



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

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Dear Friends,

When I was a boy at Trinity Crusader class in Edinburgh we used to sing choruses from the CSSM Chorus book – one of the early progenitors of books apart from Hymn Books for children and young people to sing from. One of the choruses that still sticks in my mind was “Have you ever said, YES”. It went this way:-

“Have you ever said YES,
 have you ever said YES,
 have you ever said YES to Jesus?
 Have you ever said NO
 to the Devil and SO,
 have you ever said YES to Jesus?”

It came to mind as we started to look at King Hezekiah in the second book of Kings on Sunday evenings. Now Hezekiah came to the throne at a time when the nation had, not to put too fine a point on it, ‘gone to the dogs’. It was morally and spiritually bankrupt, had long since abandoned the God who had delivered them from Egypt and led them into the promised land and it was under threat from powers without as well as within. Hezekiah set about a national renewal and the first thing he did was to tear down the idols that the people had made as their gods including even the bronze serpent (the symbol of healing to this day) which Moses had made at the time of God’s healing for them when afflicted by snakes in the wilderness. Even the holy institutions of the past had to go if they got in

the road of the people’s obedience to God.

We noticed that in order to start new things it is so often the case that old things have to stop. Now this autumn we are embarking on a thrust called New Beginnings. In it we are asking ourselves to make a new beginning with God. You will shortly be receiving a visit from a fellow member of the congregation with an invitation to come to our Congregational Meal in the Academy’s Big Hall. This will be a big event and it includes YOU.

I hope you will all think about making a new spiritual beginning with God in the fellowship of the Church but perhaps before that time comes you could consider the things in your life that need new “stoppings”?

What for example are the things that you do that just testify to big things in your life? Look at a typical week in your life and ask, “Is that it?” “Is this what my life is all about?” Look at the things you do, the things you think about, worry about, plan for, spend time at – are they significant – and realise that, before ever you think about new beginnings, maybe there are things that need “new stoppings” in your life. Make space in other words, space for God to do a new thing in your life. With every blessing and new beginnings in Christ,

*Yours Sincerely,
 Leslie Steele.*



THE GUILD

The new session starts with a Soup and Sweet Lunch after the morning service on Sunday, 3rd October to which everyone is invited. Price is £2.50 for adults and £1 for children. These lunches are always enjoyed for both food and fellowship so if you've not come before, make a note of the date and come and enjoy some extra fellowship.

The theme for this year is "Dare to care with compassion" and on the 6th October our minister will be the opening speaker.

Two weeks later, on October 20th Margaret Anne Crawford will tell us of the work at the Richard Cave Holiday Home for people suffering from Multiple Sclerosis.

At our first meeting in November, Graham Lawson will give us his reflections on 10 years spent in Burkina Faso, translating the Scriptures into a local tribal language.

You don't have to become a member to attend a Guild meeting so please free to come to any meeting that you would be interested in. We meet, as usual, in the small hall – newly painted – at 2.15 pm on alternate Wednesdays.

Deaths

- Aug. 16th Grant Turner, 42 Kilnknowe Place.
- Aug. 26th Robert Johnston, Gala Nursing Home.
- Sept. 14th Harold Richard Henry Jones, 8 The Loanings, Denholm.

We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved families and friends.

The Family Meal on 30th October

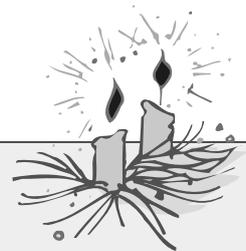
Thanks to everyone who responded with offers of crockery and cutlery etc. as requested in last month's newsletter – we need still more!! (and white tablecloths too, if possible) We realise that many folk do not have complete sets for 6 people but can you provide dishes for 3 place settings? We don't know, as yet, how many we will need to cater for – it could be 250! We don't plan to spend time washing dishes after the meal so you will get them back dirty! If you are able to help, please phone one of the catering team (numbers below); put the dishes etc into a box or basin and if you don't have transport someone will collect and return your things.

Please phone one of the team: David Leckey – 757631, Marion Stirling – 01578 730591, Deirdre Virtue – 753566 or Lillias Steele – 752320.

Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Trevor

Colin and Ruth Hanley would be grateful for any help with the Sonrise programme that has been such a good aid to Trevor. If you have a spare hour in the week (or more) and are fairly fit give them a ring for more information (759402) or speak to one of them at church.



Christmas Fayre

An initial planning meeting for the Fayre was held recently and although the attendance was sparse the following stalls were agreed on:

-  **Cake and Candy – convenors - Guild**  **Handcrafts – convenors - Musicmakers**
-  **Gifts & Toys – convenors – Tuesday Bible Study Group**
-  **D I Y & produce – convenors – Badminton Group**
-  **Books – convenor – Peter Sandison**
-  **Teas & Refreshments – convenor - Barbara McCann**

If your group was not represented and they have an idea or a stall they could convene please contact Hugh Bain.

If you are approached to help in any way please say yes remember this is YOUR church and it requires a all the financial help it can get to enable to continue to spread God's Word in Galashiels.

Passing thoughts

On yet another interview:- “Hi, Jonah, I’m Arep-ter with the Middle East News Service. We’re all desperate to hear about your encounter with that regurgitating gargantuan leviathan monster!”

Jonah:- “Oh no, another idiot reporter with six syllable words. Listen, that’s not important. The point is that I had to learn the biggest lesson of my life – the hard way!”

Arep:- “Oh no! There goes a really terrific headline.”

Jonah: “The Lord’s word to me was – Arise, go to Nineveh, cry out against it for their wickedness has come before Me.”

Arep: “That’s Assyria! They are not just mean, they are barbarous, vicious, inhuman, ruthless ravaging monsters! Gee, how about this for a headline – The Assyrians came down like wolves on the fold. Boy, your head looks real good on your shoulders. How come it’s still there?”

Jonah: “I like it there! So I hotfooted it down to Joppa, and got a boat to Tarshish”

Arep: “Good move. That’s due West. Nineveh’s due East. So your head stayed attached”

Jonah: “No! Bad move. I didn’t skedaddle to save my skin. No way! I wanted the Lord to destroy, utterly pulverise, annihilate and grind the Assyrians into the dust! Oh, you’ve got me doing it now! However, I know the Lord is gracious, merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness. If they truly repented, I reckoned the Lord would forgive them, and there’s no way I wanted that!”

Arep: “You must be mad! You’re trying to manipulate God! That’s not just a high risk ploy – that’s insane. It’s not just your head you’ll lose, you’ll lose your soul!”

Jonah: “Oh I know, I know. The very thought of it gives me a belting headache. Have you got an aspirin?”

Arep: “Aspirin? What’s an aspirin?”

Jonah: “Oh I forgot. They’ve not been invented yet! Being a prophet, I sometimes get my wires crossed. Anyhow, I never got to Tarshish. The Lord sent the worst storm in living memory. We were all going to be drowned, so I told the crew that it was my fault, and I reckoned that if they threw me overboard, things would calm down. You know they tried to get me ashore, failed, then the storm got even worse, so bad, that the crew abandoned their gods and prayed to the Lord!! Then they threw me overboard! I didn’t even get wet! The Lord did not abandon me. A huge fish swallowed me!”

Arep: “Gosh, I’m speechless ... for the first time in my life!”

Jonah: “I was there for 3 days and nights. Boy I repented of my folly and prayed every minute of that time. My prayers were answered and the fish coughed me up onto dry land!!”

Arep: “Astounding. So your troubles were over.”

Jonah: “No way! The Lord’s word came to me a second time – Go to Nineveh and tell them that in 40 days I will overturn that city. So this time, I obeyed!”

Arep: “Wise move! If your God ever tells me to do something, I’ll do it pronto – if not quicker! How did the Ninevehans react?”

Jonah: “They repented!! Sackcloth, ashes, fasting, the full works, renouncing of evil. Everyone from the king down! The Lord saw this and He relented. I was hopping mad. All that hassle for nothing! It’s just as I said – and I told the Lord so. If that lot in Nineveh could get off the hook with their record, I would be better off dead!”

Arep: “Boy, are you a slow learner! You must be solid bone between your ears! If the Lord were not, as you said, gracious, merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, you would be a goner.”

Jonah: “Then there was the episode of the plant. I won’t go into that, but I ended up being mad at the Lord and wishing I was dead. Again!!”

Arep: “I think I’ll go. Your stupidity must be contagious. Don’t you see God’s message? His grace is available to everyone, not just Israelites, but all humanity. You were playing to your own agenda. You wanted God to be unforgiving. If that were so, where would you be now? I’ll tell you – fish bait!! Salvation is available to everyone, but must be accepted – and accepted on God’s terms. By rebelling against God’s will, you cannot receive God’s Spirit!”

Jonah: “You are 100% right! Now look what has happened. The ship’s crew were converted, the Ninevehans were converted, it looks like you have been converted, and I’m back at one with God. So all’s well that ends well.”

Arep: “As a newsman, I like to have the last word. Just remember what Moses said to a colleague in a previous interview:-

WHEN GOD’S ROWING THE BOAT, DON’T STICK YOUR OAR IN.

Jack Howie

Sadly, we will be saying “goodbye” to Jack and his wife, Sandra, as they are moving in October through to East Kilbride to be nearer their daughter and grand-daughter. We have really enjoyed their fellowship during the past years and wish them God’s rich blessings as they make this move.

Provide a good home for your books!



As keeper of the bookstall at the forthcoming **Christmas Fayre on Saturday 27th November**, I would be delighted to receive any

books that may be surplus to your requirements. You can either leave them at the entrance to the Church, or let me know if you would like them to be uplifted. You can contact me in person at Church; on 01896-758634; or by email (PSandison@aol.com). Do consider contributing to this worthy cause!

Peter Sandison

Treasurer's Report

AUGUST 2004

Income

Offerings 4 weeks (Weekly average £902.74).....	£3,610.97
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.....	£148.21
Donations.....	£555.00
From Fabric Fund.....	£239.70
	<u>£4,553.88</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone.....	£13.00
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£37.40
Presbytery Dues.....	£280.00
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£3,911.40
	<u>£4,241.80</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OFFERINGS

Stipend	£2,998.60	2nd	£514.66
Mission & Aid	£802.80	9th	£680.61
Organist	£80.00	16th	£607.50
Cleaners (5wks)	£30.00	23rd	£591.20
	<u>£3,911.40</u>		<u>£2,393.97</u>
		Paid through Bank	£1,217.00
			<u>£3,610.97</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

		2004	2003		
Jan-July	30wks	£22,424.89	£21,298.05	30wks	
August	4wks	£3,610.97	£3,134.79	4wks	
		<u>£26,035.86</u>	<u>£24,432.84</u>		

From Anne Mackay

Strange, isn't it, how our experience is shaped by busyness and pressure and rarely punctuated by pauses and peace?

Strange, how every week seems to be the week when everything seems to happen; when we seem to be rushing everywhere; when everyone seems to call and demand attention; when, even when we are alone and the work is done and everything is quiet we still persist in busyness.

Strange, isn't it, how there never seems to be a middle way between pace and peace.

Even when we are on holiday, when we are out for rest and refreshment, for renewal and resreation, even then it's a rush to get there and at the end it's an equal rush to get home again....

(Douglas Aitken: "Busyness" in "Words for the Living")

"The peace of God, which is beyond our understanding, guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus" - from the Book of Common Order.