



OUTREACH

St. James the Less Scottish Episcopal Church, Penicuik



Holiday snaps! At the top of the Holy Mountain of Ardnamurchan, Ben Hiant (Gaelic: Ben Shianta). So-called by Columba, as it guided him in his navigation of the surrounding seas.

Issue No 162 September 2010



**William Longmore, son of Steve and Immi -
a grandson for Andy and Marie...**



**...and Rory David Campbell McGavin - a son for Ken and Gill and
a grandson for Val and David!**

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Service Times

Sundays: 11.00am Choral Communion; Evensong as announced
Wednesdays: 12.15pm Midweek Eucharist

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
	8.00am	“Earlybirds+” Prayergroup
Thursdays :	7.00pm	Choir Practice

Rector’s Letter

Holiday Recap: Image One

I'm sitting alone by a creek in the Shuswap region of British Columbia. I like the people I've been walking with – great folks - but I haven't spent any time yet sitting alone beside a stream. I've been daydreaming about that and it's one of the reasons I'm on holiday.

It hits me like a sudden thirst. I beg off from the group with a promise to meet them later on the trail after I've stolen some time alone.

Somebody has nailed a coffee pot to a cedar tree with an enormous spike. Who carries a ten-inch spike with them on a jaunt in the woods? Or a hammer, for that matter? It profits the human spirit very little to try and deduce or imagine what was in the mind of the man or woman who hammered this great spike into the tree and tied on the coffee pot. I'm not fond of puzzles. It's just one of those things.



If it was meant to look ridiculous, then the author of this little *graffito* has

failed because the act produces much surplus meaning and I cannot help but be thankful.

I see it along the following lines:

The observer is gladdened by this small river of clear cold water rushing down the valley and takes from it a tremendous sense of **Here** and **Now**. The creek is the centre piece. Everything about it is movement. It tumbles over rocks and swirls in eddies. It animates the place. **This** creek. **Here** and **Now**.

And therein is the problem. The water is flowing briskly downstream.

The words **Here** and **Now** and the pointing word **This** are never completely appropriate when you're dealing with a river. In the life of a rushing stream **here** soon becomes **there**, **now** becomes **then** and **this** becomes **that**. Maybe when I was younger I would have enjoyed an unalloyed experience of joy at the rush and flux of things constantly changing. Bring on yet another new thing!

It's different now. In my early fifties I find that change brings with it the possibility of loss. I find myself wishing some things would slow down. I have a harder time keeping up. Children's lives go on with or without you. Many of the cardinal events in their lives will take place beyond the bend – on the other side of you. You start to dwell on the past. *Water under the bridge* becomes the phrase one uses to describe events and experiences which are now irretrievably lost and past.

Hence the coffee pot: we want to take a stand.

In order to say something about **Here** and **Now** we need a container – something we can dip into the stream. Finally we can say “let me tell you a story about **this**, sing you a song about what it's like right **now**, show you what I have **here**.”

While we may be part of something moving and changing, we're lost in it until we find a way of stopping and being contained and dwelling, not on the whole river and the land that it nourishes, but on the single instance – the **Here** and **Now** which **This** small bit of the whole affords us – this pot of water taken from the stream.

My prayers are a container. They gather together a small series of concerns even though there are many other things we could pray about.

Next Sunday's sermon will be a container. There's more I'll want to say but will limit myself to **these** words of Jesus in light of **this** community's life in time and space.

We are creatures – limited to a time upon the earth and must take advantage of the moments of quiet reflection which are offered to us beside the running water and in the midst of all the haste and change.

This may not be what some geezer had in mind when he nailed the coffee pot to the cedar tree beside the stream. Maybe he thought he was being funny.

Maybe the full import of his actions was not yet clear to him.

Father Rob Warren

J-Tots Group.

The J-Tots group will resume on Tuesday 31 August at 9.30am following our summer break. We will meet on that morning for our regular "big clean" and sort-out of the toys. This is an informal and enjoyable event with tots and grown-ups getting busy together! Thereafter J-Tots will meet on Tuesday mornings in term-time from 9.30 to 11.30 for our special programme of craft, play, bible stories and music for pre-schoolers and their grown-ups. New members from any church background or none are welcome and encouraged to join us. The cost is £1 per family per morning to cover the cost of a healthy snack, craft materials and a contribution towards hall heating and lighting.

For more details, phone Alison Cole 01968 672400

St James' Young Church

Young Church groups resumed at St James' on Sunday 22 August. We meet on the the second, third, fourth and fifth Sundays of the month during school term-time and follow a programme based on the weekly lectionary readings. On the first Sunday of the month we contribute readings, prayers, music and sidesmen's duties at the Family Service. We are fortunate in having a dedicated team of 6 leaders who faithfully prepare activities each week on a rota basis for children of pre-school to high school age. Highlights from the past year have included two special Young Church breakfasts, the Nativity presentation, an

Epiphany party, singing at Nine lessons and Carols and Music for a Summer Evening, making the Easter Garden and joining with St Mungo's Young Church on a visit to the Sikh Temple in Edinburgh. With numbers falling recently we actively encourage and invite our current youngsters, newcomers and visitors to join us!

Alison Cole

Flower Festival

We shall be staging a Flower Festival at St James on the weekend of **2-3 October 2010**, the weekend of our Harvest Festival. The theme is to be ***The Church Year in Music***. We have not held such an event for many years and this will be a major fundraiser, involving the whole congregation. Penicuik Floral Art Club will be arranging the main displays for us, with additional arrangements by our own Flower Team. This will cost over £300 before we even start to make a profit.

We very much need volunteers to take responsibility for a specific area such as refreshments, stewarding, music, stalls, parking, publicity etc. Ideally, the organiser in each area will find their own volunteers to work with, thus freeing Marion to oversee the floral side of things. Please speak to **Marion Mather**, or sign the list on the notice board, if you feel you can organise a particular aspect of the event. As always, the more who volunteer, the wider the load is shared.

This is a big “ask”; however, this will be not only a major fundraising event, but also result in wide outreach to the community of Penicuik and beyond. A huge “thank you” in anticipation!

Please note this date in diaries and calendars.

Vestry Moments

This is a summary of matters discussed at the Vestry meeting of Wednesday 11 August 2010

- Book of Remembrance updating
- Hall smoke alarm
- Midlothian Doors Open 11 September 2010
- Success of firefighting training
- Church diary – see forthcoming events in Outreach and St James website calendar

- Rector: enjoyable family holiday in Canada; Advent Study course
- Treasurer: amongst other items concern re Outreach costs - editorial team to meet; Catherine Pow to take over as Assistant Treasurer
- Fabric: Quinquennial Review progress; continuing process for Handrail
- Constitution: new version to be presented to congregation for approval at 2 meetings

Next meetings: Wednesday 6 October 2010 at 7.30pm
 Thursday 25 November 2010 at 8.15pm

Georgina Phillips, Minutes Secretary

Choir News

While away on holiday Val and I visited a few churches as you do. In some there was obviously a strong musical input to the life of the church, whereas in others musical content in services was limited due to lack of resource. In one particular church in Godshill on the Isle of Wight they proudly explained that their small chamber organ may have been played by George Frederick Handel!

By the time that you read this edition of "Outreach" I hope that you were able to enjoy the musical involvement of the Shadwell Opera group from Cambridge University at Matins on Sunday 29th August. This year is their second year of performance at the Edinburgh Fringe and members of their orchestra have been lodging in the hall. We thank them for their enthusiastic contribution to our worship. Thanks too to our "Cambridge Liaison Officers", Mike and Nigel, for all their hard work in unraveling the arrangements.

September is the month where we get back to regular weekly rehearsals for choir after a long lazy summer..... .., when we develop our programme of music through to Advent and beyond. As always please let me know if you have any favourite music or hymn that could be included in any of our worship.

On Sunday 12th September, Penicuik Silver Band will be in church to lead the music for the morning service. 2010 is the 175th anniversary of

the founding of the Band and they are using the year to promote the Band within Penicuik and the surrounding area. They have already visited other churches in Penicuik and provided music for services. Additionally they are keen to raise money to fund their youth development and buy new instruments, so there will be a retiral collection on the day towards their funds. Please put that date in your calendar.

Another extra opportunity for music making will be on Saturday 11th September when as part of Midlothian "Doors Open Day" St James will be open to visitors. Our team of organists has "volunteered" to provide music at various times during the day. No doubt the programme can be continued during the Flower Festival on 2nd and 3rd October.

David

Father Emmanuel's visit ...

Father Emmanuel is coming to visit us in November, which is now not far off. What are we going to offer him? So far, very little! Any offers of hospitality please? He certainly doesn't want to sleep with the ducks! I know you are all waiting until the holidays are over, but please give this some urgent thought. It would be nice to have everything in place before he arrives! Please contact me if you can help.

Many thanks,

Angela

Midlothian Doors Open 2010

Doors Open is on Saturday 11 September at St James the Less, from noon until 4pm. Margaret Coull will be organising and running the historical side of the day. Organ music will be part of this event and the church registers will also be available for viewing. Refreshments will be available during the day for a donation.

If anyone wishes to help by providing some home baking, this would be gratefully received. Please bring to Ishbel on the day.

Ishbel Proctor

[If you wish to read more about the nationwide event, visit

<http://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/opendays/default.aspx> and follow the links to chosen area – Ed]

Penicuik for Africa Coffee Morning

The coffee morning will be held on **Saturday 13th November 2010 in St James Church Hall from 10.00am till 12.00.**

There will be a home bake stall, plants and flowers and various other stalls for your perusal.

You are all warmly invited to come along and bring your friends and enjoy a lovely cup of Fair Trade coffee and some delicious home baking!

We are turning out attention to this very worthy cause this year; please help us in the next push to raise the £3000 needed for furnishings at the Chitambo Midwifery School.

Val McGavin

Two Wolves

(contributed by the Rector)



One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all.

"One is Evil - It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

"The other is Good - It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Created/Tearcraft

I will have the new Created catalogues very soon and will leave them at the back of the church. It looks good!

I will be taking orders for your Christmas gifts as usual but please remember that there will be no Tearcraft stall this year.

Val McGavin

Parcels4Troops

Again many thanks to those who contributed. I have put the 'Thank you' letter on the notice board. I shall also put a list of suitable items up. This is on-going and there is a box at the back of the Church for contributions or if you want to do your own parcel and bring it to Church it must weigh up to 2kg. Thank you all again.

Margaret Coull

Congratulations



to Marion Mather on her retirement after many years of committed and caring teaching! Enjoy your free time, Marion!

News of past members

Some of you may remember **Christine Barrow**. Below is a photograph of her taken after her ordination, with Janet & Angus Palmer.

Angus writes: "We were in Ely Cathedral last Saturday for Christine Barrow's ordination to the priesthood. This is a photo taken afterwards. She will be working as a non-stipendiary in the parish of Girton, where she lives.

Christine was very involved at St James during our first years. She was Secretary of the Vestry for a while. Her first child Mark was born in 1972 - I baptised him and became his godfather. She came to the Prayer Group and went to one of the Holy Island weekends - the

second in 1974, I think. Her husband Harry was appointed to a University job in California, and they left in 1975, I think. Her second son Tim was born soon afterwards. Christine continued to be very involved with the Church and became a spiritual director. The family eventually returned to the UK, when Chris spent many years caring for her mother, so that she only thought about ordination after her mother's death. She trained at Westcott House in Cambridge, and was deaconed last year (Steve and Pauline Goldsmith went to that ordination). Chris asked me to take part in the laying on of hands at the ordination last week.”



News from France from Janet O'Brien, a member of St James until 2001

I left Penicuik in 2001 to live in France and I am delighted every time I receive 'Outreach'. I was a member of St James for many years and it is interesting to read about people I know but of course it enables me to keep in touch with the denomination to which I belong. Although there is an Anglican church in Dinard, it is some distance away and not practical to go there on a regular basis. I sometimes go to the local Catholic church in the village, where I have been made very welcome, but I do not take communion there, which is something I regret.

We enjoy our life here. I am still working, teaching in a French university and also teaching privately. Living as we do in rural France, there is space to have a big garden, grow vegetables and keep animals; we have chickens, mainly rare breeds, geese and Ouessant sheep. We also have two dogs and two cats.

I am a French citizen now - our French friends were delighted but some of the English ones could not understand why I wanted to be French. The mayor of our village, who is also our representative on the council for Ille-et-Vilaine (like the county council), was very pleased and came to the naturalisation ceremony in St Malo.

For most people the holidays will be coming to an end soon and so I wish you all the best for the return to everyday routines. (In French we call this period of the year 'la rentrée').

[Best wishes to Janet - we would be delighted to hear from other past members of St James, accompanied by a photo if possible - Ed]

Omega Group

Invigorated by the (anti-) summer break, we will be setting out our stall at the 'Outreach & Witness' event on Saturday, September 25th. You will find there some fruits of our spring labours in the form of practical suggestions for 'being God's hearing aid' in a community increasingly overwhelmed by background noise. In October, we will resume our acquaintance with Marcus Borg, having had the benefit of meeting him in the flesh at a weekend conference in St Johns, Princes Street on Sep 11, as we study his more recent book *Jesus, The Heart of Christianity*. This one comes with a study guide and set questions, so you could participate from the comfort of your home, but we would much prefer you to join us at 'Holywells'. Further details will follow in the next magazine.

Neville

Help needed!

A spring clean of the hall will take place on Saturday 4 September from 10am; there are jobs to suit everyone, please come along and help if you can. Thanks!

Kathleen Cox

Mary's Meals - Fellowship Lunch

Many thanks once again to all who provided the food, helped with the tidying up and most especially those who attended and those who donated but couldn't attend.

Because of your generosity we were able to send a cheque for £470.

Margaret Coull

Rotas

September 2010

	5 September	12 September	19 September	26 September
	Pentecost 15	Pentecost 16	Pentecost 17	Pentecost 18
11.00am Organist	Jean	Jennifer	Mike	David
St Mungo's Organists	Mike	Jean	David	Jean
Sidesmen	Young Church	Marchants	Margaret Coull Elizabeth Clark	Nigel Johnston Andy Longmore
Bread and wine	Young Church	Johnstons	Dicksons	Clerks
1st reading	<i>Jeremiah 18:1-11 or Deuteronomy 30:15-20</i>	<i>Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 or Exodus 32:7-14</i>	<i>Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 or Amos 8:4-7</i>	<i>Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 or Amos 6:1a, 4-7</i>
	Young Church	Georgina Phillips	Elizabeth Clark	Sue Owen
2nd reading	<i>Philemon 1-21</i>	<i>1 Timothy 1:12-17</i>	<i>1 Timothy 2:1-7</i>	<i>1 Timothy 6:6-19</i>
	Young Church	Richard Phillips	Jo Bullough	Robert Clerk
Gospel	<i>Luke 14:25-33</i>	<i>Luke 15:1-10</i>	<i>Luke 16:1-13</i>	<i>Luke 16:19-31</i>
Prayers	Geoff Mather	Val McGavin	Sue Crosfield	Mike Hay
Pray for	Young Church	Bible Study Group	Choir	Church Women's Fellowship
Server	Martin/ Stephen	Angela/Alice	Angela	Val/Stephen
Coffee	Marion Mather Gillian Little	Hays Smiths	McGarvas	Margaret Vesco Joyce Black
Flowers	-----Ros Hay-----			
Cleaning	Mona Bennett Sue Owen	Mona Bennett Sue Owen	Clerks	Clerks
Welcomers	Nigel Johnston Elizabeth Clark	McGarvas	Andy Longmore Nigel Johnston	Elizabeth Clark Robert Clerk
Care Van			St James	
Pentland House				St James

October 2010

	3 October Harvest	10 October	17 October	24 October	31 October Matins
	Pentecost 19	Pentecost 20	Pentecost 21	Pentecost 22	Pentecost 23
11.00am Organist	Jean	Jennifer	Mike	David	Mike
St Mungo's Organists	Mike	Jean	David	Mike	Jean
Sidesmen	Young Church	McGarvas	Isobel Stenhouse Catherine Pow	Frantoms	Tom Moffat Richard Phillips
Bread and wine	Young Church	Leavys	Barretts	Dicksons	-----
1st reading	<i>Lamentations 1:1-6 or Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4</i>	<i>Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7 or 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c</i>	<i>Jeremiah 31:27-34 or Genesis 32:22-31</i>	<i>Joel 2:23-32 or Sirach 35:12-17</i>	<i>Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 or Isaiah 1:10-18</i>
	Young Church	Brigitte Fuge	Adrian Marchant	Gill Amos	Marion Mather
2nd reading	<i>2 Timothy 1:1-14</i>	<i>2 Timothy 2:8-15</i>	<i>2 Timothy 3:14-4:5</i>	<i>2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18</i>	<i>2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12</i>
	Young Church	Ian Fuge	Val McGavin	Geoff Mather	Sue Crosfield
Gospel	<i>Luke 17:5-10</i>	<i>Luke 17:11-19</i>	<i>Luke 18:1-8</i>	<i>Luke 18:9-14</i>	-----
Prayers	Andy Longmore	Alan Murray	Elizabeth Clark	David McGavin	-----
Pray for	Early Birds Prayer Groups	Fabric Team	J Tots	Jubilee Scotland	-----
Server	Angela/Alice	Martin/Steven	Val	Angela	-----
Coffee	Gillian Miller Marion Mather	Isobel Stenhouse Jean Wright	Marchants	Mrs Neish & Family	Frantoms
Flowers	-----Kathryn Topham-----				
Cleaning	Gill Amos Isobel Stenhouse	Gill Amos Isobel Stenhouse	?????????????	Ros Hay Sue Crosfield	Ros Hay Sue Crosfield
Welcomers	Nigel Johnston	Elizabeth Clark Andy Longmore	McGarvas	Robert Clerk Andy Longmore	Elizabeth Clark Nigel Johnston
Care Van Pentland House			St James		

Church Women's Fellowship

Members of CWF enjoyed a meal at the Leadburn on 5 July. Next meeting - 20 September at 64 Deanburn, Penicuik.



Mothers' Union News

MU Scottish web address is: <http://www.muscotland.org.uk> or via St James web page link.

MU News:

"Families First" Subscriptions due before mid-September. Unless I hear to the contrary, I will assume that all who pay by Direct Debit will continue to do so. Those who pay by cheque have been notified individually. *Jean Hindle*

MU Diocese:

27 Sep Diocesan Council - Christ Church Centre, Morningside

MU Branch:

Syllabus September- December 2010

- 22 Sep Service at 12.15 followed by lunch and Business meeting.
- 13 Oct Service and lunch. Speaker ALISON BURNLEY- Glimpses of Quakerism through the Quaker Tapestry.
- 27 Oct To be arranged
- 10 Nov Father Emmanuel from Cape Coast.
- 24 Nov Wave of Prayer.
- 8 Dec Advent tea and Carols.

Quiet Day at Christchurch

MU Chaplain Jennifer Eadie of St. Ebba's in Eyemouth led the day. The central part of the day was based around the icon of 'The Three Visitors' in the story of Abraham and Sarah. The icon was later named 'The Holy Trinity'. It was an interesting short look at icons and a peaceful time for meditation and prayer.

Jennifer will be leading a Quiet Day in Eyemouth on 9 October. For more information look at a copy of the 'Adventures in Faith Newsletter'.

Margaret Coull

Where are they now?

Juliette Johnson (nee Darke)

Many of you will remember the Darke family: Peter, Carol, Juliette and Rachel were 'regulars' at St James before returning to Peter's roots in Somerset in the 1990s. Peter ran the small animals clinic at the Dick Vet School in Edinburgh and Carol was active on the Penicuik twinning committee. Juliette was an active member of the first youth group that I ran at St James in the 1980s and we have kept in touch ever since.

Juliette graduated BA (Ed) from St Luke's College at Exeter University, and, for a few years taught in Devon. She met Andrew at a Christian camp in Italy and they were married at Stogumber Church (close to where Peter and Carol live in Somerset) on an extremely cold and snowy day (more like Penicuik than the West Country) at the end of December 2000. They set up home in Hereford where Andrew still practises as a solicitor, but in 2005 took on the tenancy of the 400 acre Lower Chilstone Court Farm when Andrew's mother retired. The farm is situated close to the village of Madley, around 10 miles south-west of Hereford. Although dominantly an arable farm, they also have a small herd of Hereford cattle, which includes a bull by the name of Mr Speaker (he once belonged to a local Conservative MP), hens and, being where they are, apple and pear trees. Although the arable work is largely done by contractors, Juliette is kept busy with these other sides of the business, not to mention looking after Lucy (5) and Samuel (3) and her involvement with various local activities and committees. Both Juliette and Andrew have retained their faiths – Juliette attributes this in part to her time in the Youth Group, which is very gratifying – and attend both Madley Parish Church and a nearby Pentecostal Church.

In her Christmas letter last year, Juliette mentioned that they have a holiday cottage on the farm so we decided to try it out in June and were not disappointed. It lived up to its name of Peaceful Cottage, being set in beautiful countryside, roughly a quarter of a mile from the farmhouse, which is reached by a path over the fields. Perhaps our only regret was that we didn't see that much of Juliette and the family apart from at church, watching Andrew play cricket and on a brief visit to the farm; but, as I said, she is very busy and we spent most days out 'doing' the sights. The cottage proved to be a great base for exploring an area which has much of interest – many historic churches including Madley, Hereford Cathedral with its unique Mappa Mundi and chained library, several National Trust properties, vineyards, cheese and cider makers. Further afield, Hay on Wye, book capital of the world, and the Forest of Dean, complete with steam railway, beckon.

Juliette and Andrew are always pleased to see people from St James and catch up with the news. If you want to find out more about the cottage and the area go to www.herefordholidaycottage.co.uk

Graham Smith

[Best wishes to all the family; always good to hear of past members of St James – Ed]

Church Coffee and the Pursuit of Excellence

Contributed by Val McGavin (reprinted with permission)

Why is church coffee so often bad?

Not all church coffee is bad, but the issue that poor church coffee raises is deeper and more troubling. It is that much of what we do as churches can often be described as substandard, second best, mediocre or weak.

We've all come across signs of slackness in church life: heating systems so dilapidated that the congregation keep their gloves on in winter, PA systems held together by insulating tape and notice boards still advertising Christmas services in February; ministers who are underpaid, live in crumbling, damp houses and drive cars that barely pass their MOTs; music groups that don't know how many verses to play and church websites that crash when you click on them.

I'm not criticising poverty in churches. There are many small congregations where few people are employed yet they somehow manage to do the very best with limited resources and many people serving voluntarily. And I'm not complaining about ministers who,

through lack of resources, have to do more than anyone ought reasonably to expect. What I'm concerned about is a casual attitude to church life that accepts second best as good enough for God. This can happen in any church but is particularly troubling in churches with wealthy members who seek quality and excellence in every other area of their lives.

Why do we have a quality problem?

- In some Christian circles there is still a belief that nothing should be enjoyable, especially church. Anything that smacks of pleasure is viewed with suspicion. In this perverse view there is virtue in hard pews, out-of-tune instruments and rambling sermons. Such things – and poor coffee – are supposedly good for the soul!
- There is an undervaluing of the local church. For nearly 2000 years Christians have prized their local church, but today the local church is no longer automatically high on a Christian's priorities. There are even some who consider the local church to be irrelevant and dispensable.
- There may also be a particularly British aspect to this malaise in church life. As a nation we celebrate amateurism and informality. American churches are less prone to this, although they may suffer from the opposite temptation, aspiring to a professionalism that can produce professional organisations more akin to businesses.

Why should we pursue excellence?

- We worship a God who demonstrates excellence in all he does. He created the entire universe and then made that simplest and most satisfying of quality control statements: what he had made was good (Genesis 1). When faced with solving the problem of a human race that had rebelled against him, he chose the most costly of solutions: sacrificing his only Son.
- We serve a God who commands excellence. We may struggle with those portions of the Old Testament that talk about the details of the sacrifices and the furnishings of the temple. But what is clear is that to be one of God's people in Old Testament times required enthusiasm, expense and commitment. God's people were to ensure that the temple in Jerusalem was grand and beautiful. And as we pass into the New Testament, the spirit in which we are to worship God does not alter. God's most excellent grace demands a response of equal excellence.
- We live among people who expect excellence. If you are reading this you are probably already convinced about the need for mission. Anything less than excellence undermines that message. People are not persuaded to accept Jesus by polished, well-done services, let

alone a decent cup of coffee. God has done astonishing things in the shabbiest of churches and he can do so again. But if we talk of something that we claim is of life-changing importance and our actions reflect complacency and a careless attitude then people are going to sense a mismatch. The Holy Spirit can speak through anything but it's presumption to rely on this. To offer people words and worship of quality (and perhaps some decent coffee as well) is to make a statement that we value both our faith and them. Excellence is not achieved easily; it requires at least three things: time, money and effort. And this is why excellence is an endangered species in some churches.

- Time. Success does not occur instantly. Excellence takes time. We all know that time is the most precious commodity we have. The result is that we end up begrudging that hour cleaning the church (I have visited some disgustingly filthy toilets in churches on my travels!), the midweek rehearsing with the music group, arriving early to set up that good coffee and be well prepared for all the children's activities. But as Christians we need to remind ourselves that we have eternal life. Let's not begrudge a few hours on earth.

- Money. Excellence costs and we prefer to keep our money to ourselves. Yet nothing is a better barometer of our spiritual health than our giving. To sing about dedication and devotion and the wonder of what God has done for us and then to give almost nothing in response doesn't demonstrate a living faith. If God gave himself for us in Christ then we who are saved by his life and death ought to respond with generosity.

Money isn't everything; it is just one of the three elements. Nevertheless it is important and many of the problems I have described are attributable to a shortage of funding.

- Effort. Talk to an excellent musician, artist or writer and you will find that their mastery involved hard work, sacrifice and struggle. We need to adopt the same principle. What we do in our local churches is probably the most important part of our Christian lives. We come together in worship and fellowship as communities of people to offer praise to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to be taught by him. We need to work to make that time the very best that it can possibly be. We need to put more effort in, to get more excellence out.

Ultimately, the weaknesses in our churches and organisations have a common root: the fact that we do not value our faith as we should. What

we believe, and in particular what we believe about our local church, has ceased to become the central point around which our lives are built. It has gone from being a foundation of our lives to some sort of accessory and we need to adopt a very different mindset.

Poor coffee in our churches is the most trivial of matters, yet I believe it is often a symptom of something very serious. It is too easy for us to be substandard in what we do for God. Friends, let us resolve to pursue excellence for the glory of God.

J. John (J John is a Canon in the Anglican Church in Chorleywood. ... if you want to read more of his reflections go to his website at <http://www.philotrust.com>)

Need Washing?

Contributed by Angel Sibley

A little girl had been shopping with her Mom in Walmart. She must have been 6 years old, this beautiful red haired, freckle faced image of innocence.

It was pouring outside. The kind of rain that gushes over the top of rain gutters, so much in a hurry to hit the earth it has no time to flow down the spout. We all stood there, under the awning, just inside the door of the Walmart. We waited, some patiently, others irritated because nature messed up their hurried day.

I am always mesmerised by rainfall. I got lost in the sound and sight of the heavens washing away the dirt and dust of the world. Memories of running, splashing so carefree as a child came pouring in as a welcome reprieve from the worries of my day.

Her little voice was so sweet as it broke the hypnotic trance we were all caught in, 'Mom let's run through the rain,' she said. 'What?' Mom asked. 'Let's run through the rain!' She repeated. 'No, honey. We'll wait until it slows down a bit,' Mom replied. This young child waited a minute and repeated: 'Mom, let's run through the rain..' 'We'll get soaked if we do,' Mom said. 'No, we won't, Mom. That's not what you said this morning,' the young girl said as she tugged at her Mom's arm. 'This morning? When did I say we could run through the rain and not get wet?' 'Don't you remember? When you were talking to Daddy about his cancer, you said, ' If God can get us through this, He can get us through

anything! '

The entire crowd stopped dead silent.. I swear you couldn't hear anything but the rain. We all stood silently. No one left. Mom paused and thought for a moment about what she would say.

Now some would laugh it off and scold her for being silly. Some might even ignore what was said. But this was a moment of affirmation in a young child's life. A time when innocent trust can be nurtured so that it will bloom into faith. 'Honey, you are absolutely right. Let's run through the rain. If GOD let's us get wet, well maybe we just need washing,' Mom said.

Then off they ran. We all stood watching, smiling and laughing as they darted past the cars and yes, through the puddles. They got soaked. They were followed by a few who screamed and laughed like children all the way to their cars. And yes, I did. I ran. I got wet. I needed washing.

Circumstances or people can take away your material possessions, they can take away your money and they can take away your health. But no one can ever take away your precious memories...So, don't forget to make time and take the opportunities to make memories everyday. To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. *I hope you still take the time to run through the rain.*

They say it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them, but then an entire life to forget them. Send this to the people you'll never forget and remember to also send it to the person who sent it to you. It's a short message to let them know that you'll never forget them.

If you don't send it to anyone, it means you're in a hurry. Take the time to live!!! Keep in touch with your friends, you never know when you'll need each other ... and don't forget to run in the rain!

Book Review

'The Good Man Jesus and The Scoundrel Christ' by Philip Pullman
Unwelcome gift for a priest on Father's Day? Not if you are trying to go with the flow of biblical scholarship and noting from better informed

sources that the 'Jesus of History' is rather different from the 'Christ of Faith'. Mind you, the book left me wondering whether Pullman is Good Man or Scoundrel! To head off the anticipated wrath of fundamentalists, the back cover broadcasts a disclaimer - 'THIS IS ONLY A STORY'. Few will be fooled. Pullman is 'anti-Christ', and the book is an attempted 'send-up' of another, infinitely BIGGER STORY of Jesus as venerated in the Gospels. Some of the material is darker than that in Pullman's 'Dark Materials', uncomfortably atheistic in tone. And yet ... !

The ingenious plot is that 'Jesus' had a twin brother, 'Christ', who slipped almost unnoticed from Mary's womb. Forever overshadowed by his charismatic brother, he was content to watch from the wings as Jesus stole the show with one sensational performance after another. 'Christ' took copious notes as he became increasingly aware that he was on to a 'world exclusive', a story that would 'run and run', given the right treatment. Pullman's Christ is a highly complex character who morphs into Judas, with some encouragement from 'Jesus', and has regular chats with an evil 'stranger' that are reminiscent of C.S. Lewis' Screwtape Letters. The scoundrel!

Astonishingly, Pullman's 'Jesus' is very, very Good. Sticking faithfully to an essentially Marcan narrative which he understands well, he retells the Jesus story in compelling fashion. His expositions on 'miracles' such as the feeding of the multitude have drawn praise from the Archbishop of Canterbury and (less surprisingly!) our former primus, Richard Holloway. The Jesus story races along and before you know it you are suffering with him in Gethsemane. What a friend Pullman finds in 'Jesus'!

After 'Jesus' crucifixion, 'Christ' begins to reconstruct a new ultra-miraculous biography, pulling strings that were never there. Pullman's 'Christ' has morphed into the church of the early centuries, which he sees as power-hungry, conniving and corrupt. Sadly, he who didn't dare won Pullman's heart. The paradox is that had nobody 'spun' the story the way they did, Jesus, the Good Man, would probably have faded into obscurity. Thank you Mr Pullman for your unintended CPR (you scoundrel)!

(Philip Pullman: The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ
244pp. Canongate. 2010 £14.99. isbn 978 1 84767 825 6)

Neville

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 and support.

Pray for Florence Petrie, Mae Mann, Elizabeth Black, Ruby Graham, John Ford, Irene Hair, Ruth Haig and Eric Marchant. Also for Kathryn Topham's aunt and uncle, Paddy and Geoff, in Hull who are still going through a difficult time. Continue to pray for the ongoing recovery of Jim McGarva, Alan Murray and Mairi. Pray for Viv Bremner, mourning Douglas, and all who have lost family and friends. Please continue to pray for Lauren and her baby Charlotte, for Jean and Ralph and their family and for baby Rory McGavin. Pray for all those suffering from depression.

Pray for all who are victims of natural disasters throughout the world; for the helpless and the helpers as they seek to rebuild their lives. Pray that aid reaches those for whom it is intended.

Pray for continued progress towards peace and reconciliation; for the work of Penicuik for Africa. 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 people of countries torn apart by conflict and civil war. Remember also the British troops and the families of those overseas or about to go overseas, particularly those based at Glencorse Barracks. Pray for the work of Jubilee Scotland.

Pray for all members of the new Parliament at Westminster; for the Government that they may seek not personal glory but the common good. 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.

(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 the clergy know the progress of the person held in prayer. The list is updated every two to three months. Thank you!)

Surprise Gift of a Baby!

Rory David Campbell McGavin was born on 16th August in Simpsons, Royal Infirmary to Gill and Ken McGavin (*see inside front cover*).

He surprised his Mum and Dad by arriving 8 weeks early. He is small but is doing well. Please pray for him and his parents in the coming weeks while he is in hospital.

Thanks, from the proud grandparents! *David and Val*

Events coming soon...

September 2010

- Mon 6 Sep Flower Festival meeting in Hall 7pm
- Sat 11 Sep 12.00noon - 4pm Midlothian Doors Open at St James
- Sun 12 Sep 11am Service, with Penicuik Silver Band
- Sat 25 Sep "Outreach and Witness" day of events (*see back cover*)
- Sun 26 Sep Congregational Picnic Penicuik House

October 2010

- Sun 3 Oct Harvest Sunday
- Sat/Sun 2-3 Oct Flower Festival in St James - **much help needed; please note in diaries now!**
- Wed 6 Oct Vestry 7.30pm
- Sun 24 Oct Special Congregational Meeting/Sea Sunday Brunch

November 2010

- Sat 13 Nov *Created* (Tearcraft) Coffee Morning 10am-12noon
- Thu 25 Nov Vestry 8.15pm

December 2010

- Sun 5 Dec Bishop's visit

Outreach can also be viewed on the St James website: <http://www.stjamespenicuik.co.uk> ***The October 2010 edition will be published on Sunday 3 October. Information about events, and contributions, should be with the Editor, Georgina Phillips 661039, Merlewood, The Loan, West Linton, EH46 7HE, phillg13@toucansurf.com, by Wednesday 22 September at the latest. If sent by email, please copy to Mike Hay, mike@hayfamily.co.uk.***

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Amelie Belle Herriot Morgan at her christening on 6 June



Rhona Tabitha Kallow, a second daughter for Helen (Phillips) and Jonathan and a third grandchild for Richard and Georgina



Outreach and Witness

Saturday 25th September

Penicuik Churches Together sharing and celebrating the present scope and the shared vision of Outreach and Witness in which we are all engaged.

Morning 10–12	Sacred Heart Church	Sharing the Vision - Led by the Fraternal .
Afternoon 2–5	St Mungo’s Church Hall	Displays of the current and planned outreach and witness.
Evening 7–9	North Church	Praise, Worship and Prayer - Led by the Fraternal.

Please make a date with your diary.

To book a display table contact Rosie Townsley, South Kirk; David McGavin and Andy Longmore, St James; Alan and Jan Naylor and Billy and Sally Ness, North Kirk; Bill and Margaret Webster, St Mungo’s; Margaret Drummond, Sacred Heart.

or email – oandwdy2010-penicuik@my.ibpinitiative.org

For further information please contact any one of the Fraternal

Rev Geoff Berry, St Mungo’s;
 Rev Ian Cathcart, South Church;
 Rev John Fraser, North Church ;
 Father John McInnes, Sacred Heart;
 Father Rob Warren, St James.