great need for national colleagues to have these materials in French - much of the expertise in Bible translation and literacy is still only available in English and so as Evelyn says, "it's motivating for me to know colleagues who will benefit from this work".

Like many "faith" Christian organisations, missionaries within Wycliffe are not paid a salary, and are supposed to raise the financial support they need. At this time of writing, David and Evelyn's is at 80% of what is considered necessary for them to live in this country. Please continue to pray for them as they settle into this new working situation and for an increase in their financial support.

Presbytery Update

Following on from last month's brief note about the Presbytery's look at the future of Galashiels Churches - though nothing is finalised yet - the Presbytery Business Committee's proposal is the same as the plan of more than five years ago, namely that in the future Old Parish & St. Paul's Church should share a minister (i.e. be linked) with St. John's Church. At present Trinity Church shares a minister with Caddonfoot Church. Should anything change we will keep you informed.

Sunday School Thanks



The Church, and in particular the children, would like to say a HUGE thank you to Mrs. Gail Fox for her many years of dedication to the Sunday School. Gail has decided to draw breath for a while and join the congregation in the pews, and she will be very much missed by the children and the Sunday School Team.

Gail has been there for the children week after week for many years and has always had many a good idea tucked up her sleeve. She has been such a servant, and if there was ever anything needing done, she was the do-er! Always very quick to recognise what needed to be done. Gail very ably organised all the weekend trips away to Craik that the Sunday school have fondest memories of and have proven to be such valuable learning times as well as a lot of fun. Whether it was teaching, crafts, games, picnics, weekends away, holiday club, cleaning toilets, doing dishes etc., Gail has always been behind the graft and has been a true servant of us all. She will be very sorely missed in Sunday School. Many thanks to her for everything!

Treasurer's Report - October 2011

Budgeted Expenditure for 2011		<u>£76,444.00</u>
Budget for January - October 2011		£63703.33
Income from offerings to date	£37,643.58	
Gift Aided offerings tax reclaimed to date	£5,649.04	
Investment income to date	£4,943.49	
Bank Interest to date	<u>£8.54</u>	
		<u>£48,244.65</u>
Shortfall (voluntary income)		£15,458.68
Income from use of premises	£10,159.26	
Other donations to date	£1,750.54	
Legacies to date (less 10% to Charity Fund)	<u>£900.00</u>	
		<u>£12,809.80</u>
Income shortfall to date, against budget		<u>£2,648.88</u>
Actual General Fund income to date	£61,939.61	
Actual General Fund expenditure to date	<u>£65,970.58</u>	
Actual <u>shortfall</u> to date	<u>£4,030.97</u>	

Marjorie McKendrick

Profile of Rev. Albert Bogle, Moderator-Designate for 2012



The founder of an international interdenominational charity that helps street children has been chosen to be the next Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Rev. Albert Bogle, minister at St Andrew's Parish Church in Bo'ness was nominated last month Moderator Designate by the Church of Scotland's Committee to Nominate the Moderator of the General Assembly.

As well as preaching his ministry in Bo'ness Mr Bogle has served the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in various roles from 1983, from sitting on the Panel of Worship to being convener of the Kirk's "Church without Walls" Planning Group from 2004 to 2009. He is currently a member of the World Mission Future Strategy Group.

The importance of the correlation between local, national and international has had a profound effect on him personally, and on his ministry and congregation, and it was this that led to Mr Bogle establishing the Vine Trust.

Set up in 1985 the Vine Trust helps some of the poorest children and communities around the world. Currently, the charity's Amazon Hope Project provides a health service for around 100,000 patients every year.

Mr Bogle is married to Martha. The couple have a son and daughter.