

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: 4/2003

December 2003



MINISTER'S LETTER

The Manse
Thurso

01847895186

Dear Friends

Many of you will have heard of Joni Eareckson Tada. You may have read some of her books. Joni was left paralysed after a diving accident, which occurred when she was only seventeen years old. She has been confined to a wheelchair ever since. How-

ever her handicap did not stop her from living a life of active Christian service, nor did it stop her from marrying her husband Ken. She writes movingly of her wedding day. As she waited in her wheelchair to come forward to the altar to meet her groom, she noticed that thanks to the chair there was a big greasy mark on her dress. The chair though dressed up a bit for the occasion was still the awkward thing it always was. To make matters worse, her bouquet of flowers slipped off of her lap and were now off centre. Her paralysed hands could not rearrange them. She certainly did not feel like the picture perfect bride. However she inched her way forward and looked down the aisle. That is when she caught sight of her groom. Listen to her own words:

“I spotted him away down front, standing at attention and looking tall and elegant in his formal attire. My face grew hot. My heart began to pound. Our eyes met and amazingly from that point, everything changed. How I looked no longer mattered. I forgot all about my wheelchair. Grease stains? Flowers out of place? Who cared? No longer did I feel ugly or unworthy; the love in Ken’s eyes washed it all away. I was the pure and perfect bride. That’s what he saw and that’s what changed me. It took great restraint not to jam my “power stick” into high gear and race down the aisle to be with my groom.”

As we approach Christmas time once again, I have been thinking about what lies at the centre of our being part of the Church of Jesus Christ. The words of one of our most traditional hymns remind us that at the centre of the Christian experience is the most unlikely of romances, between the utterly lovely and sinless Son of God and people like you and me:

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

“The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord

She is His new creation by water and the word

From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride

With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.”

Jesus did not leave heaven for Bethlehem and for Calvary in order for us to have a merely intellectual or formal or philosophical relationship with you and I. He is looking for intimacy with us, to be one with us forever. He loves us with passion and with commitment that never ever wavers. I pray that this Christmas and in the coming year that many of us will catch sight of the love in Jesus eyes that says to us, “I came to the crib and the cross for you.” And as our faith catches sight of the love that brought Jesus to this earth, may the words of one of our more modern worship songs come true. May we be released from any morbid introspection, and “Forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him and worship Him.”

As we get ready to worship Christ the Lord at this special season of the year, let us remember too the many thousands in Thurso who do not yet know him as the lover of their souls, some of them perhaps on the fringe of church life, while others are complete outsiders at present. If you have been in church in recent weeks you will know that we are planning to run another Alpha course in the New Year. If you are not involved in any way thus far with the course, you can still be involved in the most important and effective way. You can pray. Please do so.

May I take the opportunity of this newsletter to wish each and everyone of you a Christmas and a New Year full of God’s blessing and peace.

Yours sincerely

Rev. Kenny Borthwick

BAPTISMS

We were delighted to see Lewis Cameron Sinclair being brought by his parents, Colin and Susan for Baptism on 12th. October.

NEW MEMBERS

At our last communion we welcomed Andrew Parker into our congregation by Profession of Faith. We also were pleased to welcome Mr. And Mrs. W. Hay back into membership. May it be our prayer that all of us new or long established members will encourage one another in the Lord.

Anyone who is interested in membership should feel free to speak to the minister at any time to discuss the matter further.

FUNERALS

Linda Salter – Harbour Court
Sadie Sutherland – Cairnmore, Forss
Elizabeth Geddes – Queens Terrace
Henrietta Miller Engelbrecht – Zimbabwe
Laura Simpson – Olig Street
Anne Ainslie – Kilmarnock
John Ploughman – Achalone
Robert Wares – Springpark Terrace
Billy (Buster) Munro – Mt. Pleasant Road

We extend our sympathies to those who have lost loved ones and pray the peace of Jesus Christ might be their strength at this time.

WEDDINGS

Lesley Smith and David Young
Sandra Cormack and Walter Mann

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso



REMEMBRANCE DAY

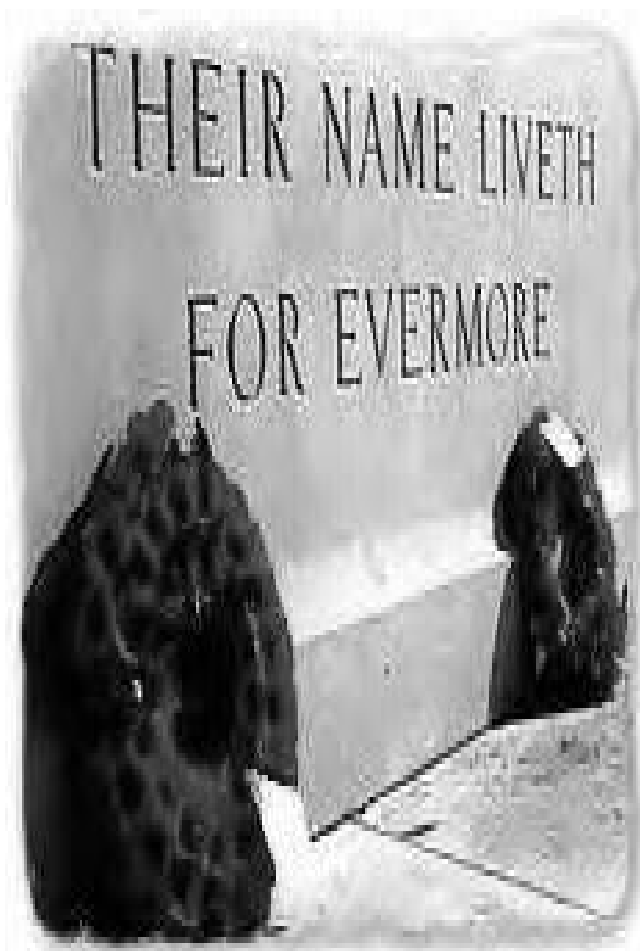
Her Only Son

She won't forget, that mother there
With tear stained face and silver hair
He was her boy, whose name's carved there
She won't forget

She needs no hallowed shrine or cairn
To make her mother's heart to yearn
He was her son, her darling bairn
She won't forget

She won't forget until she dies
Her laddie with the dark blue eyes
That sleeps at peace 'neath foreign skies
She won't forget

D.C.



"We can truly say that the whole circuit of the earth is girdled with the graves of our dead... and, in the course of my pilgrimage, I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace upon earth through the years to come, than this massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war."

**King George V, Flanders,
1922**

Notices

2004	Communion	
Month	Date	Time
December	7	Morning
2004	Communion	
January	26	Evening
March	2	Morning
April	27	Evening
June	1	Morning
July	27	Evening
September	7	Morning
October	26	Evening
December	7	Morning

COMMUNION

SUNDAY

7 December 2003

11.00 am

RESTORATION FUND TO OCTOBER 2003

Since the last report in August 2003 :

- 1 Final outstanding loan of £4,000 (and interest £150) repaid to General trustees.
- 2 Improved lighting has been installed, with bulbs still to be fitted in Gallery up-lighters.
- 3 The Property Convenor Bob Chalmers is negotiating with the plasterwork contractor to : (a) agree a start date. (b) Agree a suitable treatment for the calcified window surrounds.
- 4 The Board will meet shortly, to consider aspects of the forthcoming redecoration package, such as : (a) paintwork tender specification for long term service and compatibility with the lime plasterwork. (b) Tender process, to attract competent contractors.

SIMPLIFIED STATEMENT FOR REMAINING WORK.

Bank Balance	£24,750
plus Historic Scotland	£1,000
Regular Giving	£600
Tax Recovery	£300
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	£26,650
Lighting, Plasterwork,	
Redecoration	£26,200
2002 Retention	£450
ALLOCATION OF FUNDS	£26,650

**James Houston, Restoration
Fund Treasurer
25 October 2003**



The Church
of Scotland



St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso



for GOD

Sunday Club started this session finding out about people who went 'Bananas' for God.

Noah. He built a boat in the middle of the country when there was no water and no sign of rain. He did it because God told him to,

Gideon. Just when he needed the strongest possible army, he knocked it back to 300 men, because God told him to. God wanted to show his power.

Elijah. Just when he wanted God to set fire to the alter he had built, he soaked it with water. He did it to show how great God was.

Zacchaeus. A grown man and a social outcast climbed a tree because he wanted to see Jesus. Then he gave all his money away.

The woman with the jar of perfume. She poured lots of really expensive perfume over Jesus' feet, because she was really sorry for all the wrong things she had done.

The Spirit of the Bride is coming back for his Church.

Also lift Him up for He sees His Holy People. Jesus seeks His holy presence in the Church to rest. We should praise and worship Jesus, our living Saviour and loving Lord. For we are to sing and sing to the Nations once again. Satan hears us all calling out to Jesus and sees us marching round the Church. For the bride has come and spoke like a mighty dove to the nations. Here is the Lord Jesus - listen to My voice, for I am speaking to My Holy People. For I am Holy and worthy to be praised. Once more I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice he should listen to My voice, for I am still seeking to rest in the Church and to be made welcome. So I can leave my presence with My Holy People, says Jesus. For I have a new song for you all to sing to me. The Spirit and the Bride says come to the river of life. Let him come and whomever wishes let him take the free gift of the Water's of Life. Which is the Holy Spirit.

There is a House Group, which meets on Wednesday nights from 7.30 to 10.30. We learn more from Jesus word with the tapes, the Bible sheets and Bible verses and answer the questions, with the right answers. We sing praises and new songs and pray to the living Lord and the King our Saviour. Jesus is His name. We have fellowship with one another. We find real blessing to be in Jesus presence, where the Holy Dove can rest, and to receive the Holy Spirit. We should love one another and pray for one another. We should spend quality time with one another, and offer hospitality to the flock of Lamb. We praise His name. We are Jesus family, for we are Children of the King. Lets lift up holy hands for where two or three gather there are I am also. We are Brothers and Sisters of Jesus Holy people.

God bless you richly in Jesus name - your sister Alison Gibbons.



The True Spirit of Christmas

It was only five days before Christmas. The spirit of the season hadn't yet caught up with me, even though cars packed the parking lot of our Houston area Target Shopping Centre. Inside the store, it was worse. Shopping carts and last minute shoppers jammed the aisles. Why did I come today? I wondered. My feet ached almost as much as my head.

My list contained names of several people who claimed they wanted nothing, but I knew their feelings would be hurt if I didn't buy them something. Buying for someone who had everything and deploring the high cost of items, I considered gift buying anything but fun. Hurriedly, I filled my shopping cart with last minute items and proceeded to the long checkout lines. I picked the shortest but it looked as if it would mean at least a 20-minute wait. In front of me were two small children a boy of about 10 and a younger girl about 5. The boy wore a ragged coat. Enormously large, tattered tennis shoes jutted far out in front of his much too short jeans. He clutched several crumpled dollar bills in his grimy hands. The girl's clothing resembled her brother's. Her head was a matted mass of curly hair. Reminders of an evening meal showed on her small face. She carried a beautiful pair of shiny, gold house slippers.

As the Christmas music sounded in the store's stereo system, the girl hummed along off key but happily. When we finally approached the checkout register, the girl carefully placed the shoes on the counter. She treated them as though they were a treasure. The clerk rang up the bill. "That will be \$6.09," the clerk said, as the boy laid his crumpled dollars atop the stand while he searched his pockets finally coming up with \$3.12.

"I guess we will have to put them back," he bravely said. "We'll come back some other time, maybe tomorrow." With that statement, a soft sob broke from the little girl. "But Jesus would have loved these shoes," she cried.

"Well, we'll go home and work some more. Don't cry. We'll come back," he said. Quickly I handed \$3.00 to the cashier. These children had waited in line for a long time. And, after all, it was Christmas.

Suddenly a pair of arms came around me and a small voice said, "Thank you, Sir."

"What did you mean when you said Jesus would like the shoes?" I asked.

The small boy answered, "Our mommy is sick and going to heaven. Dad said she might go before Christmas to be with Jesus."

The girl spoke, "My Sunday school teacher said the streets in heaven are shiny gold, just like these shoes. Won't mommy be beautiful walking on those streets to match these shoes?"

My eyes flooded as I looked into her tear-streaked face. "Yes," I answered, "I am sure she will."

Silently, I thanked God for using these children to remind me of the true spirit of giving. Christmas is not about the amount of money paid, nor the amount of gifts purchased, nor trying to impress friends and relatives. Christmas is about the love in your heart to share with those as Jesus Christ has shared with each of us. Christmas is about the Birth of Jesus whom God sent to show the world how much he really loves us.

Please show this love as we think of the upcoming season.

Anonymous

<http://www.sermons.org/xmasstories.html>

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

Lord, I'm Exhausted!

Lord, I'm tired, exhausted. Sometimes I wonder how I find the strength,
so much to do, so little time and energy,
and always one more thing, nagging at the back of my mind
like toothache. Unwelcome, yet hard to ignore.

I buzz around, a frantic fly battering against the windowpane until I fail
exhausted on the sill. All noise and movement, but so little done.

And in the effort to respond to all the calls that other make
I find I am losing touch with you.

The crowds get in between, the more I do for you
The further off You seem.

A paradox, until I hear your voice, not asking more of me,
but telling me to find a breathing space, a place to rest.

And in the quiet You are there, no accusations and no suggestions
that I could do more.

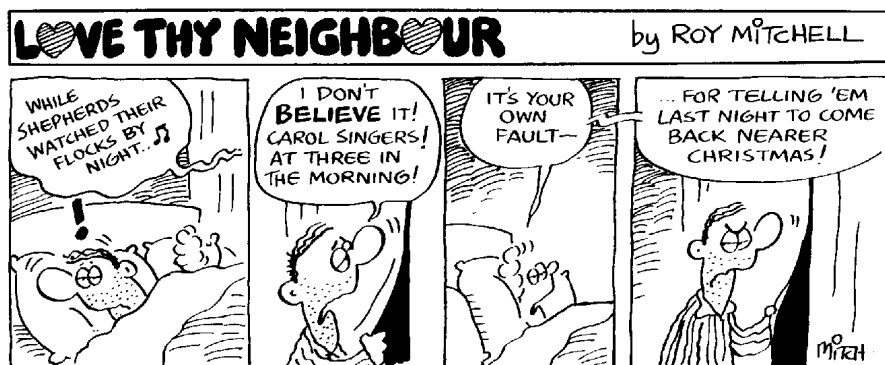
And as we sit together, I begin to realise that many of the demands I face
are self imposed. They're mine. Born out of ego,
and the guilt I feel when I can't cope comes from my pride
and not from others.

Forgive me Lord, and help me to forgive myself,
because I ask more of myself than You do.

And when I'm faced with something I just cannot find the energy to do,
give me the honesty to face the fact that
maybe You're not asking it of me.

You made the world, it wasn't me, and, valued as I am
It's You who keeps it going.

D. C.



St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

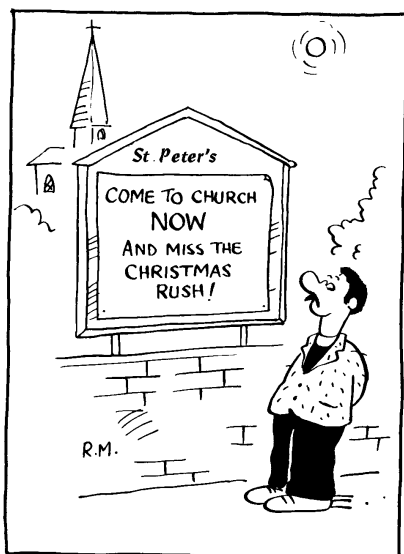
THE ALPHA COURSE

By now you will probably have heard that the church will be running the *Alpha* Course, starting in early January 2004. This course is a practical introduction to the Christian faith, that aims to answer the key questions of life and show that Christianity is far from boring, untrue and irrelevant, as so many these days seem to think. It is designed for people who are either non-Christians or relatively young in or uncertain of their faith, and has been universally acclaimed across the world by the hundreds of thousands of people who have now been on it.

More details can be found at our own alpha web-site www.thursoalpha.com or on the national web-site www.alphacourse.org. It is our intention to run evening, daytime and youth courses. The ALPHA Course leader is Charles Hume who can be contacted on 01847 892617 or via email at Charleshume@wwjdnw99.freereserve.co.uk.

The course will be introduced to potential guests at a grand Christmas supper party to be held on Friday 5 Dec in the Stewart Pavilion (Youth Saturday 6 Dec). This party will include an amusing and thought provoking video presentation, as well as an excellent meal, and it can also be guaranteed to be a time of fun and enjoyment for all. Invitations, and also application forms for the course for those who already wish to sign up, will be available in the church shortly so that church members may invite their friends. The aim would be for as many as possible of the potential guests to attend one of those parties.

There are also many roles for those who wish to help in preparing for, running and hosting the courses. These include opportunities to take part in prayer support, catering and hospitality, artistic and babysitting roles, or for offers of financial assistance. Questionnaires appealing for volunteers have already been distributed, but if anyone else wishes to get involved please contact the Alpha administrator – Penny Mathews. She can be reached on 01847 811550 or by Email at mathewsfamily@lineone.net.



FRANKLY, I'M WORRIED..... THREE WEEKS TO CHRISTMAS, AND NOT A SIGN OF AN EASTER EGG..."

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

Prayers in Heaven

Our local Christian radio station (WGCF-FM) has a program called Walk-the-Walk where believers share the experiences of their Christian walk to encourage others. One woman who had gone through a "near death" experience shared a wonderful story.

Severely injured in an auto accident, she was in a coma for about three days. During that time she went through a bright light, similar to stories told by others who have been in similar circumstances. She said during her "tour" of heaven she kept seeing piercingly bright beams of light coming up through the clouds. The beams seemed to have names and phrases written on them. She asked an angel escorting her what they were. The angel replied, "They're prayers." What a wonderful revelation that Heaven is "illuminated" by our prayers.

---Keith, The Sermon Fodder Guy

From the Times Educational Supplement: -

The story goes that the Rev Ewan Aitken, Edinburgh's education spokesman, is drumming up support in schools on his religious beat. Aitken is among very young primary kids and telling a tale as ministers do in these situations. "Boys and girls," he begins, "we're going to be meeting someone very special today. He's got a fur coat, a bushy tail and is eating nuts. Who do you think this might be?"

A wee boy thought hard about it before venturing: "The answer's always Jesus but it sounds like a squirrel to me."

Mike Gordon

Hee Hee Hee Hee Hee....!!!!

There was a couple who was successfully married for 40 years. Throughout their marriage not one secret was kept from one another, except for one little secret of the wife's which was a blue shoebox that she kept in the bottom drawer of her bedside table. All through their marriage the husband never opened this blue shoebox - he respected her privacy. The time had come in their relationship that age had crept up on them and unfortunately the wife's health had taken a turn for the worse. The doctor suggested to the husband that he get all affairs in order. During such time the husband came across the blue shoebox. Curiosity had finally taken its toll and the husband sneaked a peak. Inside was two balls of wool, 2 knitting needles, 2 pairs of mittens and £25,000 in crisp £50 notes. The husband was taken aback by the contents and took the box to his wife who admitted that it was time she explained the contents of the box.

She explained that her mother had told her on their wedding day that the secret to a successful marriage was that whenever she was angry with or felt betrayed by her husband she should knit a pair of mittens.

Upon hearing this story the husband's chest puffs up with pride, and his eyes' watered with tears of joy, as there were only two pairs of mittens in the blue shoebox.

He then goes on to enquire about the £25,000. The wife replies, well I had to sell the mittens, as the box was too small to hold them all.

From the September 2003 Embo News

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso



Guild

The Guild Session began with a visit from representatives of the Kirk session, when we were given a wider look into the structure of the Session, and its demands and responsibilities of Elders. Some elders shared experiences, which have helped and encouraged them. Music was supplied by Charles Rigg.

The next meeting we heard from Mr Charles McLeod and friend from Blythswood Care, who spoke of his work in many countries, which he visited often. We were given an opportunity to supply shoeboxes for Christmas. Reay and Orlig Churches joined us for this meeting.

Our twin guild - St Ninian's - Aberdeen - (shared with us 10 years of twinning). A meal was organized for 30 members - 4 husbands who joined our friends Kathleen and Betty from Aberdeen in the Royal Hotel. A lovely meal - and back to church where we were shown slides of Betty and Kathleen travelling together in various places. We were presented with a picture of their Church, plus two cakes depicting some of the stained glass windows - (it was a pity they had to be cut - to eat). We were given a short history of the windows and the Church. Prior to their visit we presented them with an etching of our Church.

Our topic this year is "Who Cares" meeting led by Mrs M Chalmers, and several others taking part in small dramas "Pass the Buck", who cares discussion was mainly through an acrostic - Care and Courage, - thinking of those who care and others who need care. Finishing with Reflection showing the Majesty of God, amidst the frailty of many whom we must care for and love.

By the time this reaches you we will have shared fellowship with Guests from the Salvation Army, and will also be looking forward to a visit from Mrs Stitt - sharing her speciality "Handicrafts". The United Guild dinner this year is in the New Weigh Inn Motel, and our final programme will be 15 December - when our Guests will be the Northern Children's Choir.

Apart from Branch work - we had a Presbyterial Council meeting with our National Convenor - Mrs M Alexander - who shared with us her visit to South Africa; and West Church Choir was singing for us. We also shared an evening with the West Church Guild for their Harvest tea. Musical items were given by the "Occasionals". A splendid meeting enjoyed by other guilds as well.

We have been busy, and soon will be visiting Wick Baptist Church, providing a programme for them.

"Dare to Care with Courage" is easy to say, not so easy to carry out, we realise our need of prayer and support of friends. We ask for prayers of the Congregation, and still look forward to seeing others joining us in our group, in true spirit of Guild.

M Chalmers
Contact Person

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.