

Parish Press

Monthly magazine of South Holburn Church, May 2010



A huge thank you to all who helped in any way to make the Souper Friday lunch such a 'souper' success, whether it was donating a pan of soup, the bread, the coffee or the shortbread, washing dishes or just enjoying the lunch. The wonderful sum of £370 was forwarded to Christian Aid and organiser Alison Dale hopes all who came along enjoyed it as much as the team (pictured above) did. They hope to see everyone at their next soup and sweet lunch after the service on Sunday, May 23.

Church without walls

By Session Clerk Alan Johnston

An important part of South Holburn's outreach within our community is the worship services we hold in the three sheltered housing complexes and nursing home in our parish.

The services take place during September to May and play an important part in bringing our church out into our parish, reaching members who might not otherwise be able to come

along to church. The services are led by a dedicated team who share worship on a rota basis with the invaluable assistance of elders and family members.

We also have a small team of musicians for musical support. The picture below was taken at Balmoral Court and includes Anne Duncan, one of our pianists, and the youngest member of our team, Eleanor Johnston.



From the manse

A time for choosing

This will be a significant month for the United Kingdom, as the people of our country go to the polls on Thursday, May 6.

Like many other public buildings, our church halls at South Holburn will serve as a polling station. Local people will come to our church to express their preference, about who should form the next government in Westminster.

In the present political climate, it is perhaps rather easy to become cynical about our political system.

None of the major parties have emerged unscathed from the infamous row involving MP's expenses.

In addition, the economic difficulties of our time mean that unpopular decisions need to be taken.

The media coverage of the election campaign perhaps

leaves some people feeling weary.

For reasons such as these, some folk may not feel bothered about voting.

If we are struggling to muster enthusiasm about the General Election, then we would do well to remember the events of April 27 1994.

That was the day on which 20 million people in South Africa went to the polls, the majority of whom had never previously had the opportunity to vote. The event marked the end of the apartheid era, during which few rights were extended to the majority of the population.

The election of 1994 represented a triumph for those who had been seeking freedom: at long last every individual had an equal part to play, regardless of their race or colour.

My predecessor at Holburn ⇒

⇒ Central Church was the Rev Alan McDonald, who served on the Kirk's former Church and Nation Committee.

The Church of Scotland had long supported the campaign to end apartheid, recognising that oppression on racial grounds is unjust and contrary to the values of the Gospel. Alan McDonald was one of a number of church leaders, who were invited to act as independent observers, ensuring that fair elections took place.

By travelling to South Africa, and by monitoring the procedures, Alan played a part in legitimising the process.


We should never become indifferent about the processes of democracy, because they are a privilege that we are fortunate to enjoy.

Future meetings: the board next meets on Tuesday, May 11 and the session on Thursday, June 17.

Others have made sacrifices so that we can choose our own leaders and in many countries people would envy our opportunity to do so. Regardless of who governs our nation after May 6, difficult and unpopular decisions will need to be taken.

Let us pray for wise and honest leadership – and let us play our own part, if we are at all able to vote.

George S. Cowie



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Disability champion experiment

By Session Clerk Alan Johnston

At their April meeting, the Kirk Session discussed various matters ranging from Christian Aid Week and summer services to world affairs and also received a series of reports from visitors to church organisations.

Among the correspondence received was a letter from the Scottish Churches' Disability Agenda Group (SCDAG) and Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) who are about to launch a year-long experiment into the benefits of asking congregations to appoint a Disability Champion.

The session agreed that anyone interested in finding out more or participating should contact the Session Clerk.

A letter was also received from Christian Aid thanking Alison Dale for the donation of £370 raised following the Souper

Souper lunch. The session also expressed their thanks to Alison for organising such a successful lunch. It had been a great success and was enjoyed by all who came along.

Church records

The session heard that South Holburn's records had been inspected by Aberdeen Presbytery and found to be in good order.

Church Organ

The Rev George Cowie ⇨

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MSSCh MB ChA

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⇨ advised that the Makin company would be returning to carry out post installation modifications to the church organ.

Presbytery elder

The session agreed to the re-appointment of John Gillies as our presbytery elder. John indicated that it is important that we rotate the post and George advised that if anyone was interested in becoming our Presbytery Elder, they could talk to him during the year.

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid week this year is May 9 to 15 and South Holburn was holding a fund-raising lunch after morning worship on Sunday, May 23. Envelopes will be distributed in church as per our usual arrangements and it was agreed that we would look into the suitability of having Christian Aid envelopes available at our Spring Fair.

Summer services

It was agreed that our 9.30am

summer services will take place during July and August. Pat Moir advised that the family barbecue is provisionally planned for Sunday, August 22 and it was decided that there would be no 9.30am service that Sunday if the barbecue goes ahead.

Anyone interested in leading one of the early services during the summer should ⇨

Brian Smith

painter and decorator

interior and exterior



31 Abergeldie Terrace,
Aberdeen AB10 6EE

Tel: 01224 575127
Mobile: 07745 107426

⇒see the Session Clerk.

Committee reports

For the worldwide church committee, Fred Gibb reported that our Haiti appeal had raised £345.

The appeal for our visitor from Kachere had raised £590. The cost of an air flight is £1000.

Two containers had been filled for Malawi and one more was due to be filled soon.

In addition, £20,000 had been donated to the Malawi Partnership Funds.

It was hoped to use the funds in conjunction with the Mary's Wheels organisation to provide clean water and sanitation to school areas.

For the pastoral care and outreach committee, George Cowie reported that the committee would meet during the summer and would discuss matters arising from our recent Elders' Conference.

Visitor Reports

Christine Laennec reported on

a visit to she made to the **Girls' Brigade** in March with her daughter Isabel. Both were made to feel very welcome by all.

There are seven Explorers, six Juniors, and 14 Brigadiers. Starting and leaving times are staggered allowing each group time with their leaders.

The officers are Captain Lesley Bills, Lieutenant Catherine Buchan and Warrant Officers Laura Bills and Holly Johnston. George Cowie is the chaplain.

Christine was impressed by how much helpful and affectionate interaction there was between different age groups.

The girls were practising for their Open Night on May 13, and they were very well-disciplined in performing their routines, but each girl was expressing her own personality.

The officers were very well-prepared and organised, and created a relaxed ⇒

⇒atmosphere of fun. There was much laughter all around. All the girls did Easter crafts, and the older ones prepared biscuits and hot chocolate after the younger ones had left. Each group said a prayer before they left.

Anne Stott reported on a visit to the **Lunch Club's** Christmas lunch made by her, Fiona Woodhead and Katie Woodhead (aged six months). They had a great time and the lunch was of a very high standard. There were

approximately 100 people attending and after lunch they were entertained by the Beacon Choir from Bucks burn. Tea and coffee was served afterwards.

Anne expressed her gratitude to the organisers and their helpers for making the Lunch Club such a warm and friendly place where folk can come and enjoy good food, entertainment and in the company of friends.

George Cowie also thanked

all involved in the Lunch Club and stated how pleasing it was to see so many people coming along and enjoying the food and fellowship.

Alastair McCulloch reported on a visit made to the **Bowling Club** in March. He enjoyed his visit, particularly as he was part of a winning team. There were 12 bowlers attending which is about the usual number. Everyone was very friendly and the atmosphere was nice and relaxed.

Open nights

George advised that both Girls' and Boys' Brigades open nights take place in May and that everyone was very welcome to come along.

Presbytery Elder's John Gillies gave the March report reported (previously published in the Parish Press).

Church tables

The session agreed to a request from St Machar's Cathedral to borrow 12 tables on the first Saturday in May.

Noah's mission in 21st Century Scotland

In the year 2010, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in Scotland and said:

“Once again, the earth has become wicked and over-populated, and I see the end of all flesh before me.

“Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans.”

He gave Noah the blueprints, saying: “You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights.”

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard - but no Ark.

“Noah!” He roared: “I’m about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?”

“Forgive me, Lord,” begged Noah, “but things have changed.

“I needed a Building Permit.

“I’ve been arguing with the Boat Inspector about the need

for a sprinkler system.

“My neighbours claim that I’ve violated the neighbourhood bye-laws by building the Ark in my back garden and exceeding the height limitations.

“We had to go to the local planning committee for a decision.

“Then the local council and the electricity company demanded a shed load of money for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark’s move to the sea.

“I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

“Getting the wood was another problem.

“There’s a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the Greater Spotted Barn Owl.

“I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls - but no go! ⇨

⇨”When I started gathering the animals the RSPCA took me to court.

“They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will.

“They argued the accommodations were too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space.

“Then the Scottish Environmental Agency ruled that I couldn’t build the Ark until they’d conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood.

“I’m still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how many minorities I’m supposed to hire for my building gang.

“Immigration are checking the visa status of most of the

people who want to work.

“The trades unions say I can’t use my sons. They insist I have to hire only union workers with Ark-building experience.

“To make matters worse, the Inland Revenue seized all my assets, claiming I’m trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

“So, forgive me, Lord, but it will take at least 10 years for me to finish this Ark.” Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky.

Noah looked up in wonder and asked: “You mean you’re not going to destroy the world?”

“No” said the Lord. “The government beat me to it.”

Highland Theological College are holding a teaching week-end in Gilcomston South Church, called Living as Children of the Father, led by the Rev Dr Noel Due and the Rev Hector Morrison. No booking required and on Friday, May 14, there’s a session at 7.30pm; on Saturday, May 15, there are sessions at 10am and 11.45am and a prayer meeting at 7pm and on Sunday, May 16, services at 11am and 6.30pm.

Volunteers wanted for summer services

By Session Clerk Alan Johnston

Our 9.30am summer Services will resume during July and August and as in previous years, we're looking for volunteers to lead a service.

This is a great opportunity for individuals, friends or church

groups to take lead worship. If you would like to volunteer or are interested in finding out more, please see me over the next few weeks.

Don't worry if you haven't led a service before, 'first-timers' are especially welcome!

If you are a taxpayer, the church can reclaim the tax on any offerings you give if you sign a Gift Aid form.

You do not have to commit yourself to giving a set amount or for any length of time. All you have to do, is sign a form and gift aid convener Shelagh Johnstone will take care of the rest.

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South Holburn's May diary

Sunday, May 2: Service at Riverside Care Home at 3pm.

Saturday, May 8: Spring Fair from 2pm to 4pm.

Sunday, May 9: Service at Bridge of Dee Court at 3pm.

Sunday to Saturday, May 9 to 15: Christian Aid Week.

Tuesday, May 11: Congregational Board meeting at 7.30pm.

Thursday, May 13: Girls' Brigade Open Night at 7.15pm.

Sunday, May 16: Service at Gairn Court at 3pm.

Sunday, May 16: Guild Walk from St Mark's Church.

Friday, May 21: Boys' Brigade Open Night at 7.30pm.

Sunday, May 23: Service at Balmoral Court at 3pm. Christian Aid lunch after morning worship. Pentecost evening service at 7pm.

Sunday worship is at 10.30am. The choir meets for rehearsals at 9.45am on Sundays. Sunday School meets in the hall prior to the service and takes part in the first part of worship. Crèche meets in room 1.

Girls' Brigade meets at 6.30pm on Thursdays. Boys' Brigade meets at 6.30pm and 7.30pm on Fridays. The Parents and Toddlers meet on Thursdays 9.15am to 11.15am. Bowling Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm to 4pm.

Instant Neighbour donations can be placed in the boxes at the back of the church on any Sunday.

Last container on its way to Malawi

By Fred Gibb

The final container left Aberdeen for Blantyre Presbytery on Monday, April 26.

This made seven in all since 2006.

Five and six were filled and on their way during the previous week and the seventh marks the end the project for the present.

Problems of financing and storage have been too great and the few workers are greatly in need of a rest.

The present premises being used for storage are being flattened to make way for yet another car park for U-Square.

Many thousands of pounds

worth of goods have been sent including many medical items.

Thank you all who donated unwanted bicycles, sewing machines, tools, toys and also contributions to the various appeals.

We are still continuing with our twinning with Kachere Church and look forward to the visit from their Session Clerk Hastings Phale in September.

The appeal to help with his air fare allowed us to send £590 made up from £340 in donations including £100 from our social committee funds and £250 from the Malawi Partnership Fund.

Woodside congregation go on air

Woodside Parish Church produce and record their own Christian radio show on the local community radio station SHMU.

Called Take a Moment with

Woodside Parish Church, the show features music, good talks and special guests and is on air every Sunday from 8am to 9am, on SHMU 99.8fm.



Easter Sunday was extra special this year, not only did we have our youngest members helping the congregation to transform the empty cross into a vibrant symbol of life, but we also had the baptism of the gorgeous Sam and Sophie McCulloch.