



OUTREACH

St. James the Less Scottish Episcopal Church, Penicuik

Advent and Christmas Edition



What is he doing? See "Tearcraft"!

Issue 140, December 2007



Nigel and Moira's latest family additions (see "Congratulations!")



More fund-raising, by St Mungo's West Linton

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Service Times

Sundays: 8.00 am Said Communion
 11.00 am Choral Communion
 Evensong as announced

Thursdays: 11.15 am Informal Said Communion as announced.

On the first Sunday of the month the 11.00am Sunday Service is a Family Communion; on the other Sundays the young people go out to Young Church during the first hymn and return in time for Communion.

Groups and Activities

(please contact the appropriate person listed inside the back cover)

Sundays: 7.30pm Youth Group for 10-16s
Tuesdays: 9.30am "J-Tots" Playgroup
10.00am Bible Study at 24 Mauricewood Park
7.30pm Mauricewood Housegroup at 6 Arras Grove
Wednesdays 7.00am "Earlybirds" Prayergroup
Thursdays : 7.00pm Choir Practice (Junior Choir on Sundays,
10.15am)



Rector's Letter

A flood of pictures and poetry. You wanted more. You might have wanted something clearer. All right then. Let me tell you what I see clearly. Our enemies are camped around us, and we are a people who will not listen and our government has its head in the sand. Bad news is always clearer than good news. Men and women in the street are all talking about the bad news: One threat after another, one looming crisis replaced by another. The wall is leaning towards us. Our enemies at our gates. What they don't know is that other empires are being born to take their place.

Everybody knows the bad news. It's the good news which needs to be announced. That's what we prophets do as we try to light candles in the midst of storms. Somebody needs to do it, I said, and God said that somebody needed to do it and what with the walls trembling and all that smoke I put up my hand and said I'd give it my best shot.

So what do I see? I'm seeing shepherds. I'm seeing a young woman. I'm seeing a baby. I'm seeing a provincial backwater filled with people who nobody takes particularly seriously.. It's a story. I tell it to you now and you'll think it's a new story. But there's nothing new about it. It's like all the oldest stories in our Bible. Big things come in small packages. The one we can trust is the one whom God points out in the crowd. Abraham from a backwater, Moses on the run from the law, Jesse's youngest son David. If the story doesn't make sense now it will then. It will all make sense.. This time it's the biggest gift in the smallest package.

The child in her arms is the smallest thing in the room and the weakest human in the story. And even the girl who bore him cannot yet understand all the angel told her or, for that matter, the words I used to describe the tiny child in her arms:

“Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.”

Father Rob Warren

"Penicuik for Africa (PfA)"



It was heartening to find both the attendance and list of apologies for our annual open meeting 30% up on last year, with a strong representation from our friends in North Kirk . The details of our year can be read in the report to the St James AGM but a few points should be stressed here. We approved embryonic plans for buying an

ambulance for Chitambo. Our representative had inspected a converted Landcruiser (pictured) on the Toyota Dealership's forecourt in Lusaka, the Zambian capital; it is priced at £25,000 and has drawn approval from the senior staff in Chitambo hospital. A second option is being explored: to buy a similar vehicle from Toyota GB, get it converted



in Germany and shipped to Lusaka. We will decide between them on the basis of detailed quotes that will include fitments requested by Chitambo, such as supports for IV bags, an oxygen cylinder, under-bench cupboards for cool-box, medicines etc. An electric winch for emergency use in the rainy season etc. will also be costed. We hope to deliver the ambulance (in persons!) next August in time for the hospital's centenary celebrations, continuing links with Scotland at the place where David Livingstone was buried just over 100 years ago. Our Ambulance Appeal Fund stands at nearly £27,000 but the appeal remains open, just in case we run a little short of cash. On an organisational note, we elected Graham Smith as Treasurer to the relief



of Richard Vallis, who had struggled manfully out of his comfort zone for two years. We also appointed a representative from North Kirk to the executive to consolidate the partnership between us.

Christian-Muslim conversations

It was the twelfth occasion that Andrew Sarle, a Development Officer with CAIRS (Churches' Agency for Interfaith Relations, Scotland) had introduced his friend Na'eem Raza under the above heading and we were warned to expect monologue rather than dialogue! Nov. 19th at St James turned out to be the second- best attended meeting of their series and the 38 present (of which about 1/3rd came from other churches) were taken on a steep learning curve as many of the myths surrounding Islam were swept away. Na 'eem was once a leader of Young Muslims in the UK and is currently the president of Glasgow's Muslim Council and he came across as a benevolent version of Abu Hamza . His account of early Muslim history took a benevolent view of the prophet Mohammed's military exploits and his interpretation of recent events (the Iraq war) as the source of hostility between Sunni

and Shi'a Muslims was also 'charitable' but this offset the warped interpretations imprinted on our minds by the Western media.

It was news to me that the Qu'ran describes Jesus' ascent to heaven from the cross and that Muslims looked forward to the second coming of Christ on the day of judgement; that it venerates Mary, having a whole chapter entitled 'Mary, the Mother of Jesus'. The teachings of Mohammed and Jesus had much in common, both were ambassadors for a God of peace, justice and mercy rather than wrath and vengeance. The source of divergence between Christianity and Islam lies in the respective views taken of Jesus: to most Christians, he is 'Son of God', to Muslims he is the penultimate prophet. Jesus was venerated because he was a perfect Muslim, submitting himself wholly to the will of Allah. When the 'heresy' of Arianism (Jesus as human rather than divine) was snuffed out by an alliance between state and church, Christianity and Islam were set on diverging paths.

A steady flow of questions, mostly relating to cultural practices associated with Islam, began to turn the monologue into a conversation and there were frequent murmurs of approval as Na'eem pointed out that on matters such as equality between the sexes, the West has only recently put its house in order. Did you know that a Muslim husband had to declare all his earnings to his wife and devote them to the needs of the family whereas a wife was entitled to an income of her own and it was regarded as an act of great benevolence if she gave money to the family? It was a pity that the 'conversation' had to be 'officially' stopped but the hubbub at the end as we enjoyed a drink and washed down delicacies provided by Ruth's friend from the Mosque kitchen suggested that it had only just begun. For the unobtrusive Andrew Sarle, it was a job well done.

Christmas Greetings

Jean and Frank Lindsay write: "Christmas Greetings from Wales to all our friends at St James. We wish you all a Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year! We shall be thinking of you all, with our love. (*"Nadolig Llawn, y Blwyddhan Newydd Dda"*)"

Help requested!

We've recently received the following letter:

"Dear St James

Can you help...I work for a national charity The Cinnamon Trust. We offer help to elderly and terminally ill people with pets, and we have been contacted by an elderly lady in Penicuik, who has a much loved companion dog who needs to have some longer walks during the week. The owner cannot exercise her dog due to failing health and her son can only manage walks at the weekends when he visits.

Sadly the Trust doesn't have any registered volunteers in the area. Does the church have any community volunteers that can help her, even an hour a week. She is protective about her little dog and only wants trustworthy people taking her out, hence my email to you. I look forward to hearing from you

Kind regards

Moira Butler, Volunteer Co-ordinator, The Cinnamon Trust"

If you feel you can help, or you can suggest someone who may be able to, please contact Mike Hay on 675761, who will be happy to pass on your details to the Cinnamon Trust.

The Fundraising Challenge

2008 will be a busy year for our fundraisers as we strive to raise a £4000 contribution towards funding the essential fabric repairs identified in the last Quinquennial Review. The Fundraising Committee has devised a varied and innovative programme of events which are listed below.

At the same time they believe that there is considerable talent within our church organisations to come up with new ideas for fundraising and to take responsibility for those events e.g. Youth Group could do a car wash, J-Tots a sponsored silence!

They will complement the corporate programme, increasing our income. So why not encourage your group, be it Choir, CWF, House Group, J-Tots, MU, Young Church or Youth Group to rise to the challenge. There could even be a prize for the most productive idea!

Graham

Date	Event	Venue	Leader	Other
2 Feb 2008	Curry Evening	St James's church hall	Marion/Geoff	
5 Apr 2008	Daffodil Sale/ Jumble Sale/ Coffee Morning	St Mungo's Church Hall, Penicuik	Kathleen/ Marion	If daffs not ready, sale & coffee am will go ahead & separate daff sale organised
7/14 June 08	Car Treasure Hunt	Various	Andy	No catering required. T Hunt terminating at hostelry!
.....	SUMMER	BREAK
Sept 08	Murder Mystery Evening	Penicuik House	Graham	Date TBC Catering required
8 Oct 2007	Fashion Show	St James's Church and hall	Kathleen	Date TBC Wine and nibbles
Sept/Oct 08	"Talents"	N/A	Graham	Money distributed in Sept and collected in Feb 09?

The Leprosy Mission

The coffee evening held in October in the North Kirk was very successful, raising £600. Penicuik churches combined to fund raise for the Leprosy Mission (TLM), and this year's project for Sudanese leprosy patients, has been achieved. A total sum of £2500 has been sent to Scottish Headquarters for Sudan.

Thank you to everyone at St James who supported the effort and bought tickets from us or gave donations.

Marian Hunter and Catherine Pow

Tearcraft

Dear family and friends of St James

Thank you so much to all who baked, sold plants, books, made tea, washed up and to those who bought Tearcraft, we had an excellent morning of trading and fellowship. We were able to send off a cheque for £475.00 being the amount raised on the day. A letter of thanks from Tearfund is below**. Sales and orders from the catalogue were also excellent and up to now total over £800.00

I am so pleased that St James, as usual, has pulled out all the stops and raised this amount of money for such a worthwhile charity. You will be pleased to know that we will not clash with St Mungo's Coffee Morning next year - they have already set the date for 2008, so all I have to do is choose another!

Val and the Mauricewood House Group.

***Dear Friends*

Tearfund

Thank you so much for your recent gift of £475.00 Your generosity is greatly appreciated and will help to release people from poverty across the world.

In the rural areas of Sindh Province in south Pakistan there are hundreds of villages without a primary school. The Diocese of Hyderabad, a Tearfund partner, is meeting this need by providing good quality, sustainable village schools. The schools are open to all faith communities, but there is a special focus on empowering Christian and Hindu communities; as minorities they are often marginalised in Pakistan.

The village communities take an active role in running the schools. They build huts to house the lessons, recommend a teacher for training and appoint a school management committee to oversee the school's development. After two years' experience the teachers supervise a group of schools and look for opportunities to open more.

loans, often putting them deeper into bonded labour. Meanwhile, health education is improving the well-being of families. Teacher training is modelled on Jesus' mentoring of his disciples: leading by example, coaching and sending out as agents of change to the surrounding villages. All teachers are envisioned to see the impact they can have in their communities. Fifty of these village schools have opened since 2002. The Diocese aims to open another 155 by the end of 2009 providing quality education to children previously excluded by poverty.

Please pray for the continued growth of the village school network and for good relationships with government authorities.

Thank you again for helping to transform lives.

Yours in Christ

Margery Jackson Regional Volunteer Manager East and Central Scotland, Challenge House, 29 Canal Street, Glasgow G4 OAD”

Thought for the month!

Write a letter to God.... then knee mail it.

Contributed by Angela Sibley

The European Dimension

We are always happy to have news of our extended church family so the following letter from Betty White will be of particular interest.

‘The two photographs were taken on 28th October at our granddaughter



Claire’s confirmation at St George’s Anglican (Episcopal) Church in Berlin by Bishop Geoffrey. The service was lovely and included a baptism and then confirmation of nine candidates, including an 82 year old gentleman. Bishop Geoffrey has the largest diocese of all covering as it does the whole of Europe. He is based in Gibraltar and

travels continuously – during October he told us he had been to Siberia, Croatia, London, Berlin and Lisbon. He told us he sometimes can’t

remember what colour his front door is! Claire is on the end at the right hand side of the communicants group photo. The bishop had all the little ones sitting at his feet and after telling them the story of the shepherd and his sheep asked what his staff was used for? One bright little 3 and a half year old put his hand up and said "Please sir I know – it's to hit them on the head". The bishop laughed and said "Well that's a new one". He then asked what his hat was called to which the said same youngster replied "Please sir it's a cap and the ribbons are to tie it on with when its windy in the fields so the sheep don't tread on it". The bishop roared with laughter and asked the little boy "Where did you learn that?" "In Sunday school"!



The family photo comprises (L to R) Annette, Stuart, Arthur, Claire, Betty and Liam. Annette and Liam were married at St James in 1990. Liam's kilt drew admiring glances with members of St George's wanting a photograph taken alongside him.'

Sadly (for us that is) Arthur and Betty are moving to Banchory at the end of January. We shall miss them but wish them well in their new home on Royal Deeside. (ed).

Congratulations to Norman and Gwen Wagstaff

...who celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary on St Andrews day, 30th Nov. We know you are both keen readers of "Outreach", Norman and Gwen, so please accept our hearty congratulations and our love and prayers!

And more Congratulations!

To Colin and Maureen Chaplin and family in their 50th wedding anniversary year, “a God-given gift, our great grand-daughter” a daughter, Calee May, for Jess and Jason Matthew: 9lbs 10oz(!) born 17 November 11.54pm (Canadian time!)

...and to Nigel and Moira Johnston who are once again, or rather twice again, grandparents - baby Lewis arrived to proud parents Kate and Damien in New Zealand in mid-November, and a baby boy to Louisa and Andy (8lb) on 21 November (see *inside front cover*). It's all happening!

Faith in Older People

Contributed by Angela Sibley

The Celebrations and challenges in the pastoral care of older people was the title of an enjoyable and informative day. A group of us met, (carers, chaplains to hospitals, care homes, pastoral care visitors) to discuss how best to help older people, especially those with any form of dementia, retain and express their faith. We also looked at the needs of full time carers and the help and support they needed. Both the cared for and the carers can feel vulnerable, get exhausted which leads to irritability, feel resentful when the carer goes out and the carer feels guilty when they go out. How does one balance your needs as a carer with your own needs?

We know that God is with us in our situations, whether we can articulate it or not. How can we best include those with dementia in our worship? When they are very frail, how long should we expect them to be able to take communion (especially if they have problems swallowing, or spit the wafer out). For some a cuddle is a comforting experience – but how does that sit with rules and regulations these days?

When visiting people in hospital it is often very difficult to find a quiet place for a service/prayers/communion. We cannot initiate a faith service or demand a quiet room – this had to come from the patient or

We all agreed that whenever one visits an elderly person, we need to take time – time to listen to them, time to just be with them. They are people and faith is important, (sometimes more important when they are older), never pass them by or ignore them even if you do not know whether they know you are there. Just because they do not communicate with you does not mean that they do not appreciate your visit. Sometimes there is an easy solution to a problem – enlarging music so that a pianist can see the score, enlarging the printed prayers, write short prayers on card in large letters. **NEVER ignore that hunch, nudge that you should visit someone, it could be a nudge from God.**

The day received support from the Church and National committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church in order to offer the conference free.

Notes from the Outer Hebrides

Contributed by Geoff and Marion

St Moluadh's (St Moluag's) Church at Eoropaidh Ness is situated in the north western corner of the Isle of Lewis. We found this lovely simple stone built Episcopal church by chance when visiting my daughter Katie who is working in the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. It was the Gaelic Episcopal pub sign that first caught our eye. Access to the early



13th century church is by way of a narrow grass path between the long and narrow crofters' rigs. The church had lain in ruins for many years until the then Rector of St Peter's Episcopal Church in Stornoway organised its restoration in around 1912. There is no electricity or heating with summer only services being held by candlelight and oil lamp. We suspect that it might well be the most westerly Episcopal Church

in Scotland and is a real gem. We signed the visitors' book with greetings from St James Penicuik and left our offerings in its beautiful mid 14th century alms box.

During our all too short stay on Lewis we attended the Sunday morning Eucharist at the same St Peter's Episcopal Church in Stornoway

mentioned above. We arrived 15 minutes early (something of a novelty for me) and were extended a very warm welcome. The Rector introduced himself and asked if I would mind reading the first lesson. I agreed and asked if he wasn't expecting very many regulars that Sunday. 'Oh yes' he said, 'but they arrive at two minutes to eleven to avoid being asked to do a reading!' There was no organ or piano, just a tape recording of the hymn tunes but once we got started everyone sang along in hearty Episcopalian fashion. We enjoyed tea and biscuits at the back of the church amongst the hymn books. They are just finishing building a small church hall which they hope will be ready for use in the new year. It really did make us realise how blessed we are with the talents and facilities we have at St James.



As many of you will know, the Sabbath is strictly observed on Lewis and Harris with no gardening, hanging out of washing or anything that can be considered work. All the shops are closed and there are no ferries or Sunday papers. Many parishioners are picked up by bus and ladies must wear hats to church.

Some B&Bs offer a cold breakfast prepared the night before with the washing up being done on Monday morning. This all seems a far cry from Sunday life on the mainland where so many people have now sadly given up church in favour of work and play.

All of the people we met on Lewis and Harris were extremely friendly and hospitable. If you haven't been to Lewis, please go there, we can recommend an excellent B&B in Stornoway. There is so much to see including the restored Black Houses village and of course the standing stones at Callanish. We also visited St. Clements Church at Rodel on the southern tip of Harris, a very old church built in 1547 that has been beautifully restored. Harris is beautiful and some of its beaches are stunning. It goes without saying that we hope to return to Lewis and Harris before Katie returns to the mainland.

December 2007 Rota

	2-Dec-07	9-Dec-07	16-Dec-07	23-Dec-07	24-Dec-07	25-Dec-07	30-Dec-07
	Advent 1	Advent 2	Advent 3	Advent 4	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Christmas 1
11.00am Organist	Jean	Jennifer	Mike	David	David	Mike	Mike
St Mungo's Organist	Mike	Jean	David	Mike	??	??	David
Sidesmen	Young Church	Alan Sibley/Des Frantom	Elizabeth Clark/Margaret Coull	Ian & Margaret MacLennan	Ian & Margaret MacLennan	Jim & Moira McGarva	Nigel Johnston/Andy Longmore
Bread and Wine	Y Church	Johnstons	Hindles	Dicksons	Clerks	Young Church	Matins
1st Reading	<i>Isaiah 2:1-5</i>	<i>Isaiah 11:1-10</i>	<i>Isaiah 35:1-10</i>	<i>Isaiah 7:10-16</i>	<i>Isaiah 9:2-7</i>	<i>Isaiah 9:2-7</i>	<i>Isaiah 63:7-9</i>
	Young Church	Faye Clerk	Ruth Green	Elizabeth Clark	Ruth Green	tba	Jean Hindle
2nd Reading	<i>Romans 13:11-14</i>	<i>Romans 15:4-13</i>	<i>James 5:7-10</i>	<i>Romans 1:1-7</i>	<i>Titus 2:11-14</i>	<i>Titus 2:11-14</i>	<i>Hebrews 2:10-18</i>
	Young Church	Georgina Phillips	Jo Bullough	Mike Hay	Ian MacLennan	tba	Val McGavin
Gospel	<i>Matthew 24:36-44</i>	<i>Matthew 3:1-12</i>	<i>Matthew 11:2-11</i>	<i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>	<i>Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)</i>	<i>Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)</i>	<i>Matthew 2:13-23</i>
Prayers	Young Church	Val McGavin	Jean Hindle	Angela Sibley	Val McGavin	tba	-----
Pray for	Bible Study Group	Choir	CWF	Early Birds Prayer Gp	Fabric Team	J Tots	-----
Server	Angela/Steven	Val/Charlotte	Angela/Sara	Val/Emma	Val McGavin	Angela/Alice	-----
Coffee	Margaret Vesco/Joyce Black	Isobel Stenhouse/Jean Wright	Gillian Little/Marion McCluskey	Elisabeth Clark/Robert Clerk			Mrs Neish & family
Flowers	Marion McCluskey				A McGavin		
Cleaning	Gill Amos/Is	Ros Hay/Sue Crosfield	Ros Hay/Sue Crosfield	Marian Hunter/Mgt Vesco			Marian Hunter/Mgt Vesco
Welcomers	Mae Mann/Elizabeth Clark	Carol Hodgkin/Andy Longmore	Nigel Johnston/Robert Clerk	McGarvas			Mae Mann/Elizabeth Clark
Care Van			*				
Pentland House				*			

(Where an alternative reading is given, the first reading is used unless clergy notify readers otherwise)

January 2008 Rota

	6-Jan-08	13-Jan-08	20-Jan-08	27-Jan-08
	Epiphany	Epiphany 1	Epiphany 2	Epiphany 3
11.00am Organist	Jean	Jennifer	Mike	David
St Mungo's Organist	Mike	Jean	David	Mike
Sidesmen	Isobel Stenhouse/ Des Frantom	Elizabeth Clark/ Margaret Coull	Ian & Margaret MacLennan	Andy Longmore/ Nigel Johnston
Bread and Wine	Young Church	Clerks	Leavys	Hindles
1st Reading	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6</i>	<i>Isaiah 42:1-9</i>	<i>Isaiah 49:1-7</i>	<i>Isaiah 9:1-4</i>
	Gillian Little	Geoff Mather	Sue Crosfield	Gillian Little
2nd Reading	<i>Ephesians 3:1-12</i>	<i>Acts 10:34-43</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:1-9</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:10-18</i>
	Gill Amos	Marion McCluskey	Andy Longmore	Alan Murray
Gospel	<i>Matthew 2:1-12</i>	<i>Matthew 3:13-17</i>	<i>John 1:29-42</i>	<i>Matthew 4:12-23</i>
Prayers	Geoff Mather	Sue Crosfield	Mike Hay	Andy Longmore
Pray for	Junior Choir	Mauricewood House Group	Mothers Union	Pastoral Care group
Server	Angela/Steven	Val/Alice	Angela/Charlotte	Val/ Sara
Coffee	Kathleen Cox/ Sue Crosfield	Mona Bennett/ Margaret MacLennan	Hays/ Graham Smith	Margaret Vesco/ Joyce Black
Flowers	Marion McCluskey			
Cleaning	Helen Topple/ Ruth Frantom	Helen Topple/ Ruth Frantom	C & M Leavy	C & M Leavy
Welcomers	Carol Hodgkin/ Andy Longmore	Nigel Johnston/ Robert Clerk	McGarvas	Mae Mann/ Elizabeth Clark
Care Van			*	
Pentland House				

February 2008 Rota

	3-Feb-08	10-Feb-08	17-Feb-08	24-Feb-08
	7th before Easter	Lent 1	Lent 2	Lent 3
11.00am Organist	Jean	Jennifer	Mike	David
St Mungo's Organist	David	Jean	David	Mike
Sidesmen	Young Church	Isobel Stenhouse & Des Frantom	Elizabeth Clark & Margaret Coull	MacLennans
Bread and Wine	Young Church	Johnstons	Dicksons	Clerks
1st Reading	Exodus 24:12-18	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Genesis 12:1-4a	<i>Exodus 17:1-7</i>
	Young Church	Joyce Black	Margaret Coull	Ruth Green
2nd Reading	II Peter 1:16-21	Romans 5:12-19	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	<i>Romans 5:1-11</i>
	Young Church	Jo Bullough	Georgina Phillips	Elizabeth Clark
Gospel	<i>Matthew 17:1-9</i>	<i>Matthew 4:1-11</i>	<i>John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9</i>	<i>John 4:5-42</i>
Prayers	Young Church	Georgina Phillips	Elizabeth Clark	Ruth Green
Pray for	Vestry	Young Church	Youth Group	Bible Study Group
Server	Angela/Emma	Val/Alice	Angela/Steven	Val/Charlotte
Coffee	Isobel Stenhouse & Jean Wright	Gillian Little & Marion McCluskey	Frantoms	Elizabeth Clark & Robert Clerk
Flowers	Marion McCluskey	Lent		
Cleaning	Moira Rendall & Jennifer Edge	Mona Bennett & Ruth Green	Mona Bennett & Ruth Green	Clerks
Welcomers	Carol Hodgkin/ Andy Longmore	Nigel Johnston/ Robert Clerk	McGarvas	Mae Mann/ Elizabeth Clark
Care Van			*	
Pentland House				

Mothers' Union News

MU Scottish web address is: www.muscotland.org.uk or via St James web page link. Mothers' Union Theme for next year is: "Time for Relationship 2008"

Provincial Retreat 4 - 6 March 2008 at Kinnoull - £85

conducted by MU Central Chaplain, Bishop Richard Inwood, Please ask Joyce Black for an application form if you would like to attend.

Diocesan Activities:

4 Members attended the Quiet Day in the Christ Church Centre, Morningside. Unfortunately, the MU Diocesan Chaplain, Michael Paterson couldn't conduct it as planned, since he was away for his brother's funeral. We are asked to remember Michael and his brother, Ian, sister-in-law and young family in our prayers. Jennie Ritchie conducted the Quiet Day talking about St Aidan, and Hendy Proctor of Christ Church, Morningside took the closing Communion Service.

Intercessions in St Mary's Cathedral - 3 Dec 12.30 pm.

Branch

On the late news word came through about the soldier killed in Afghanistan. He was named as Captain John McDermid of 2 Scots at Glencorse, and was their first representative on the Community Council. "A nice chap": *Margaret Coull.*

Margaret asks us to remember him and his family in our prayers, also those who have recently gone out from Glencorse, Dreghorn to serve in Iraq. Cards and small gifts - can be sent free of charge from the Post Office (maximum weight 2Kgs), to: A single Soldier, c/o Padre Rory MacLeod, 1 Scots Op. Telic, BF PO 641. Last posting date for Christmas is Friday 7 December!

Suitable items: warm socks, shower toiletries, wet wipes, mags, paper backs, newspapers.

5 Dec: 2.30pm Advent Carol Service at St Leonard's, Lasswade

12 Dec: Noon Lunch meeting in the Hall: Advent Carols with 'The Singing Padre' from Glencorse Barracks.

Hampers: to be arranged.

2008:

Jan 9th & 23rd: - Topics still to be confirmed.

13 Feb: World Day of Prayer Bible Study
27 Feb: Speaker from the Prem Baby Unit
The above meetings will all be Lunch Meetings noon for 12.30.
Fri 7 Mar: 7.30 pm - World Day of Prayer at The North Kirk.

Church Womens' Fellowship News

The group agreed to attend the 'Muslim Conversation' at St James on Monday 19 November, which would have been their planned meeting date. It was a well attended and stimulating meeting with plenty of questions asked.

3 Dec: at 64 Deanburn (*Hampers to organise in conjunction with MU*)
21 Jan: at 64 Deanburn

Mission News

Contributed by Frances McLean

Overseas News

There are two articles in LINKS, which may be of interest to St. James' folks:

Fresh Start in Delhi. There are street children in most large towns and cities throughout the world, and in India, the Delhi Brotherhood are coping with the them as just one of their several projects among the poor of Delhi. They write – Each day a large number of children from neighbouring states end up on the streets of Delhi, after running away from home, either because of poverty or family difficulties. Lured to Delhi with the prospect of finding a better living, the children end up joining in dangerous activities, such as stealing, drug trafficking, cheating and begging.

The Delhi Brotherhood Society social workers visit the bus and train terminals, inviting those who need help and safety to the Shelter. Some of them refuse but, at present, 30 boys aged 8 to 14 are making use of the night shelter's facilities. Some of them are keen to return to their homes, but others are keen to get an education, which the Society also makes available to them.

Cyclone strikes Madagascar. Schools and hostels provide access to education in a country where many families struggle to feed their children, let alone educate them. Bishop Roger wrote, "In Northern Madagascar, the boy's and girl's hostels (Mary Katharine Tindall Hostel, Daraina) have been an important means of helping young people from remote villages, receive a better education. Thanks to the generous support the social gospel has been a blessing to a number of people, and the new schools have opened in the diocese to enhance this educational objective of our missionary work. The Very Revd. Jaoana Lehibe, Dean of the Cathedral, was himself a beneficiary of the boy's Hostel in the 1960s. The boy's hostel usually has about 20 residents, including Muslims and followers of other religions.

Bishop Keith Benzies, my predecessor, (*some of you will remember him visiting St. James' some years past, He mostly wore his kilt as he moved around his diocese!*) ensured that his ministry favoured the sick and lame whenever necessary, and this has been maintained. On the 15th March, The Diocese of Antsiranana (in the North) was badly hit by Cyclone Indlala with 150 Km. Winds and fierce rains. Some 5,000 people were homeless. The town of Antalaha was badly damaged, including the church and school, which had just been repaired. Bishop Roger Chung said, "And so it goes for all our 125 church communities in the Diocese where houses, churches and civil infrastructures have all suffered excessive damage." In the region of Ambilobe, 20 hectares of rice fields were completely destroyed when the river flooded. Bishop Roger was moved to quote Psalm 130. "Lord God, out of the deep I call out unto your Holy Name, hear my cry."

Both the above areas receive help from both USPG and SECMA. There are more interesting articles reported in LINKS, which are worth reading. There are two copies at the back of the church in additions to the copies held by several members of the congregation..

Choir News

Most of my energy has gone into writing the AGM report, so this will be a fairly brief contribution this month! Just to thank the choir particularly for some super singing, at the November Evensong and at both the services on Remembrance Sunday, here and at Sacred Heart. The

latter service was, I think, particularly moving, with the combination of Taizé and the anthems we contributed, and it was very good to have the opportunity to combine with other congregations. To be repeated!

The Lessons and Carols this year will be on 23 December at 7.00pm; many of the choir carols will be familiar to you, but one new one will be “Welcome, Yule” with music by CH Parry (of “I was glad” fame!). With repeated cries of “Welcome!”, it’s a spirited piece which I’m sure you’ll enjoy. As I write, the exact arrangements for the morning service on 16 December are still being discussed, but we hope to offer some excerpts from Tony Hatch’s “Rock Nativity” (don’t be put off by the title, it’s not too loud, and it’s really tuneful - honest!) with possibly a small tableau to accompany the music. Watch this space.

All that remains is to wish you all a very happy Christmas on behalf of the whole choir, and to invite you to come and support all the St James events, traditional or otherwise!

Mike Hay

Stories

It was suggested that we should print the story related by Thomas Joyner during his sermon at St James on 15th July, not just for the benefit of those who were not at the service but also to remind us of a very happy trans-Atlantic interlude. In the event Thomas e-mailed the entire sermon which we have great pleasure in reproducing below. At a later stage we hope to print some thoughts by Thomas on his summer (for lack of a better word) with us in Penicuik and West Linton. (ed)

“Once upon a time;” it’s a phrase we’re all familiar with; we know, when we hear that string of words, that we’re about to be told a story, and we prepare ourselves for a story. It may be a fun and entertaining story or it may be a story to teach a point or a lesson. But we all know what “once upon a time” means.

Yet some stories are so familiar to us that we cease to really hear them. I’m sure you know your favourites from childhood that you could probably recite from memory. It’s these stories, the ones we know so well, that can often be told without our hearing them again. Sometimes a story has to be told multiple times and in multiple ways for it to be heard.

I think Scripture *has* to fall into this category much of the time. We know that we're to love God and that God loves us ('yeah, yeah, I know that'), and we know that we are to put the needs of others before our own ('I've heard this before, ok'). So you should not feel bad or embarrassed if you heard today's gospel and thought: "Oh, I know this one. I'm supposed to help those who need it. Ok, got it."

Yes, we *are* supposed to help those who need it, but that's not solely Luke's point in this story. You see Luke wants us to know the story, it's almost as if Luke is aware that we can become *too* familiar. So today's gospel becomes a story within the story; it's the story we've been hearing since the start of his gospel.

It's Luke, alone, who gives us that visit by the angel Gabriel to Mary. It's a visit important to us today because it's the first example of Luke's great theological point: God cares for those who are poor, hungry, sad, unimportant and weak. Mary is unimportant and yet God chooses Mary and Mary responds as someone willing to let Christ into the world. While I don't wish to engage in a deep theological discussion of Mary's importance, I suggest that her importance is all in her willingness to 'work with God', to see as God sees, and to say 'yes.' Luke's implication is that this is something we can all do.

But Luke's not done; because it's Luke who gives us the 'Sermon on the Plain' (as opposed to Matthew's 'Sermon on the Mount'). The disciples, in Matthew's version, go up to Jesus on a Mountain. Jesus, in Luke's version, comes down to the people who want him to heal them. Are we beginning to see the threads of the story?

But, as if that's not enough, Luke's version is not the same as Matthew's. Luke gives us three blessings ("Blessed are you who are poor; blessed are you who weep and blessed are you who are hated and excluded on account of the Son of Man." Luke also gives us three 'woes' but to focus on them only in terms of judgement is to miss their full force; they are also words of care that seek to get our attention in a very direct way: "Woe to you who are rich; woe to you who are full and woe to you who are spoken well of."

And this, in my roundabout way, gets us to today's gospel. Hopefully, if I've done my work, what was a very familiar story is worth hearing again. Jesus responds to a question asked by someone skilled in the law to test him. "What do I have to do, accomplish, make, to have eternal life?" But not content with Jesus' legal answer the question then becomes: "Who is my neighbour?" This is a different question and

becomes the occasion for Luke to illustrate the story we've been hearing ever since Mary's "yes".

The parable of the Good Samaritan, as it's been called, is a story meant to show us that God cares deeply for us, not for just the 'rich and beautiful people', not just the important and well groomed, but for you and me. But while we're to take that reminder to heart we're also challenged to live that way, to go and do. Our lives, what God yearns for from you and me, is that we act in the way the Samaritan acted: by kindness, generosity and a willingness to open ourselves and our busy existence to other people and their needs out of a limitless compassion and love.

We should recognise in the priest, the functionary of a role who cannot (according to his understanding of the law) defile himself by touching unclean things. We should recognise in the Levite (a priest's assistant) as the individual who's motive for not helping may parallel that of the priest. The two figures who have religious and social standing refuse to help. But the story is not merely to make clergy and those of social standing squirm because we can all *surely* recognise ourselves in the passing priest and Levite; and we are meant to see them as rich, full and spoken well of.

It's the Samaritan (a people of mixed race, who were viewed as people of an inferior culture and who had their own places of worship) that stops to help. His love is boundless and in his action he transcends *all* of the regulations, codes and rules we create or we tell ourselves God created for us. We are meant to be shocked by the willingness of someone weak and lowly doing something of great good. Are you hearing the story anew?

Too often we think that the 'concern' or 'help' we're supposed to give must be in the form of money. That mistaken belief leads us to the conclusion that all we need to do to show concern for those less fortunate than us is write a check, or drop a few coins in a box. While that *is* important, especially for those who needs are great, there is a more immediate form of concern and help we can show that doesn't involve our wallets or purses.

It can be in the form of attention, kindness, thoughtfulness and offering *yourself* (not just your possessions) to someone who is in need. This country, not to mention the world, is full of people who know how to weep very well, but lack someone to sit with them in their weeping or even give them permission to weep.

There are people all around us who are hungry, not just for food, but for a kind word and company in those moments when the solitude of life seems oppressive and smothering. And we all know what it means to be included, invited and made to feel welcome in a community. These are as much the living of the Beatitudes as anything.

The circle is completed when we acknowledge the love and kindness of another person as well as God. Megan McKenna writes: "That the kingdom of God is about sharing and passing on the passion of life, the presence of Jesus who himself was so alive that he gave hope and vision to all who could trust his words....so that the power to transform society is loosed and those who believe can respond creatively to the needs of the world...They are about fidelity to God, to one another, and to life."

That fidelity involves a vision to see as the Samaritan sees, as God sees, which is a vision of unlimited love and compassion. Luke's story and Jesus' invitation is for us to be a people who say "yes" to God and live in the spirit of the beatitudes: joyful, simple and merciful. It is culture shattering and life altering to see and do from this vision. So, taking Luke's example perhaps another story will help.

Once upon a time a young man, Nathan, was travelling, on his way home to Beersheba. It had been a hard journey and he was still two days from home. But he'd been walking over the hills and through the valleys of Judea for three days and he was thirsty, hot, and weary. His water bottle had long been empty. Each step was harder, slower. The sun baked him mercilessly. He had eaten an orange early in the morning, but that seemed hours, even days before.

He was making for home, keeping to the back roads, sleeping in caves and staying out of sight of towns, for he had been a revolutionary, proud and defiant of the Romans. He had fought for freedom, for liberation and he and his friends had struggled long and hard against great odds and they had lost. Many had been killed and in the last battle they had been routed. Now they were scattered across the country, seeking their homes, rest, and time to regroup. Even though he was tired, hungry, and thirsty he didn't dare approach anyone. He was on his own and wondered if he'd make it home or be captured like so many others and enslaved by the Romans.

He fell often, his tongue parched, his lips cracked and bleeding. He thought, "Have I come this far just to die in the sun?" At times he crawled on the ground to keep moving. If only there were some shade, a cave, an outcropping of rock, a tree. As he kept moving, he prayed,

and suddenly he saw a tree in front of him. But was it really a tree? In the heat he could see anything. As he drew nearer he could hardly believe it—it was an apple tree! He ran and stumbled and fell toward the cool, life-giving shade of the tree. He crawled under the branches and smelled the sweet blossoms and fell asleep exhausted, feeling safe at last.

Hours later he awoke, refreshed by the shade, and hungry. He reached up and grabbed an apple and ate it. Then another and another. The fruit tasted so good, luscious, fresh, sweet, and wet. It revived him. He knew he'd make it home. As he chewed the fruit he prayed aloud, giving thanks to God and then to the apple tree. But how could he show his gratitude to the tree? He really had nothing but the clothes on his back, and they were ragged and torn, dirty too. His pouch was empty, though he intended to fill it with the ripe juicy apples that would get him through the next two days on the way home. What could he give the tree? He must show his gratitude. The tree had literally saved his life.

He sat in the shade, savouring the coolness as night drew on. He said the psalms and prayers of his childhood, listening to the words anew, looking for an idea, a gift for the tree. And then he knew what to give; of course, he could give a blessing! There were blessings for everything: he knew the one for daybreak, for food and wine, for children, for the Sabbath. He even knew Moses' and Aaron's blessing over his people from so long ago. He would have to make his own blessing for the tree.

He looked at the wide sweep of its branches and knew that its roots extended far. He had already tasted of its fruit which was sweet and juicy and life-sustaining. He had never seen a tree that beautiful and so he smiled to himself as he knew the blessing. He stood to honour the tree and bowed his head, gathering his heart to put into the blessing. "May all the trees that are born of your seed grow as strong and true as you and be as richly giving and generous as you have been to me, a stranger who stumbled across your path and fell in your shade."

Nathan spread his arms wide and called down heaven and earth, the stars and the rising moon to witness to his blessing, then knelt and put the palms of his hands on the ground beneath the tree. He arose and filled his pouch with apples that he would savour and space out over his journey. He would remember this tree that had saved his life, this tree that had been a blessing to him, and he knew then that he

would make it home to his family. He took one last look at this tree, so beloved now, and turned for home.

Your prayers are asked for.....

Please pray for all those known and unknown to you who through sickness, need, bereavement or any other trouble are in need of God's comfort, remembering in particular:

Betty and Arthur White as they move to their new home in Banchory, John and Joy Ford, June Virtue, Don Mackenzie, Mae Mann, Sarah (aged 8 with Crohn's disease), Elizabeth Black, Ruby Graham, Ralph, Eiliah, Cliff, Lorna Coleman and Margaret Paton. Please pray for Georgina and family following the death of her aunt and for the family and friends of Haley in their grief. Also for the family of Madeline McCann praying that she might speedily be reunited with them.

Pray for continued progress towards peace and reconciliation between Lebanon and Israel and for the people of Gaza. For those suffering as a result of natural disasters, remembering in particular those affected by Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh, and from famine and drought. Pray for the release of all who are enslaved, for those held captive unfairly or illegally and for the work of Amnesty International. Pray for those suffering under corrupt and uncaring political regimes, remembering especially the people of Zimbabwe.

Pray for the peoples of countries torn apart by conflict and civil war remembering especially Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Remember also the British troops and the families of those overseas or about to go overseas, particularly those based at Glencorse Barracks.

For those who staff the Bethany Trust Care Van as they minister to the homeless on the streets of Edinburgh, and for the homeless themselves. For the work of Penicuik in Africa, remembering especially Rev Charles Makonde and those working to combat the ravages of AIDS in Mombasa and other African countries.

A prayer for Interfaith Week (Nov.25th-Dec.2nd)

“Almighty ever-living God, Lord of the universe and Lord of our lives, we praise you. You have created us to be Your people, drawn from all the rich variety of the world's families and the world's Faiths.

We confess that we are prisoners of prejudice, bound by the chains of yesterday's wrongs and tomorrow's fears. We pray that You will forgive the wrong that we have done and set us free from our fear of one another, free to celebrate our beliefs and our liberty as one universal family under God.”

(A reminder to folks from Frances that the Prayer Request book is either to be found in the chapel or on the altar, waiting to be used. Please do make use of it by adding your concerns and prayers. The requests are prayed for on other days as well as on Sundays. Also let me know the progress of the person held in prayer, The list is updated every two to three months. Thank you!)

Events coming soon...

Sun 2 Dec 12.15pm St James' Annual General Meeting
Weds 5, 12 and 19 Dec: 7.30 - 9.00pm Advent Study. Soup and rolls available from 7pm.
Sat 15 Dec 11.00am Choir sing at Drummond Grange
Sun 16 Dec 11.00am Tableau and modern Christmas music
Sun 23 Dec 7.00pm: Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
Mon 24 Dec 11.30pm: Midnight Communion
Christmas Day 11.00am: Christmas Day Family Service.

2008

7-8 Mar MU Provincial Retreat
Fri 7 Mar 7.30pm World Day of Prayer, North Kirk.

Parish Register

Baptisms: 4 Dec 2007 Thomas Haney Murphy Moffat
Annabelle Rose Proctor
Cameron Graham Proctor

Outreach on the Web!

The current edition of the magazine, and previous editions, can be viewed on the church website: <http://www.stjamespenicuik.co.uk/> . Just click on the appropriate link near the top of the page.

***A very Happy and
Blessed Christmas to
all our readers!***



For those of you wishing a convenient way to send Christmas greetings to each other while benefiting a charity, the “World Vision” communal Christmas card will again be in the Hall soon. Just add your message, sign and make a donation. Thank you!

Ros Hay

The February 2008 edition of “Outreach” will be published on Sunday 3 February. Information about events, and contributions, should be with the Editor, Graham Smith 673012, 1 Caplaw Way, EH26 9JE, caplaw@hotmail.co.uk , by Wed 23 January at the latest. If sending by email, please copy to Mike Hay, mike@hayfamily.co.uk.

The editors would also like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a successful and happy 2008!

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Please note: some details will change after the AGM on 2 December!

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Memories of Summer!

Ishbel, and Rosina with granny Marian and John (without grandparents Nigel and Moira!)



Annabelle looking pensive after her Christening!



...and Tom looking very cheerful after his!



Tearcraft sale - a great success!