

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: 4/2002

December 2002



MINISTER'S LETTER

**The Manse
Thurso**

01847895186

Dear Friends

Here is a story for you to think about as you do your Christmas shopping. A stingy man went Christmas shopping, but everything he saw was too expensive except for a broken vase, which was on sale for £2, because the handle had broken off. He asked the shop assistant to mail it for him

with the original price tag of £50, thus giving the impression that he had paid the full price for it but it had got broken in the mail. A week after Christmas he got a thank you note from his friend, which read as follows: "Thank you for the lovely vase. It was so nice of you to wrap each piece separately!"

Well done the shop assistant, exposing such stinginess. Is the story above true? I have no way of knowing, but I remember seeing on T.V. another amazing example of the same character defect. The programme was about a millionaire. His practice when he went to a party was to take a piece of wrapping up paper with a gift tag attached, which he would throw into the pile of ripped up wrapping paper. People would find the gift tag later and presume he had sent something, though they could not remember what.

I hope this has not put any ideas into your head! What we are remembering at Christmas is so against the spirit of meanness. We are celebrating the incredible generosity of our God to us. "God so loved the world that He gave us His Only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but shall have everlasting life." The gift of forgiveness, the gift of eternal life, the gift of mercy, the gift of His Son! What a generous God.

What about the generosity of our response? I am not of course thinking primarily in financial terms, though of course giving in material terms is part of Christian commitment. Indeed I want to thank you all for your extremely generous response to the Gift Day, which happened just 2 days before the writing of this letter – to date over £3,000. When I write about the generosity of our response to God's generosity though, I am thinking of the

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overall giving of ourselves to Jesus. God's giving of his Son was total and complete, nothing was held back. Only a total, nothing-held-back response shows a proper appreciation. That is easy to write about in principle. What does it mean in practice? It means that each day, in each encounter we face with other people, in each decision we make, in every circumstance whether easy or difficult, we need to consciously remember Jesus is the one I live for. What could I do, what could I say that would honour him.

Can you imagine how that might change the way we behave towards one another and speak to one another? Again, it is easy to leave commitment in the realm of the theoretical, to talk in grand terms. I was greatly challenged by reading the prayer of an American Evangelist Arthur Blessit who has walked around the world carrying a cross, using the interest that engenders to speak about Christ. He prayed, "Lord, don't let my vision be wider than the next person I meet." He has lived true to that prayer by seeking to represent Jesus to every person he has met on his round the world walk. This Christmas time, as we think about our response to the generosity of our God, may we earth that response by making Arthur Blessit's prayer our own.

May I take the opportunity on behalf of my family and myself to wish you all a very blessed Christmas.

Your friend and minister,

Rev. Kenny Borthwick

SERVICE OF BLESSING

We were delighted to welcome to our morning service Harvey James Jack, who was brought by his parents Robert and Donna for blessing.

WEDDINGS

Lindsey Bain and Neil Gallacher
Lesley Sutherland and Gary Oag
Jacqueline Sinclair and Jared Fraser
Helen Budge and James Allan
Allison Calder and Ian Stewart

FUNERALS

Mrs. Margaret McBay
Mrs. Nan Green
Mr. Andrew Thomson
Dr. Bill Young
Mr. Gordon Paterson
Mr. Morris Mcleod

We pray that those who mourn might know the peace of the Prince of Peace at this time of the year.



Our Christmas Prayer

*God grant you peace at Christmas
and fill your heart with cheer;
God grant you health and wisdom
throughout the coming year;
God guide you with His wisdom
and keep you in His care;
This is our wish to you
This is our Christmas prayer.*

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"SHE REFUSES TO SING IT BECAUSE IT'S SEXIST...."



"HE SAYS, CAN WE DO 'DALLAS' INSTEAD?..."



"IT'S VERY ENCOURAGING TO SEE SUCH A GOOD TURN OUT....."

War Poem 1944

*Stay with me God. The night is dark,
The night is cold: my little spark
of courage dies. The night is long;
be with me God, and make me strong.*

—Poem found on a scrap of paper in a slit trench in Tunisia during the battle of El Agheila—1944.

Hear the Warrior Cry

Jesus said, I am the way
The truth and the life
Those who come to Jesus
Will never be cast aside
As day turns into night
And the winter shadows fall
Open up your ears to Jesus
And hear the warrior's call
He's gathering all who will obey
All who hear His voice
He's calling out to you and me
We clearly have a choice
This day let us turn to him
And do his works of love
Let us be done with works of sin
And receive power from above
Accept His Holy Spirit
And all that we are taught
To do His works without His love
Will only bring about naught
So let us receive the greatest gift
No other can give Indeed
Take His gift of love today
And bless someone else in need
Reach out the hand of Jesus
To all who may pass by
Take the step of truth today
Hear the warrior cry

Fiona Crossley

Notices

2002	Kirk Ses- sion	Communion	
Month	Date	Date	Time
December		1	Morning
2003	Kirk Ses- sion	Communion	
January		26	Evening
February			
March		2	Morning
April		27	Evening
May			
June		1	Morning
July		27	Evening
August			
September		7	Morning
October		26	Evening
November			
December		7	Morning

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SIDE DOOR CLUB

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Monday 16th December 2002

Details to Follow
(see intimations)



The Church
of Scotland

COMMUNION

Sunday 1st December 2002

11.00 am

Family Service

Sunday 22nd December 2002

11.00 am

Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday 24th December 2002

7.00 pm

The Flower Rota

The calendar for 2003 will soon be in the vestibule. Anyone who wishes to donate flowers please fill in his or her desired dates - remember weddings take precedence.

*The arrangers wish to thank
all who helped in any way
during the year.*

Any query - please ring
892093

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RESTORATION FUND TO NOVEMBER 2002

Since the last report in August 2002

1. Work has been completed on:
 - a) Window grill protection
 - b) Tower floor and Louvre repairs
 - c) Stone wall indenting
 - d) Side door repairs
2. This work cost £55,000, with £21,000 still to be invoiced.
3. A further package of work costing £20,000 remains to:
 - a) Install improved lighting.
 - b) Restore remaining plasterwork.
 - c) Redecorate church interior.
4. Once the lighting is approved by the Edinburgh Artistic Matters Committee, this work is scheduled for early 2003.
5. Highland Council, under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (ENTRUST), has made a Grant of £10,900.
6. The Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust has made a Grant of £5,000.
7. Grants of £4,000 from the Baird Trust and £1,650 from the General Trustees are payable when all the work is complete!
8. Roll on 2003.

Note: with thanks due to the anonymous donor who paid the 10% Third Party Contribution towards the ENTRUST grant, 5 above.

Funding to Date

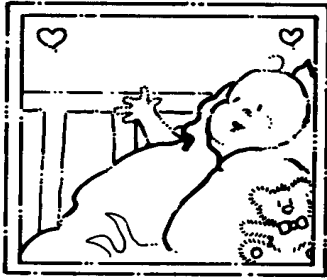
Donations	41,350
Regular Giving	111,000
Tax Recovery	24,600
Events	3,350
Trustees	18,350
Grants	39,450
Historic Scotland	137,200
Interest (Net)	5,450
Cash Raised	380,750
Loans	13,350
Cash Flow	394,100
Bills Paid	358,750
Bank Balance	35,350

Forward Projection to 2002

Projected Cost (including lighting) plus Redecoration and Plasterwork	385,000 15,000
Fund Target	400,000
Raised to Date	380,750
Plus:	
Historic Scotland	8,000
Pledges '02-'03	15,000
Tax Recovery	1,450
Minor Grants(Baird & Trustees)	5,650
Loan Interest	-850
Funds Identified	395,000

**James Houston,
Restoration Fund
Treasurer
5 November 2002**





Praying for Children

My husband and I had been happily (most of the time) married for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with his word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, he blessed us with yet another son. The year after that, we were blessed with a daughter.

My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty.

We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old. I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella."

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they play in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint him.

I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks.

I tried to be understanding when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs.

When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humour rather than the mess.

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children.

While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother - I didn't even come close - I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God.

I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too.

Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us everlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife."

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was

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playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine.

My five-year-old shepherd had practised his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." But he was nervous and said; "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes."

My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not 'wrinkled clothes,' silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes."

A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing.

I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived.

My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur."

The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation.

"I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," Father Brian laughed, wiping tears from his eyes. "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur."

"My children are my pride and my joy and my greatest blessing," I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin.



Light Factory Holiday Club - August 2002

Most of you will know that for the second year running some Thurso Churches got together to run an event known as "**The Light Factory**" and some of you may be wondering just what the light Factory is and what happens during this week - other than people dressing up and having green custard poured all over them!

The week is for children of primary school age and its main purpose is to bring Jesus into the lives of youngsters and lead them into full membership of the church. Neither children nor their parents are required to be members of any church, although of course many are.

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The name "Light Factory" comes from a Scripture Union programme on which we based last years event and it was decided to retain the name as children were familiar with it - it also meant that a lot of our advertising materials could be recycled. "Light Factory" as a name will now be kept for all future events but the theme and activities will be different each year.

In 2001 the theme was "Jesus is the light of the world" with Heaven represented as a factory producing all the light. In a series of activities including music, games, craft, video and one-to-one talks Jesus, Christianity and the need to follow his ways were introduced to the children.

This year's week was based on another Scripture Union programme - "**Megaquest**" and used a computer game scenario to introduce creation, the fight between good and evil and God's sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of all our sins. Once again it blended music, games, craft, video and talk to bring an understanding to the young minds with an added novelty of drama to present a pantomime – The Virus Buster - of each days key learning points. Many of you will have seen bits of this during the family service on the Sunday following the week.

All the activity takes place at Mount Pleasant School and the children are split into school years with the appropriate number of adults to lead and take care of them. To meet Child Protection requirements – which protects both children and the adults working with them - all the adults must be screened and have an understanding of their responsibilities and necessary working practices. To enable parents with pre school age children to come and help a crèche is provided.

Organising and running the week takes a tremendous amount of resources – financial and human. With 80+ young children attending on a daily basis this year we had, just about, sufficient number of helpers from the four churches involved – St. Peter's, Thurso Baptist; Episcopal and United Reformed. Without more helpers, and possibly more space, we cannot seriously consider any expansion of the number of children taking part. A year on year increase is likely and an indication of the success of the week can be judged from the large increase in children attending and it is significant that most of last years children not only came to this years' event but many brought friends along with them.

The morning starts for the children at 10.00 am and finishes at 12.00 midday during which time they have been constantly occupied. For the helpers the day starts much earlier and finishes much later! There's all the registration to see to, the craft to get ready, the music to prepare, the refreshments to be sorted - and many of the leaders have taken holiday to do this! However satisfying it is it can sometimes feel to be a very long morning! The weeks activity is just a part of it though – there are months of planning and preparation including deciding on the programme and not least raising the money and advertising the event.

This year we had an extra event for the children in the middle of the week – a fun afternoon on the beach - and it really was fun! There were games, ice cream, competitions, sand castles and even one or two mad people who swam. It did add a considerable strain to the leaders and whilst we would love to do it again it will require more people so that some leaders at least can have time off to do essential things in their own lives.

Other extra events were also organised this year. There was a late decision to hold a

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ceilidh one evening for older children, helpers and anyone who was interested. Attendance for this was very disappointing, due partly to the lack of advertising, but was certainly enjoyed by those who did go. Some show offs even knew all the dance steps!

And of course there were the bands who were invited to come and entertain adults and youngsters in the high School on the Friday night. This was done as we were very conscious that teenagers and young adults were not being catered for – something we must surely try and rectify in the future. Those who saw and heard the bands were thrilled to see such evangelism and joy from young people and for some of us who hosted them there were occasional magical moments such as breaking into song instead of a simple meal time grace. The groups played in both St. Peter's and the Baptist Church the next day and there was some surprise that the Baptist Church walls remained standing! This event was only planned - I'm not sure that "planned" is the most appropriate word! - at the last minute but was popular and we would look to do it again but not necessarily as part of the Holiday Club week. It will also require specific funding; it was very expensive and the Holiday Club is not geared for such activities – indeed it more than emptied the bank account.

As I said earlier neither attending children nor their parents are required to be members of any church to come to the Light Factory and the occasional cynic has suggested that parents may simply use it a cheap child minding service but does that matter? Children are being introduced to Jesus – some for the first time – and some along with their normally non church going parents attended the post event family services in the churches.

The week is there to introduce Jesus into the lives of young children; we hope that some – even one would be a success! – will come to full membership of the church. If we don't (or won't) show children that Jesus is alive and that being a Christian and going to church are things of great joy then where will they get this message and basic knowledge from? Similarly we can't stop at this young age group; teenagers and young adults must be encouraged to discover – in some cases rediscover – Jesus and the life of the Church. But there is a human and financial cost to this. The Holiday Club is very grateful to the band of volunteers who get together to plan for 3 months before the event, those who give up their time to help during the week, and the large number of people who, often anonymously, contribute financially to the week. But more is needed! You don't have to be a team leader, teacher or musician to help during the week. Your prayers will always be appreciated but if you want to give practical help it can be given in many ways; there are lots of associated activities needed such as clerical support, helping with refreshments, clearing up and just being an adult presence. Church members can also help by advertising the event through the town via children, grandchildren and friends. Financial support is always required - and maybe this is something the Board may wish to consider - but most of all people are needed.

If you want more details about how YOU can help with next year's event – dates are -

Reunion for Class of 2002 – 22nd February 2003
Light Factory 2003 - 11th to 15th August 2003.

Please speak to Linda Clarkson, Judy Gordon or Alison Sharp or Alison Reiss.

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“Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness to the soul”

It may be that some of you are thinking much the same kind of thoughts about websites and web surfing. Why bother with a website for the church? Do we really need the Internet? The question has supposedly been asked, “If Jesus were alive today, would he use the Internet?” to which the response has been given “Jesus is alive and he is using the Internet.”

I am sure that no one in the church today can doubt the place of the Internet, for good or ill, in modern society. For instance, it is almost impossible to watch a children's programme or a sports programme which does not have a reference to its website or encourage contact by e-mail. Now this in itself is not a good enough reason for creating a website; it ought not to be done on the basis of “If you can't beat them join them.” It is important to remember that creating a website is not an end in itself, but the means to an end. In that way it is to be placed in the same category as visual art, music, television, radio or the printed word or anything else that is used to proclaim the gospel. If this is our starting point, then it follows that whatever is put on the web should have the same basic aims as the church as a whole. Within the church I would see that as being to build up, strengthen, and encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ. Primarily the website is for the congregation of the church, and I hope that the site helpful in some way to any who visit it's pages. Secondly I hope there will something of use to the any who have never been to our church, some who may live locally, or others who may have heard of it through events such as CLAN or by contact with church members. I would hope that there would be something on the website that would inform, help, or challenge those who visit, and hopefully encourage them to faith in Christ as their personal Saviour.

Some people are interested in the history of a church and the building itself. As Saint Peter's is a listed building, I am sure there will be some who want to know a bit about that so I have one page with information about this. Those of you who looked at the leaflet for visitors will see at once that most of what I have has been gleaned from that.

I first thought of creating a website for the church when I read the information about the church which is available on the leaflets displayed at the entrance to the church. I thought that this, together with some colour photos would make a good basis for a church website. I added some items from the quarterly newsletter and a page of links and showed these to Kenny, whose response gave me encouragement to continue.

The website is hosted by Ecosse Net (www.ecosse.net). Ecosse Net basically holds all the information on its computers, so those individuals in any part of the world can access it. A common complaint regarding free web hosts is that there is often a long complicated web address (URL) that people will need to use in order to access your site. I know that when the site was first set up, some people were confused by the address of <http://sites.ecosse.net/spandsacos>. To get round this, a web address of www.spandsa.co.uk was obtained. Typing this address will automatically take you to the page where the site is located.

The website's front page has links to other pages within the site. These give a brief history of the church, a calendar of the events happening at the church, an on-line version of the quarterly newsletter, photos from some of the church events, links to some of the most popular daily devotional readings (e.g. Spurgeon's Morning and Evening series) and a page of links to other Christian websites which I think may be of interest).

The quarterly newsletter has been an inspiration to many over the years and I am grateful to Hector MacLean for all his help with making it available on the web.

Recently I have “borrowed” some of these pages and used them as the basis for a children's

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section. The Kidszone at the moment consists of pages which have previously been in the Quiet Corner section but it's list of links is more geared towards Christian and educational sites which have been designed with children in mind. Photos from this year's Light Factory and Megaquest are also in the Kidszone.

I would not claim to be an expert in web design or knowing what children like or find useful and I would greatly appreciate any help at all with ideas, information or suggestions on how to improve the content or layout of any part the website (this goes for the site as a whole, not just the children's section). I think most children these days are quite accustomed to surfing the web, and many youngsters have their own web sites. If any young person has an idea and would like to share it with others, please get in touch.

Ian MacKinnon



GUILD

Our first meeting of this session was, as usual, based on our theme for the year. This is Strength Through God's Empowerment and the Rev. S Dunnett gave a very thought—provoking talk on various kinds of power, be it military, political or economic, and showed how such power could be used for good or evil, citing current world situations. He then led us all to realise that God's power should be the only really important influence in our lives. Mrs. Claire Bolton was our next guest. Her interesting demonstration of Flowers in Church was interspersed with appropriate music and readings.

In October Mary Chalmers led a bible study based on the work of Lodging House Mission, one of our chosen projects and Margaret Buxton presented a discussion programme based on our topic, Sharing Our World. We are very grateful to Margaret for stepping in at short notice when Keiss Choir was unable to come. However we hope to welcome them later in the session.

A Christmas Craft evening organised and carried out by Jan Carver and Margaret Hammerton was most enjoyable. These ladies had put a great deal of thought and effort into their display of cards, tags and tree and table decorations. They showed a great deal of talent and hopefully inspired some members to have a go for themselves. At this meeting also Ruth Hume showed some Tearcraft goods and several ladies took the opportunity to do some Christmas shopping.

The Presbyterial Council organised rallies in Wick and Thurso in late September. The Thurso one, held in the West Church, was not as well attended as previous rallies but those who were there had a most enjoyable and informative evening. The meeting was led by Miss Esme Duncan, the council convenor. Our own Praise Group along with Body and Soul provided the musical items and the speaker was Rev. Iain Sutherland, formerly of Lybster, who spoke of his experiences as a rural minister and challenged people to consider their role in the church. The West Church Guild provided an excellent buffet to complete the evening.

As has been happening for the past few years each of our meetings is led by one member of our management team. This involves organising and leading our worship (a very important part of the evening) as well as introducing our speaker etc. This system continues to work well and initial doubts about one's ability to do this are soon overcome, as each person trusts the empowerment that comes from God.

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Aiding Growth: From Infancy to Maturity

Bringing spiritual hope and physical care, Mission Aviation Fellowship uses light aircraft in developing countries so that people in remote areas can receive the help they need.

As any parent knows, raising a child through the early years of life is exhausting and emotionally demanding. For many in Tanzania, it is often a life-and-death struggle, due to poverty and lack of medical resources. But MAF's monthly airborne medical safari out of Kilimatinde gives hope and support, speeding medical care to those in urgent need.

Jolanda, wife of Andries Schuttinga who leads the MAF team in Tanzania, accompanied pilot Herman Sterken on a recent action-packed safari from Dodoma. First stop was Kilimatinde itself, to deliver a TV set to be used for HIV/AIDS education and to collect three nurses and a medical officer. Flying first to Igwamadete, they left one nurse with vaccines and medical supplies to run a mother-and-child clinic. Jolanda explains: 'That means the care of pregnant women and monitoring the growth and development of infants and young children. Such work is crucial, providing them with the essential vaccinations and advice.'

Five minutes flight away, the other two nurses ran a similar clinic in Mpapa. Jolanda — a doctor herself — helped the medical officer run a general clinic. During the dry season, fewer patients are expected, but the pair were kept busy all day, seeing many people with back problems, and treating cases of diarrhoea — a common problem for young children. Flying to Igwamadete to collect the nurse, they found a young woman seriously ill, and in need of emergency medical care. Her critical condition meant that MAF's help came not a moment too soon, as the plane flew her to Kilimatinde Hospital.

Across the border in Kenya, MAF is aiding the work of Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL), whose aim is to bring God's Word to people in their own language. That's another reminder of Jesus' words, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.' Flights especially support BTL projects in the Marsabit region, with literacy and translation in progress in the Borana, Rendille and Daasanach languages. The aircraft provide a vital link for BTL staff in these remote areas. Mundara Muturi of BTL testifies: 'We often use MAF planes. Our Production Unit helped build the reception desk at MAF's Operations Centre in Nairobi.' In this way, MAF and BTL are supporting each other as partners in mission.

Translation work is progressing well. In Borana, the entire Bible has been translated, and some literacy materials have already been produced. The Rendille project has published translations of Mark, Genesis and Exodus, and in Daasanach, versions of Mark and Genesis and literacy materials are available. Pray for the ongoing progress of translation teams and the people whose lives are being transformed through receiving the Scriptures in their own language.

MAF is involved at the heart of reaching vulnerable people, whether they are in spiritual or physical need.

Edited by Hector M MacLean for the members and friends of St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso. Many thanks to all who contributed. Contributions not used may be used in later issues. Printed by St Peter's and St Andrew's Church.