

Parish Press

Monthly magazine of South Holburn Church, March 2010



Above, happy smiles at last year's Spring Fair - don't miss this year's event on Saturday, May 8 - raffle tickets and quizzes already on sale!

Stories to make you smile

Prince Charles is visiting an Edinburgh hospital and enters a ward full of patients with no obvious sign of injury or illness and greets one.

The patient replies:

"Fair fa your honest sonsie face,

Great chieftain o' the puddin race,

Aboon them a' ye take yer place,

Painch, tripe or th airm,

As lang's my airm."

Charles is confused, so he just grins and moves on to the next patient.

The patient responds:

"Some hae meat an canna eat,
And some wad eat that want
it,

But we hae meat an we can eat,

So let the Lord be thankit."

Even more confused, and his grin now fixed, the Prince moves on to the next patient, who immediately begins to chant:

"Wee sleekit, cowerin,
timrous beastie,

O the panic in thy breastie,
Thou needna start awa sae
hastie,

Wi bickering brattle."

Now seriously troubled, Charles turns to the accompanying doctor and asks:

"Is this a psychiatric ward?"

"No," replies the doctor.

"This is the serious Burns unit."

On Palm Sunday, because of a sore throat, five-year-old Johnny stayed home from church with a sitter.

When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm branches. The youngster asked what they were for.

"People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by," his older brother explained.

"Wouldn't you know it," the boy fumed. "The one Sunday I don't go, He showed up!"

From the manse

We probably have several hundred books in our study at the manse, ranging from weighty theological publications to light-hearted collections of sermon illustrations.

Recently I found a small book, which was almost 'buried' beneath its hefty neighbours. The title of this little volume is self explanatory: Children's Letters to God.

This book contains a wonderful collection of writings, all of which were penned by young children. Many of the contributions will raise a few smiles, for example:

Dear God. In Sunday School they told us what you do. Who does it when you are on holiday? Jane.

Another young girl wrote: Dear God. Did you mean for giraffe to look like that or was it an accident? Norma.

While many of these letters might make us chuckle, some of them also ask quite searching questions.

The logic of children's minds is often very sound and it isn't always easy to respond to their queries.

For example:
Dear God. Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones why don't you just keep the ones you've got now? Jane.

The author of one letter expressed her insightful understanding of faith:
Dear God. I don't ever feel alone since I found out about you. Nora.

These letters remind us that we can gain an awareness of God, even in our earliest years. It is when we are children that we most often begin to appreciate the great mysteries of life.

Yet, with the passing of the years, I wonder whether we sometimes become less⇒

⇒ willing to search and less willing to ask great questions. For all that we are bound to lose some of our childlike innocence, it is perhaps sad if we also lose our sense of wonder.

The authors of scripture remind us that that faith and wonderment should not be limited to the years of childhood. Our knowledge of God can never be sufficient and there are always new questions to ask or mysteries to explore. The writer of

Holy Land trip

Those interested in a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in October 2011 are to meet in Portlethen Parish Church on Sunday, April 18.

Anyone unable to make the meeting but interested in finding out more about the trip can contact John on 01569730604 or e-mail watson-john18@sky.com and details will be forwarded.

Psalm 8 demonstrated this searching approach, which ought to stay with us throughout our lives:

When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in your places – what are we that you think of us – mere mortals that you care for us?

We are never so wise that we need not ask questions of God and we are never too old to have a sense of wonder.

George S. Cowie

**David
George
Gray**

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South Holburn & Eco-Congregation Scotland

By Ronnie Johnstone

Eco-Congregation is a joint project of the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland which helps Christian congregations in Britain and Ireland address environmental concerns on both spiritual and practical levels.

Eco-congregation Scotland is supported through a partnership between Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRT) of the Church of Scotland. It was launched in 2001 at a special dedication service in Dunblane Cathedral when senior representatives from all the major denominations signed a pledge committing to the programme. Small actions add up to big results, and, since the launch, 234 Scottish churches have registered with the

programme, including 13 in Aberdeen city and 12 in Aberdeenshire.

Eco-Congregation is a free programme which is flexible enough to suit the unique needs and situations of individual churches.

Eco-Congregation provides information about specific ecological issues in the form of a set of 12 free Resource Modules for use in church life. The modules are divided into four categories (Grounding in Faith, ⇨



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⇨Managing in Faith, Growing in Faith, and Living in Faith), which are designed to help congregations integrate environmental care into their worship, group activities, institutional management procedures, and personal lifestyles. Module one, The Church Check-up, is a basic environmental audit for churches which aims to help churches recognise and affirm their positive environmental practices and to prioritise future areas that need improvement.

The other eleven modules are divided into three categories, Growing in Faith and Understanding, Putting God's House in Green Order, and Changing Lives: Changing Communities, and are designed to help congregations integrate creation care into their worship, teaching, group activities, management procedures, community engagement, and

personal lifestyles. Eco-Congregation supports participating congregations through workshops, an informational website, newsletter, and networking opportunities for connecting with local environmental groups and other Eco-Congregations. Eco-Congregation recognizes valuable creation care work with its Eco-Congregation⇨

Brian Smith
painter and decorator

interior and exterior

31 Abergeldie Terrace,
Aberdeen AB10 6EE

Tel: 01224 575127
Mobile: 07745 107426

⇒ Award, which is given to churches that have completed the Church Check-Up, incorporated God’s creation care into their teaching and worship, undertaken practical environmental projects, and engaged with the local community around environmental issues. Accomplishments of individual Eco-Congregation churches include: creation care services, energy-saving measures, recycling projects, conservation initiatives, wildlife preservation, and environmental education.

Eco-Congregation’s newsletter features green care activities at individual churches; opportunities such as grants, conferences, and collaborative projects; and faith-based reflections on environmental issues. Eco-Congregation is delivered to churches in Scotland and England by national agencies, with some limited support available for churches in Wales and Ireland. Further information is available on www.ecocongregation.org/scotland or from Ronnie Johnstone.

Helping our Kachere visitor

By Fred Gibb

In March, the Session and Board agreed to raise some money to help with the air fare of our visitor coming from Malawi in September.

This was done by donations at the church door and I am pleased to say approximately £270 was raised, including £100 from the Social Committee. On behalf of the World Church Committee, I wish to thank all who contributed and as the money will be sent by transfer during April, any further donations can be put in the plate marked ‘Malawi’. I am still waiting for offers of accommodation for our visitor Hastings Phale. Even if you just want to know what is involved.

Aberdeen Fairtrade survey

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/thirdworldcentre>

Since 1983, the Third World Centre has been at the forefront of the move to Fair Trade in Aberdeen.

There are three aspects of the organisation, the most obvious of which is their shop, Fair Trade Aberdeen, re-housed last July at 101 George Street.

They also run an education centre, known as the Montgomery Development Education Centre, which has separate funding and operates out of premises in Queen Street Church.

It supports teachers in embedding global citizenship throughout the curriculum and delivers training and resources.

The final aspect of the centre’s work is the co-ordination of the Aberdeen Fairtrade City campaign. Although Aberdeen has Fairtrade City status, the work of raising awareness

and expanding the use of Fairtrade products is growing and developing all the time. Aberdeen Fairtrade is the network of campaigners co-ordinated by the centre and working in partnership with the council on Fairtrade events.

The centre needs to plan for the future of its three constituent parts and is consulting with as wide a selection of people as possible.

A survey is available in the shop and online (at the address in the heading above) and they’d appreciate as many people as possible to help by taking part.

They consider you will be ensuring Aberdeen’s continued commitment to the wider Fair Trade scene and helping to build on the solid foundation laid down by the centre over the past 27 years. In fact, they need your help.

Campaign plans in pipeline

By Congregational Board Clerk John Gillies

Plans for the September Stewardship Campaign are progressing, members of the Congregational Board heard at their March meeting.

The name of the campaign is to be Building Tomorrow, reported Alan Johnston and a logo had been decided upon. The centrepiece of the campaign is to be a re-view of the life and work of our

church which would take place in the evenings of Thursday and Friday, September 2 and 3, and on the afternoon of Saturday, September 4.

The organisations and groups in our church are to be asked to participate. One of the main parts of the campaign is to extend a personal invitation to all members of the congregation and their ⇒

⇒ families to attend the re-view. As the campaign progresses, the help of board members and congregation members will be needed to help with the organisation and the re-view.

The committee is to report back to the board on a regular basis.

Correspondence

A letter had been received to say that that planning consent for the church development had been granted.

Fred Gibb wrote to say that, at the meeting of the Malawi partnership, there was a discussion about financial support for visitors from twinned churches in September and asked for permission to ask the congregation for contributions. After discussion, the request was agreed and it was also decided to intimate the appeal in the order of service for two weeks and to place a plate for members to place donations.

Records checked

The records of South Holburn have been attested by Aberdeen Presbytery and found to be in good order. The chairman thanked all the record keepers for their meticulous care.

Annual accounts

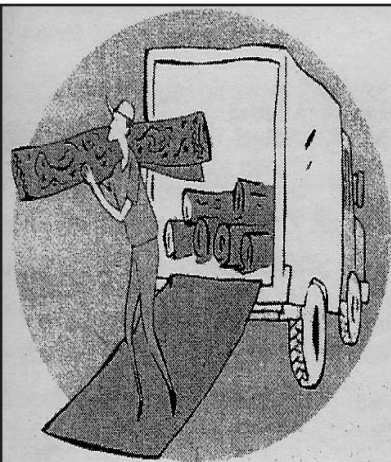
Finance convener Raymond Kelly presented the annual accounts, the first 12 pages of which detailed the trustees and the life and work of our congregation and measured our achievement and performance throughout the year. The offerings received during the year had decreased as had the expenses.

Development report

Presenting the report, John Gillies said the plans for our development has been approved by the local council and Historic Scotland. The architect was now preparing detailed drawings for our application for a building warrant and for when we go out to tender.⇒

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⇒ **Property matters**

Property committee convener John Watson reported that the work at the manse had started and the claim had been passed to the insurance company. He had asked the slater for a price and start date for the pointing work on the window at the rear of the church but was awaiting a reply.

Social news

Social committee convener Pat Moir said they had to

cancel the Scottish Evening due to lack of support. They had reflected on this and decided that for future events to sell tickets in the hall after the services on Sundays. The following events were planned - a fashion show on April 7, a strawberry tea in June, the barbecue in August and a silent auction in September. They were also considering a visit to Trinity hall.⇒

⇒ **Spring Fair ahead**

Dr Bob Drummond reported that there was plenty of activity behind the scenes for the May 8 event. They had decided to keep the charges at last year's price.

Church officer deputies

George Cowie said it would be helpful to have a couple of deputies for the Church Officer and if anyone was interested to see him.

New photocopier

The board approved a recommendation by the finance committee to set up a small committee to decide on the new photocopier and its purchase or lease. The Rev George Cowie, Dorothy Smith and Ian Mann had volunteered.

Next meeting

The Congregational Board next meets on Tuesday, May 11, in the church at 7.30pm.

List of Things to do...
 ✓ Repair the central heating...
 ✓ Organise Yearly Servicing...
 ✓ Get a reliable, efficient & Swift service provider
 Who shall I call????

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The Church of Scotland: Ministries and Mission contributions 2010

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you for supporting the worship, mission and service of the Church through the money you give in your offering. It is important that you know what happens to this money.

This letter tells you about your congregation's Ministries and Mission contribution - the money your congregational treasurer sends to the church offices in Edinburgh.

How does it enable the worship, mission and service of the Church?

The information in this letter shows how your congregation's contribution is used to support parish ministries, mission and renewal and general support and services provided for our congregations and the councils of the General Assembly.

Please note that the cost of your minister is not what he/she is paid.

The cost is the total for the stipend and

employer's national insurance and pension contributions and is based on a minister with 10 years service.

£68,960 is South Holburn congregation's contribution; of this money **£59,995 (87%)** goes on **Parish Ministries** - the cost of ministry in your parish is £39,100 and your contribution to the cost of ministries in other parishes and training for ministries is £20,985.

In addition, **£3793 (5.5%)** goes on **Mission and Renewal** which supports the Church's work in resourcing congregations for Christian education and outreach, in caring for the vulnerable in society, in partnership with churches in some of the poorest parts of the world and in providing a Christian perspective on the issues of today.

And **£5172 (7.5 %)** goes on **Support and Services for Councils and Congregations** which provides financial, legal, safeguarding and other services and meets

the cost of the General Assembly and the Moderator.

Please note that Ministries and Mission contributions only provide part of the total funding required for the work of the Church listed above.

A fuller picture is given in the leaflet **Funding our Faith**, which is available free to all congregations.

I hope that this helps you to understand Ministries and Mission contributions and shows you are enabling the sharing of the gospel through the money your congregation sends through the church offices to all parts of Scotland and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon D Jamieson,
Head of Stewardship,
Stewardship and Finance Department,
The Church of Scotland,
121 George Street, Edinburgh.

Celebration meetings for people with learning disabilities, their friends, families and carers

Causeway Prospects is a Christian voluntary organisation committed to helping people with learning disabilities, their friends, family and carers to live life to the full. The Bridge of

Don group is hosted by volunteers from churches in the Bridge of Don and wider Aberdeen area; it is part of the national Causeway Prospects network of groups. They meet

once a month (3pm to 4.30pm on Saturdays, April 17, May 15 and June 19, at Oldmachar Church, Ashwood Park, Bridge of Don) to enjoy each other's company, music, crafts, Bible

stories, drama and refreshments. Everyone is welcome and more details are available from Stef Robertson, tel 01224 494334, mob 0777 385 5220 or email stef.robertson@yahoo.com.