



Galashiels Old Parish and St. Paul's Church

Newsletter ♦ Dec 06 - Jan 07

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Letter from Leslie

When I was at University one of our lecturers, DWD Shaw (Bill Shaw) had a book published called "Who is God" and it was advertised on posters in New College as *Who is God? by DWD Shaw*.

Students are always up to mischief and it didn't take long for one wag to write under the poster in big black letters, *Who is DWD Shaw? by God*.

Well before you laugh, there is an answer to the first question. The answer lies in the crib at Christmas time because it is in the person of Jesus Christ that we find God incarnate - "His name shall be called Immanuel, which means God with us". On Sunday evenings we have been looking at the first chapter of Colossians and finding the statements made there about Christ so definite, so emphatic, so unambiguous that we can come to no other conclusion than that it is God we are dealing with in Jesus Christ. If you want to know who God is, go to Jesus.

The other question, "Who are you?", is an interesting one. For many the answer would be in how they felt, what they cared about, their likes, dislikes and so on; for others it would be about their family background, their genes, their ethnicity and ancestry - however the best place to start would be with God. The TV detective, Kojak, used to say to the characters he met on the street, "Who loves ya baby?". The answer to that question is that, if no-one else loves you, God does. It doesn't really matter who YOU think you are, GOD thinks you are important - a somebody - and at Christmas time you should hear afresh God's word to you in Jesus:

"For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" – John 3:16

With every blessing this Christmas time,

Leslie Steele.

Christmas Services 2006

~ Come and join us! ~



December 15 th	6.30 p.m.	Boys' Brigade Carol Service ☉
December 17 th & 24 th	11.00 a.m.	Christmas Family Services ☉
December 17 th	6.30 p.m.	Seasonal Evening Service
December 24 th	11.15 p.m. for 11.30 p.m.	Candlelight Evening Service
December 25 th	10.30 – 11.15 a.m.	Christmas Day Family Service

☉ followed by refreshments & mince pies



Sunday School Christmas Parties 2007

will be held in the Church Halls on

Saturday 16th December

Younger children 2.00 - 4.00 p.m.

Older children 6.00 - 9.00 p.m.

Christmas Fair

A big THANK YOU to everyone who contributed in any way to our recent Christmas Fair fundraiser held on the 18th November.

The morning was a huge success, raising a much-needed £2447, which will help temporarily alleviate our present financial situation.

It was with great enthusiasm and mutual support that our church family worked together in various ways, making this a wonderful day and by God's Grace an answer to prayer. From baking fresh scones and making coffee, to working on stalls, serving at tables, selling and buying tickets - as well as all the super contributions that were given so willingly to all the stalls - many, many thanks!

All praise and thanks to our Heavenly Father who sustains and enables us all to participate in His plans for Old Parish & St Paul's in this its 125th anniversary year, and to continue working for His Glory in this place.

Lynn Beswick & Louise Johnston



----- AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE -----

At the last Congregational Board Meeting the Board wished to make absolutely clear to the Congregation the seriousness of our financial situation.

The Treasurer has had to empty our reserve fund due to the fact that our income has persistently been insufficient for us to pay our bills – see last month's newsletter. As figures stand at the moment we will run out of funds altogether next year. The Board has considered major ways of reducing our expenditure to the bare minimum (we certainly aim to keep this newsletter going though it is now put together in-house) and maximizing our income (through the use of our Halls) but at bottom the regular giving of those who consider themselves part of Old Parish & St Paul's is the only long term solution. So here is a plea to every member:



GIVING TO THE CHURCH

For too long Churches have been financed on the principle of "How slow can we ride the bicycle without falling off". Do you get the drift? Minimal effort when going slow, but a quick spurt when the bike is about to fall. When the Church is in special need, efforts are made to save the day, but then a return to "slow ahead" comes back all too easily.

In all honesty this is not the way to run the Church. The way to run the Church is for everyone to fix a percentage of their income to give and **to stick to it**, after all it is what we all promised*. Each person must determine what that percentage will be, though many see the Old Testament's 10% as the God-ordained proportion ("tithing" comes from it), but whatever it be, it means that when a change in income comes, there is a matching change in giving. No forgetfulness, but a steady commitment. 2007 will be an important year to see whether or not we are going to rise to that challenge. Are you with us and will you make that "fitting proportion" your commitment?

*** Church membership vow:** *Do you promise to give a fitting proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world? I do.*

Sporting Champions at the Christmas Fair

The following winners were crowned at the Fair, up in the gallery:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Putting: | Juniors – Rachel Noble (9/18) |
| | Adults – Lynn Beswick (8/18) |
| 90 second skip: | Juniors - Duncan Sandison (188) |
| | Adults – Jim Tennant (172) |
| Keepie up: | Juniors – Duncan Sandison (165) |
| | Adults – Jim Tennant (214) |

Congratulations to them all!



Jesus is my reason

“Festive Greetings” ~ “Seasons Greetings” ~ “Wishing you Joy”
“Best Wishes for this Festive Season” ~ “Wishing you Peace”



These are all greetings from inside Christmas cards, but aren't we missing something? Where has Jesus gone?

We asked a number of people what they thought the meaning of Christmas was:

- ☺ *Christmas is for kids, it means showing your loved ones how much you care ... and spending lots of money on them!*
- ☺ *Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.*
- ☺ *Christmas is a season of joy, holidays, greetings exchanged, of gift giving and families united.*
- ☺ *My idea of Christmas is very simple ... loving others! Come to think of it, why do we have to wait until Christmas?*

Nice sentiments, but all of them have missed the point! Jesus is the point. God's gift to us, His Son, born on earth, to teach us, to love us, to save us, to reunite us with God, to give us eternal life. Now that's something to celebrate! Jesus is the reason. Without Jesus, there is no Christmas; without Him, we revert back to a pagan winter festival.

But what can we as Christians do? How can we unpack the real message of Christmas in such a way that people will see in it something more than it has become? We at Edinburgh City Mission feel so passionately about this very thing that we have launched our "Jesus is my reason" campaign.

We want to challenge every Christian to make sure Jesus is central on every Christmas card you send this year.

With secularisation crowding Jesus out, it's important that each of us can say "Jesus is my reason" for Christmas, and have the courage and the boldness to put Jesus on each and every Christmas card we send this year. To each friend, relative, co-worker, classmate, student, to fellow Christians, and non-Christians alike. Be excited enough at the gift God has given you to want to tell everyone about it! To help you get started we are giving away specially designed sheets of stickers, which you can add to your cards and envelopes. **To request your free sheet of stickers, telephone 0131 554 6140 or email mail@ecm.org.uk and we will post them out to you.**

Where has Jesus gone? He's right here!

God put the world square with Himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what He is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. (2 Corinthians 5:17-19 "The Message")

Jim Tennant

Retiring Offerings at Christmas

The retiring offerings at the Christmas Family and Candlelight Services will be donated to Emmanuel Healthcare to help support the David Gordon Memorial Hospital in Livingstonia, Malawi. Details of this project can be viewed at:

<http://www.emms.org/programmes/article.php?articleID=11>



The Kirk Session is pleased to welcome the following new members into the Church Family:

Steven Dobson, 35 Honeylees Drive, Tweedbank
Alan and Marielaine Fraser, 123 Halliburton Place

Crèche Rota 2007

I will shortly be making up the crèche rota for 2007. If anyone would like to volunteer for crèche duty, or "retire", please let me know by Sunday 17th December. I can be contacted by phone (01896-758634) or email (SMISandison@aol.com).



Shirley Sandison

Thursday Lunch Club

Drivers! Do you have some spare time to give to the Lunch Club once every 4 weeks? Teams 1 and 4 each need a substitute driver to bring some of our older folk in time for lunch and take home again – you can stay for lunch, or go home and come back. Please get in touch with Lillias (752320) or Marion (01578 7300591) as soon as possible! Thank you in anticipation.

Treasurer's Report - October 2006	
Income	£
Offerings - 5 weeks	3,904.91
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.	206.32
Donations	1,291.47
Church of Scotland - Investment Funds	6,518.64
Total Income	11,921.34
Expenditure	
Electricity, Gas, Gas Service & Telephone	183.02
Advertising, Printing, Stationary, etc.	324.72
Mission	51.47
Repayment of Short Term Loans	1000.00
Travel Costs	407.20
Standard Monthly Expenditure	
Stipend	00.00
Organist	125.00
Cleaners - 5 weeks	40.00
Total Monthly Expenditure	2,131.41
Offerings	
2nd	718.81
9th	474.40
16th	771.04
23rd	587.74
30th	395.92
Total Weekly Offerings	2,947.91
Paid through Bank	957.00
Total Offerings	3,904.91

Offerings Update				
	2006		2005	
	Monthly Total/s (£)	Weekly Average (£)	Monthly Total/s (£)	Weekly Average (£)
January - September (39 weeks)	30,618.73	785.10	32,575.31	835.26
October (5 weeks)	3,904.91	780.98	3,635.99	727.20
Total (44 weeks)	34,523.64	784.63	36,211.30	822.98

FINANCIAL SITUATION

You will notice in this October financial statement that the 'Standard Monthly Expenditure' is only £165.00. This is due to our inability to pay October's stipend to '121'. Although the final income figure looks healthy, we suffered from a cash flow problem during the month which resulted in the stipend standing order being dishonoured. As indicated in last month's Newsletter, we have cashed in our reserves, which will allow us to pay the October stipend in November, along with the regular one due in November.

David Leckey (Treasurer)

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously towards this year's mammoth 68 boxes – you were so generous, there were even too many drivers turned up on the Monday to ferry them down to the lorry! (Sorry Wendy!)

In addition to the shoeboxes, the retiring offering at the Harvest Thanksgiving Service went to Blythswood, who sent the following story.

A young man - let's call him Florin - abandoned at a hospital at the age of four, spent the next 14 years in orphanages. Shortly after his arrival at Blythswood's Daniel Centre, in Floresti, Romania, one of his sisters made contact with him. She took him to meet his mother and the rest of the family: seven sisters and three brothers.

"I was glad to meet them but sorry to see the condition in which they lived", Florin says. "They all lived in one room: I realised it was better for me to stay at the Daniel Centre".

Houseparents Sandel and Cristina, along with social worker Elvira, have been there to support him as he comes to terms with his family history. Now Florin wants to earn money to buy a schoolbag and books for his younger brother. He wants to help his family, but also to make a go of his own life. His ambition is to get a job, get married, and have a family of his own.

Your support makes all the difference to Florin as he prepares to look for employment.

In the Book of Psalms, King David says, "If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up". I'm so glad that Daniel Centre staff point these boys to God, who never abandons those who trust in Him.

Extract of a letter from Mrs Elma Ross (Patron, Blythswood Care).



Wanted

A volunteer (or volunteers) to take over the running of the Church sound system from Bert Hegarty, who has faithfully discharged this duty for over 20 years.



No experience necessary, as a sound training will be provided!

If you are interested, or would like to know more, please speak to Bert in Church on Sunday - you'll find him at his controls!

Presbytery News

Some people have asked about the Presbytery vote on the Civil Partnership issue, the subject of my "Letter" in the last Newsletter. Sadly, the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles voted to accept the Legal Questions Committee's motion to allow ministers to perform services to mark Civil Partnerships. However, this appears to be a minority view nationally, as so far only 6 Presbyteries have voted for, whereas 20 have voted against, and so the motion seems likely to fail at the next General Assembly.

Leslie Steele