



Galashiels Old Parish and St. Paul's Church

Newsletter ♦ September 2006

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Letter from Leslie

Dear Friends,

I hope you have been enjoying this lovely summer whether away on holiday or at home. I spent a fair bit of time travelling with my daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren in their van. When the journey was a bit longer than usual I was often regaled by my granddaughter saying "tell me a story". Sound familiar to you?

My grandfather was seemingly regaled by me with requests to "tell me a story about a wee boy in a red car", then next night "...about a wee boy in a green car", then next night "... about a wee boy in a blue car" and so on - any colour would do. At any rate he was a good teller of stories about wee boys in cars. I don't know if I'm any good at fulfilling the request from Jenna, but was tempted eventually into trying to stop the procedure by the following means, which some of you might know:-

"Shall I tell you a story?
About Jack-a-nory?
Shall I begin it?
...there's noth'n in it".

Did it work? Not really, but I was reminded about Eugene Peterson's saying about life when he said that people want to know

"Is there a story ... and am I in it?" The quotation from Shakespeare about life being "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" is well known. If that is the case then we have much cause to be gloomy, and yet despite that it is the foundation of the modern philosophy so prevalent today called postmodernism. It declares that there is no *metanarrative* behind life, or to put it more simply, no *big story*, that life is a tale with "nothing in it". Christians beg to differ: there IS a story behind the universe; there is a Story-teller behind it, and everything and everyone has their place in the unfolding story. When Paul was in Athens he preached to the intellectuals of the day and told them that God had created the world and everything in it, and gave us our lives so that we would feel after Him and find Him (*Acts 17:27*). If that is the case then indeed there is a story and we are in it; our part is to find out what that part is and to engage in it with all our strength.

"Shall I tell you a story ?
'bout a Newsletter Reader?
Shall I begin it?
... You finish it!"

*With every blessing,
Leslie Steele.*

Film Award for UGC and Focus SU Group

Members of the Underground Church and the FOCUS Scripture Union Group were very pleased when their five minute film, "Birds of the Air", based on Matthew 6:26* was nominated for 4 of the 10 award categories - Acting, Writing, Adaptation and Best Film - in this year's SAMYP Film Festival. The awards took place at the "home" of the Multimedia Youth Project, St. Andrews Parish Church, Bo'ness.

Competition was tough as the film awards are now international with entries from outwith Scotland as well as the length and breadth of the country.



We were delighted to bring home the "Adaptation" category. Having only entered the competition for the first time this year it was exciting to be given an award for a category that we had worked hard on and discussed with all the members of the group in order to make the Bible verse relevant.

If you haven't had the opportunity of seeing the film then you can borrow the Church copy on DVD from the bookstall beside the pulpit.

Who knows what 2007 will bring for our budding actors and actresses !!!

Ishbel Adamson

** Look at the birds flying around: they do not sow seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds?*

The Lydia Project, Malawi

There is all too often much hand wringing in the Church of Scotland instead of stepping out in faith. In that wonderful book of wisdom, Ecclesiastes, the preacher commands his listener 'to cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days'(11.1). In his powerful teaching in Mathew 25, Jesus reminds his hearers of their obligation to others less fortunate than themselves.

Last year Bruce Ritchie very movingly reported the truly appalling situation in which many find themselves in Malawi. He touched a chord, and I am happy to report that both Session and Board looked sympathetically on the suggestion that we commit ourselves to help, not just in giving a 'one off gift' but in committing ourselves to regularly and systematically helping those who are suffering so much. To set out to help without thinking through the issue would be foolish. Bruce told us about the work of the Lydia Project, organised by Claus and Rachel Fiedler, through which appropriate help is given to those in need. For example, a family can be fed for a month by a donation of just £13. So by regularly giving £40, we would be feeding three families for a month and saying by our actions to our brothers and sisters in Malawi that we stand beside them in their need.

When we thought of the practicality of providing a regular gift it was decided that it could be done very appropriately by the small surplus we generate in The Lunch Club - an idea supported by the "Lunch Clubbers"



Preparing a meal for children at an orphan care feeding centre

themselves.

Arrangements have been made to put this plan into action. We have cast our bread on the waters and we have responded in kind to Jesus.

The Lydia Project started in early 2002 at the height of the hunger season in Malawi. It was initiated by Mrs. Rachel Fiedler and has operated continuously since its inception, bringing food, fertiliser, seed, and community support to villages out in the isolated rural areas.

The Lydia Project is a legal charity under BACOMA (Baptist Convention of Malawi), which is registered both as a church and an NGO (Non-Government Organisation). The Project has a board and its own account. Klaus Fiedler (fiedler@globemw.net) is the accountant. The areas of Malawi being reached are: the eastern part of Southern Malawi, which includes the areas around Zomba, Domasi, Jali, Liwonde, Balaka, Mangochi, plus four areas in the Northern Region of Malawi. Food is bought locally, and then transported directly out to the villages at risk, where it is distributed free to named and identified recipients from lists drawn up on previous fact-finding visits. Maize is available in Malawi, but is expensive.

Lydia has a simple organisation. It is in contact with 197 communities in its working area. These communities are organised in 17 chapters. In most cases supplies are taken to the chapters by Lydia staff. The chapters have lists of needy people, mostly of households with orphans. Care is taken that beneficiaries in the rural communities include people from all religious backgrounds.

Lydia works on a direct action philosophy. Lydia also has long-term aims in terms of development, and medical help, especially in HIV related home-based care.

For more information go to www.brucezomba.co.uk and click on the link from there.

George McCann

Deaths

Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life"

30th July Mrs. Kathleen Jack, Windyknowe Road, Galashiels

11th August Mrs. Eileen Robertson, Melrose Road, Galashiels

We extend our sincere sympathy and prayers to the bereaved families

Focus Scripture Union Group



Focus Group starts again on Wednesday 6 September in the big hall here in St Paul's. We welcome all P7 - S3s, and new members are very welcome!

The group is Bible based but includes games as well as Bible input. Cost is 50p. per session.

Ishbel Adamson

Holy Wit

The wedding report in the local paper said, 'The Bride wore a long white dress which fell to the floor.'

From: *Holy Wit*, Selected and Compiled by Rev. James A Simpson, p. 58

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Editor's note: there is no connection whatsoever between this story and the notice below!

Weddings

15th July 2006

Craig Lowrie
160 Gala Park, Galashiels
to
Andrea Brown
4 Riverside Drive, Tweedbank



26 August 2006

Norman Maciver
92 Forest Gardens, Galashiels
to
Susan Black
7 Westwood Gardens, Galashiels

Best wishes and future happiness!

Thank you

Effie Devlin would belatedly like to thank Leslie, Lillias, Margaret Cashman and friends in St Paul's Church for cards, letters and support received, especially over these last few months.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

During March of this year, Melrose and Peebles Presbytery appointed five ministers and five elders, including our minister - the Rev. Leslie M. Steele - and myself, as Commissioners to the General Assembly, 2006. Presbytery appoints different ministers each year and they would normally be accompanied by their elder representing their Church at Presbytery.

Although Leslie had attended many previous General Assemblies, I was attending as a first time Commissioner.

Prior to attending the General Assembly, I received a book containing copies of all the reports from the various committees, councils and delegates, which were to be presented to the Assembly. This book was about an inch thick and is historically known as "the Blue Book", which I assume takes its name from its blue cover. Also sent was a booklet entitled "Order of Proceedings". This booklet contained details of all Ministers, Elders and Deacons attending the General Assembly from the Presbyteries of Scotland, England, Europe and Jerusalem, delegates from other churches in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and visitors from other countries. Also included were details of the Youth Representatives appointed at the National Youth Assembly 2004 and others from twenty-one Scottish Presbyteries. Unfortunately, there were no nominations for a youth representative from Melrose and Peebles Presbytery.

I was absolutely amazed at the number of people attending, not only from Scotland and the rest of the U.K., but from all over the world. They are all too numerous to mention, but they included Ministers or Representatives from the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Church of Zambia.

Each Commissioner, Delegate or Visitor was issued with a security pass bearing an allocated number, mine being 114, and the last number being 895.

On the evening of Friday 19th May, I attended a meeting for first time Commissioners at Rainy Hall, which is part of the Church of Scotland New College complex where prospective ministers study, and which is adjacent to the Assembly Hall. The Hall was packed with other first time Commissioners, and I learned that the three gentlemen sitting next to me were the Rev. Dr. John Evans from The Uniting Church of Australia, the Rev. James Marshall from Bearsden, who was the Moderator of The United Free Church of Scotland, and Ian Dutton from Stichill, an Elder from the Presbytery of Jedburgh.

The Rev. William C. Hewitt, Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, then informed us of the various procedures, and on moving into the Assembly Hall explained how we operated the microphones if we wished to speak during a debate, and how to work the electronic voting machines should this be required.

My only previous visit to the Assembly Hall was to see the Scottish Parliament when they occupied the building whilst the new Parliament building was being built. If any of you were on a similar visit you will have been in the Hall where the General Assembly is held.

Although most of the persons attending the General Assembly were staying in Edinburgh, I opted to travel by car every day, sharing the transport with Leslie. As I drove home on the Friday night I must say that I felt quite honoured to be attending the Assembly the following day. I will give you a summary of my experience at the General Assembly in the next Newsletter.

Ian Forsyth



Assembly Hall, Edinburgh



General Assembly



Lord Mackay of Clashfern, Lord High Commissioner



The Right Rev. Alan McDonald, Moderator

Treasurer's Reports

	June	July
Income	£	£
Offerings - 4 wks (June) / 5 wks (July)	2,910.73	3,470.09
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.	2,763.08	68.47
Donations	326.50	1,993.31
Total Income	6,000.31	5,531.87
Expenditure		
Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone	270.53	377.93
Servicing of Appliances	222.19	-
Advertising, Printing & Stationery	-	273.80
Fabric, etc.	-	750.25
Manse costs	-	800.00
Sunday School	-	784.55
Media Sound System A/C	200.00	-
Standard Monthly Expenditure		
Stipend	4,348.70	4,348.70
Organist	125.00	125.00
Cleaners - 4 wks (June) / 5 wks (July) ..	32.00	40.00
Total Monthly Expenditure	5,198.42	7,500.23
Offerings		
5th (June) / 3rd (July)	557.14	369.49
12th (June) / 10th (July)	421.76	341.42
19h (June) / 17th (July)	437.71	697.54
27th (June) / 24th(July)	542.12	489.70
31st (July)	-	619.94
Total Weekly Offerings	1,958.73	2,518.09
Paid through Bank	952.00	952.00
Total Offerings	2,910.73	3,470.09

Lunch Club Away Day



Members of the Lunch Club had a very enjoyable trip to North Berwick at the end of June. Following a very good lunch at the Blenheim House Hotel, there was time for a wee wander or seat looking over the harbour area before returning home.

Feed the world for free

Too good to be true - well, only partly! If you go to www.thehungersite.com you will see a button "HELP FEED THE HUNGRY". Press this and you will help feed somebody, somewhere, with the value of 1.1 cups of staple food, paid for by the site's sponsors. Put the site into your "Favorites" and every time you're online just "click"!

Jim Tennant

Offerings Update

	2006		2005	
	Monthly Total/s (£)	Weekly Average (£)	Monthly Total/s (£)	Weekly Average (£)
January - May (22 wks)	17,210.98	782.32	18,475.85	839.81
June (4 wks)	2,910.73	727.68	3,350.99	837.75
July (5 wks 2006 / 4 wks 2005)	3,470.09	694.02	3,190.06	797.51
Total (31 wks 2006 / 30 wks 2005)	23,582.80	760.74	25,016.90	833.90



Senior Badminton starts on 20th September – please come and join us for fun and fitness!

Not the Ryder Cup



Never mind the Ryder Cup in Ireland, this year's big event on the golfing calendar, the Old Parish & St Paul's Golf Outing, will take place between September 11th and 25th at the world famous K(else Golf) Club. 3-irons have been getting polished all summer in preparation for this event. Can Derek Turnbull and Richard Noble defend the titles they won last year?

If you wish to participate in the outing, please contact Jim Tennant. Details will be sent to all of last year's participants.