



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

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Dear Friends,

We enter the Advent Season now when the Church everywhere celebrates the coming of Christ. I hope you will consider coming along to Church to join with us in our celebration and I want to tell you the reason why. Is it because we want more people in the Church, more people to fill the pews, to be involved in the organisations, to help in leadership, to give money? No, no, no, no. Yes, our New Beginnings thrust this autumn laid out a lot of what we do in Old Parish & St Paul's and we do desire to see you with us but please *hear this*, it really isn't involvement in the Church or its 'things' that we seek, what we seek above all is the best for everyone and we know that the best thing is to come to know and love Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

But what does this religious-speak mean? It means that the inkling that people of the world have of what is good, right, just and true comes to be focussed in Jesus Christ. If you have ever thought, "that's not right", or "that isn't fair", or on the other hand "that's good" or "that's true" then you have acknowledged a higher standard, a universal morality by which you have declared all things must be judged. CS Lewis spoke about this idea of right and wrong as being "a clue to the meaning of the universe". (Mere Christianity – Chapter 1). It is reasonable to speak of this greater reality as being God behind the universe.

However Christmas brings things much nearer home than ideas and clues. People everywhere of various religions have acknowledged the intrinsic

goodness and rightness of Jesus but the Bible goes much further in saying that unlike any other man the very essence and presence of God was in him, indeed *was* him such that we have no other picture of God except Jesus Christ. "Show us the Father" said Thomas and "we shall be satisfied" and Jesus replied, "Have you been with me so long and yet do not understand? He who has seen me has seen the Father" and in Colossians Paul declares, "All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily".

To come to know and love Jesus Christ therefore is to come to know and love God so you see that is why this is the most important thing for any man or woman because it is to enter into a relationship with their creator and originator that is described by the word "Love". As the Christmas carol says "Love came down at Christmas" and the best thing for any man or woman is to know that love and be caught up by it.

The Barna Research Group, a polling and statistical organisation in America, has various ways of defining classifications of people by asking them questions. One question asked of people in order to define them as Christian is "Have you ever made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in your life today?". That's not everything there is to say but as a basic rule of thumb, it's not a bad definition and it's our prayer that everyone who reads this newsletter will be able to answer that in the affirmative. May God bless you this Christmas,

*Yours in Him,
Leslie Steele*

Newsletter Deliverers: a plea—and heartfelt thanks!

Like to help out and get fit(ter)?! There are soon to be vacancies on the team of Newsletter deliverers – the ones who kindly deliver this excellent publication to your letterbox! No experience required – just a willingness to spend a brief time once a month delivering Newsletters to about fifteen or so households in a District. Districts needing to be covered include Scott Street/Gala Park, Croft Street/Douglas Street, and Balnakiel Terrace/Kilnknowe Place.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the team of deliverers for the many hours they have put in over the years trudging from house to house. And special thanks to the forthcoming "retirees", Peter Henry – who has been covering two Districts – and Lynn Beswick.

If you would like to offer your services to this worthy cause, please have a word with me in Church or give me a call on Galashiels 758634."

Peter Sandison

Christmas Services at Old Parish and St. Paul's

Friday 17th December	6.30 p.m. Boys Brigade Carol Service
Saturday 18th December	Sunday School Christmas Parties
Sunday, 19th December	11.00 a.m. Christmas Family Service
Friday 24th December	11.30 p.m. Christmas Watch Night Service (Carol singing from 11.15 p.m.)
Christmas Day	10.30 a.m. Family Service (Bring your favourite gift!)

'Mary gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.'

Luke 2:7

O may we keep and ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving all mankind;
Trace we the Babe, who hath redeemed our loss,
From his poor manger to His bitter cross;
Saved by His love, incessant we shall sing
Eternal praise to heaven's almighty king.



BOYS' BRIGADE

Our Company, the 1st Galashiels, were well represented at the Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 14 November.

Captain David Nightingale, along with Lieutenants Robbie Noble, Carol Grieve and Gordon Smith and members of the Company Section, paraded along with members of the other three Galashiels Boys' Brigade Companies.

During the service, Andrew Grieve from our Company Section, laid the wreath at the War Memorial on behalf of all the Galashiels Companies. Our final evening this year will be on Friday 17 December, when our Carol Service will be held in our Church commencing at 6.30 p.m. A warm welcome is extended to all members of the congregation and friends.

Ian Forsyth, President

Afternoon Teas – Riverslea

A much belated thank you is due to all our kind friends who came to the Autumn Teas at Riverslea towards the end of September. We enjoyed having you and hope you enjoyed coming, the company, and the fun. We are indebted to your generosity and the "Donation Pail" yielded £270 for Church Funds (including 3 donations from absent friends – a truly remarkable effort!

We would also like to thank Zena for her good humour, baking, time and support she gave us over these days.

Nancy & Douglas Noble

Death

Nov.19th Mrs Margaret Birch, 70 Tweed Road, Galashiels
We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved families and friends.

Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal

On behalf of Tweedbank Guides and Blythswood Care, I'd like to say thank you very much to everyone at St. Paul's Church as well as the Guides who contributed to the shoebox appeal. The donations were sent together, and we loaded over 100 boxes onto the lorry last week; this amount is more than I'd ever dreamed of. I'd been panicking that we would not have the 40 required to get a special collection. I was told to have faith and its amazing what prayer can do. The guides were set this challenge as part of their yearly challenge badge and certainly those who put the most effort in got the most out of it, there were some fantastic shoeboxes and I hope that this small contribution will make some people very happy.

Thank you for your help

*Gail Fox, Unit Guide
Tweedbank Guides*

THE CRECHE

I would like to thank everyone who has helped in the creche over the past year. I will soon be making up the rota for next year and would like to know if there is anyone else in the congregation who would like to add their names to the rota. It involves being on duty in the creche from 10.50 a.m. every 5 to 6 weeks or so, and there are always 2 adults on duty at any one time. If you would like to add your name to the rota or would like to find out more, please telephone me on Galashiels 758634 or see me at Church.

Similarly if anyone already on the list would like their names removed, please let me know as soon as possible.

Many thanks.

Free to a good home – one black and one colour ink cartridge, still in boxes, for HP series 600 inkjet printer, etc. contact Jim (Tel. 751003)

Christmas Reflections from the Prayer Secretary

Let us all remember
When our faith is running low,
Christ is more than just a figure
Wrapped in an ethereal glow –
For He came and dwelt among us
And He knows our every need,
And He loves and understands us
And forgives each sinful deed –
He was crucified and buried
And rose again in glory
And His promise of salvation
Makes the wondrous Christmas Story
An abiding reassurance
That the little Christ Child's birth
Was the beautiful beginning
Of God's plan for PEACE on EARTH

Helen Steiner Rice

'Often, in the midst of great problems, we stop short of the real blessing that God has for us, which is a fresh vision of who He is.' (Anne Graham Lotz)

A Prayer at Christmas

Loving Heavenly Father lead us to Bethlehem to hear anew and afresh the wondrous story of our Saviour's birth and give us glad hearts of joy and thankfulness to praise and worship you.



Once again we are holding a disco at the church on Saturday 4th December 2004. This will be a fundraiser event to help cover costs for Crossover camp 2005, which both the Boys Brigade and Guides will be attending.

Both the disco and camp were a great success last year, so if you wish to help at the disco or know some young folk who would like to come, please speak to Gail Fox (01896 753433) or Robbie Noble (01896 753936).

There will be two discos so that all ages can attend:

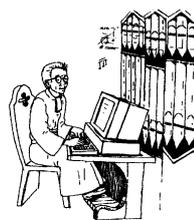
Yellow ticket: P1-P3 age, 6pm-7.30pm, £1.50

Red: P4-P7, 8pm-10pm, £2.00

Green: S1+, 8pm-11pm, £2.50

Ticket includes 50p voucher for the tuck shop.

Multi-Media System



It has been decided by the session that the increasing use of visual material in worship means it would be desirable to have a modern projection facility. This would allow for the use of computer designed material, as well as footage from videos and DVD's.

For a church the size of St Paul's, we will require a 10 foot screen, a very powerful projector and a computer to run the whole system. In addition to this, we would plan to upgrade our sound system which is also in urgent need of attention. Another useful aspect of this system is that it is not fixed and can be moved into the halls or wherever the church needs to use it.

In total, we need to raise £5,000 to put this in place, which would help the ongoing development of the congregation's worship

If you wish to contribute towards these items, the Congregational Board will be opening an "Audio / Visual Account" which will only be used for new technology within the church. For further information, please speak to David Leckey (Treasurer) or Robbie Noble (who can tell you more about the system).

Christians in Iraq

As we celebrate Christmas with our family and friends in the freedom of our land, let us remember the Christians in Iraq, for whom this will be a very hard time. A recent letter from the Barnabas Fund tells of the grief and devastation caused by the bombings of five Christian Churches in October. Since then, there have been threats of violence against Christians, because the women do not follow the Muslim practice of covering their heads. Church leaders are accused of being agents of the West and threatened with death. Leaflets circulating in Iraq carry the message 'Christians go – leave Iraq'. The Church in Iraq pre-dates Islam by many centuries, yet now the Christians feel they are being forced out of their homeland. Please pray for them.

Not Another Silent Night

Join with the exile band and choir in Not Another Silent Night at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh on Saturday 11 December 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

The full exile choir and orchestra help you to celebrate Christmas. Join in with your favourite carols and celebrate Christmas the Gospel way!

Tickets (from a mere £5 (£4.50 students)!) available from the Usher Hall Box Office 0131 228 1155. (For St. Paul's members – Gordon Smith has a few tickets available, so try him first. There may be a few seats on a minibus going up to the event – if transport is a problem. More information from Ishbel Adamson 01896 756032)

This is going to be a great outreach opportunity with the Gospel message gently and sensitively presented through the familiar Christmas message. Come and bring your friends!

CAMPAIGNS CORNER

Brighten the future at the flick of a switch: 100% renewable energy, still bringing you the same light, warmth and comfort, but without the potential to cause floods, droughts and cyclones which affect poor and vulnerable communities around the world. Tearfund had joined with **Good Energy** to promote renewable energy that won't pollute the environment and won't run out. Customers get the same quality and reliability of supply, and help reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Switching to **Good Energy** is free, and it's not heavy on the pocket, less than £3 extra per month, and if you sign up Tearfund will receive £10, and £10 more after a year. For churches and businesses that sign up, Tearfund will receive £120. This action is part of Tearfund's *Whose Earth* campaign. Simply call 0845 456 1640 or visit www.good-energy.co.uk, quoting UE38d. Who said electricity has to cost the earth?

Jubilee Debt Campaign: Jubilee Scotland has joined a wide coalition of Scottish charities, trade unions and faith groups in launching ambitious plans for 2005, in the run up to the G8 Summit to be held at Gleneagles. **In a world where poverty kills 30,000 people every day**, 2005 will be a year of unprecedented opportunity for rich countries to change the rules and practice of **trade**, cancel poor countries **debts** and deliver more and better **aid**. This time, plans are being made by Scottish campaigners, in co-operation with others from all over the world, for thousands to the streets of Edinburgh (as happened at the Millennium), on **Saturday 2nd July 2005**, in advance of the G8 meeting. The campaigners will insist that the world's richest (and most influential) nations should take up the challenge to **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**. Gordon Brown recently announced the UK will spend an extra £100 million per year on debt relief, let's continue to speak up on behalf of the poor, and pray, that there are no harmful strings attached to this promise, and that this cancellation will not be funded at the expense of aid budgets. Find out more at www.makepovertyhistory.org.uk

Trade Justice Movement: Consider this for starters; the developed world gives \$50 billion in aid every year, but spent \$350 billion on agricultural subsidies in 2003(although some of

Treasurer's Report

OCTOBER 2004

Income

Offerings 4 weeks (Weekly average £729.72).....	£2,918.86
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.....	£82.81
Donations/Retiring Offering.....	£1,540.00
From Fabric Fund.....	£552.25
	<u>£5,093.92</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Telephone Costs.....	£89.59
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£141.78
Fabric Fund.....	£1,857.39
Retiring Offering – Tear Fund.....	£79.50
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£3,911.40
	<u>£6,079.66</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OFFERINGS

Stipend	£2,998.60	4th	£523.30
Mission & Renewal	£802.80	11th	£471.56
Organist	£80.00	18th	£379.70
Cleaners (4wks)	£30.00	25th	£627.30
	<u>£3,911.40</u>		<u>£2,001.86</u>
		Paid through Bank	£917.00
			<u>£2,918.86</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

		2004		2003	
Jan-Sept	39wks	£29,819.46		£27,717.73	39wks
October	4wks	£2,918.86		£3,430.81	4wks
		<u>£32,738.32</u>		<u>£31,148.54</u>	

these are much needed!), whereas debt repayments by all developing countries amount to \$400 billion per annum. For example, the USA spends \$3 billion in subsidy to its cotton farmers and the world price of cotton is at its lowest, in real terms, since the Great Depression of the 1930's. The surpluses in production of these kinds of commodities are "dumped" on world markets, inevitably bringing destitution to hundreds of millions of small family farms in the developing world. 6,000 people attended the rally on September 26th and many thousands sent in the "Vote for Trade Justice" cards, which are still available at the back of the church. For more details on any of the above – please contact Jim Tennant. Thank you for your continuing prayerful support and action.

God knew we could never buy our way to Him – the cost was too great.

We could never earn our way to Him – the task was too great.

We could never will our way to Him – the commitment was too great.

God knew we could never come to Him – so He came to us!

Roy Lessin