

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: 2/2004

June 2004



MINISTER'S LETTER

**The Manse
Thurso**

01847895186

Dear Friends

I thought it might be interesting for you to know some statistics that arise from 2 sources - the most recent survey of Scottish Church Attendance, and the most recent census of the population.

On the day on which the attendance at church was taken, results showed that over the whole of Scotland, in all the denominations, 570,000 people attended a place of worship. Predictions for 2020 are that there will be 331,000 people attending Sunday worship.

To break down the figures a bit more, the average age attending the Church of Scotland is 51. The report unquestionably shows there is a massive disconnection from the church of people under the age of 45. However the figure that really interested me was that the population census showed that 2 million people in some sense feel themselves affiliated with the Church of Scotland. The Board of National mission feels that shows either good will or benevolent indifference. Whatever conclusions one might draw we can surely say such a high figure shows we should not make the assumption of paranoid hostility to the church.

How do we reach this large number of people who are not against the church but who never come? Again the Board of National Mission of the Church of Scotland wants to respond to this positively. It believes rightly that it is the task of the church to follow the Spirit, which perhaps means moving our buildings, our people, our ministers and financial resources to where the river of God is flowing.

This will be a crucial year at the General Assembly, which both Howard and myself will be attending. You may see Howard speaking ... but almost certainly not me! The General Assembly will be asked to consider changes, which will mean that the church is able to be more flexible in its approach to its missionary task within this land let alone overseas. It will

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be asked to support changes which will mean resources - financial, material and ministerial - being directed to where there are opportunities opening rather than being locked in a maintaining of the past.

To get the balance between being a church that maintains good things from the past and yet is intentionally orientated to mission is a difficult task. That is the task facing the National Church today but it is the task facing us at a congregational level. IF the census is right, it shows there are many people even in Thurso who are not opposed to the church but who do not take any active part in it. Both they and we are impoverished as a result. May God help us to get the balance right between being true to what God has done in the past, even the recent past, in our congregation but helping us to know how to adapt so that more meaningful contact can be made beyond the church walls.

Your friend and minister

Kenny Borthwick.

WEDDINGS

Vikki Ross and Alan Mackay

FUNERALS

Isobel Gunn, Kirk View
George Miller, Kemnay
William Mill, Brackreyach, Westfield
(Forsie)
Isabella Mackay, Pentland View
Fred Fermor, Millbank Road

We extend our sympathies to those who have lost loved ones and commend them to the peace and help of Christ.

FINANCIAL REPORT PRESENTED TO THE STATED ANNUAL MEETING 2004

At our Stated Annual Meeting it was agreed that we should present some of the Treasurer's report in the Newsletter.

Income for the year ending 31st. December 2003 amounted to £68,380, which was a slight decrease on the previous year of £411. However, there is an outstanding tax recovery claim in respect of giving through deeds of covenant and gift aid, which will probably be in excess of £6000. When tax recovery is left out of the accounts it actually shows there has been an increase in giving in 2003 amounting to £14 093, or 30%. This is good news.

However, as can perhaps be expected expenditure was up as well, increasing by £1191 to £70,584. A major item was of course the new sound system and peripheral equipment, which cost £18181. However thanks to individual donations the actual burden of this cost to the congregation was in effect reduced by £7995 (thank you to those who contributed and thus reduced greatly the financial burden on the congregation as a whole).

At the end of the year our useable funds stood at £22,996, a decrease of £370 on the previous year. There is still the need for restraint on our regular spending and capital projects involving considerable expenditure - e.g. a new heating system, disabled access - will need to be looked at carefully in terms of financial feasibility.

In producing this extract of the report, it would only be right to thank most sincerely our treasurer, Stuart Whiteley for all his hard work over the years. We also thank the Independent Examiners, Gordon Noble and Hector Maclean and the individual members of the congregation who assist each Sunday by counting the offering. Special thanks are due as well to Robert Allan our Freewill Offering administrator.

At the Stated Annual Meeting, we also welcome on to the Board Mr and Mrs. I. MacKillop. We hope they enjoy serving the church in that capacity.

“Yes, I am”

As a congregation we are studying Mark's Gospel, and have been for some time. One of the passages, which the Reverend Borthwick believes to be profound, is Mark 14:60-62

⁶⁰ The high priest stood up in the council and asked Jesus, “Why don't you say something in your own defense? Don't you hear the charges they are making against you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus kept quiet and did not say a word. The high priest asked him another question, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the glorious God?”

⁶² “Yes, I am!” Jesus answered.

Contemporary English Version

As I listened to it, I was reminded of an article I received from a good friend; he has gone on to Glory. I published it in September 1994 and it is repeated below.

John

St. John's Gospel has been described as a pool in which a child can paddle and an elephant can swim! I agree with that. It is so profound e.g.; the Woman at the Well account ends with Jesus' self-disclosure - 'I, the One who is talking to you, am he'.

Modern research indicates that St. John the Apostle was the writer of the original draft of that Gospel and that it was one of his disciples, the Elder, who edited the final edition we have in the Bible - as chapter 21, verses 24 and 25 indicate.

St John lived in Ephesus, now part of Turkey and those of his converts would have recognised the use of the expression 'I am', to indicate Jesus' divine being. In fact, it is a unique feature of John's presentation of the function of Jesus of Nazareth e.g. in John 8:24, 'You will die in your sins unless you believe, that I am (he); 8:58: 'Before Abraham was, I am'.

In John 6:20 - when the disciples were some miles away from the shore they saw Jesus walking on the water approaching the boat. They were terrified, but he called out, 'It is I, do not be afraid.'

While the 'I am' sayings are closely linked to the revelation of God in and through Jesus, in some they are closely associated with Jesus' function e.g. 6:51 - 'I am the bread of life'. 8:12 & 9:5: - 'I am the light of the world' & 'While I am in the world I am the light of the world', 10:7,9 'I am the door (of the sheep)' - 10:11,14, 'I am the good shepherd' & 1,5, 'I am the (true) vine'.

These few examples which I have quoted demonstrate the unique revelation of God among men and women and that Jesus, who is one with the Father, is able to reveal the Father in a unique way.

John Davies



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Notices

2004	Communion	
January	25	Evening
March	7	Morning
April	25	Evening
June	6	Morning
July	25	Evening
September	5	Morning
October	31	Evening
December	5	Morning

St Peter's & St Andrew's Sunday Club

Annual Accounts For Year Ending 31st December 2003

Income	£
Children's Collection	339.20
Cram-A-Can	95.80
Donation for Tear Fund	10.00
Donation for MAF	120.00
Church Contributions	500.00
Coffee Morning	241.00
Coffee Morning (Donation)	10.00
Church Family outing	424.18
Total Income	1740.18

COMMUNION

SUNDAY

6 June 2004

11.00 am

SUNDAY

25 July 2004

6.30 pm

Expenses	£
Donation Toybox (Cram-A-Can)	100.00
Donation Love Russia	150.00
Donation World Evangelism For Christ	160.00
Donation Mission aviation Fellowship	150.00
Donation Holiday Club	50.00
Christmas 2002 (Thurso Club)	10.00
Christmas Presents (2002)	51.09
Coffee Morning (Lorna Nicol)	20.66
Coffee Morning (D Malcolm Band Room)	16.00
Teaching Material	241.67
Church Family Outing	426.03
Prize giving Books	453.55
Total Expenditure	1829.00



The Church
of Scotland

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

BRIEF STATEMENT ON FUTURE OF THE RESTORATION FUND

BRIEF SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING DISCUSSION 20th APRIL 2004

At the recent Board meeting, held on Tuesday 20th April 2004, the Board members assessed the progress and status of the Restoration Fund. The Board considered the risks associated with the closure of congregational giving. These were mainly associated with uncertainty surrounding the costs of plasterwork repairs and whole church redecoration. Firm quotations from contractors are still awaited:

- a) From the Plasterwork contractor when he starts works and assesses the state of the wall surfaces.
- b) From the redecoration contractors when Chancel, Plasterwork and Electrical Heating improvements have been completed.

Under Fabric matters, the Board considered our "winter heating deficit", and a proposal for halogen based heating was discussed. The outline cost was put at £12,500. The Board decided to proceed with a feasibility study, and the Property Convenor, Mr Malcolm, was instructed to obtain professional Heat Engineer advice, for a Scheme to re-equip the whole Church building with a comprehensive heating system.

The Board then discussed how to reconcile:

- a) Sequencing of Replastering, Redecoration, Chancel Improvement and Electrical Heating upgrade.
- b) Forthcoming Fabric and Restoration funding requirements.
- c) The interests of the Congregation, especially those contributing to the Restoration Fund at present.

During discussion, it noted that Plasterwork repairs were scheduled to start at the end of May 2004. Then, through Summer 2004, progress would also be made with the Chancel and Heating improvements.

The Board reached the following conclusions:

- a) Redecoration would not take place until 2005.
- b) The Restoration Fund should remain open, through to the completion of Redecoration in 2005.
- c) The scope of the work funded by the Restoration fund should be amended to include the Electric Heating upgrade. This should provide an immediate tangible benefit to all members of the congregation, this winter. This involves the redirection of Church Restoration funds, which were originally earmarked for the Redecoration, which has now been delayed to 2005.
- d) The Restoration Fund Treasurer to place an update in the Newsletter, setting out the Board's Way Forward for the Restoration Fund.
- e) The Restoration Fund Treasurer to write to all

Restoration Fund contributors, to update them with the Board's Way Forward for the Restoration Fund.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESTORATION FUND.

New: It is now Board policy to complete the plasterwork and electric heating upgrade this year, as part of the Restoration Project. At the same time, Fabric Fund work will continue to close out the Chancel improvements. Then with these Church works settled, "topping out" with redecoration of the whole church can be planned and completed in 2005, with redecoration taking place during Summer 2005.

Revised: Fund assets and liabilities will match, as the projections below demonstrate, if Congregational Giving to the Restoration Fund now continues to mid 2005.

FUNDING OVERVIEW APRIL/MAY 2004-04-27

REMAINING WORK	
(Estimated without Quotes)	
Plasterwork Repairs: Ceilings & Walls	4,800
Plasterwork Repairs: Window Surrounds	3,100
Redecorate Church, less Centre Ceiling & Hall	13,000
New: Install whole building heating system	12,500
Reserve	3,000
TOTAL	36,400

FUNDING AVAILABLE	
(Based on cash now and forecast)	
Bank Balance	22,950
Tax Repayment Claimed	350
Congregational Giving Revised: now through to 2005	11,700
Tax Repayment 2004/05	1,400
TOTAL	36,400

Prepared by James Houston, Restoration Fund treasurer, 30th April 2004, following Church Board meeting, held on 20th April 2004.

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Living life to the full

Christian Aid Week begins on 9 May, and the money raised this year will be used to improve people's lives in more than 50 countries worldwide. One of the places that Christian Aid has recently begun working in is the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan. Here, as in many other poor countries, money raised in Christian Aid Week is being used to help people live life to the full.

Khurshed Khuinov is 17 and lives in Tajikistan's capital, Duschanbe. He shares one room in a city hostel with his mother and five brothers and sisters. Life in the hostels is bleak and dangerous, so the organisation Zumrad, which is supported by Christian Aid, runs youth clubs to improve the lives of vulnerable children and give them emotional support. They enjoy climbing and camping expeditions, as well as workshops in which they make their own rucksacks and tents.

Zumrad is one of ten partner organisations in Tajikistan supported by Christian Aid. Tajikistan is one of the poorest countries in the world outside Africa, and Christian Aid began to work there quite recently. Situated in central Asia, north of Afghanistan, it was part of the Soviet Union until independence in 1991. Subsequently the economy has collapsed, and there has been a bitter civil war. One in three workers is jobless, and vulnerable people such as children and the elderly have little or no support. Children are particularly at risk if they are orphaned. Fifty thousand were orphaned during the war, and many more have parents who have been forced to leave home and seek work in Russia. Huge state orphanages provide schooling and shelter, but they are overcrowded and poorly resourced. Children living in these conditions are stigmatised, often do not have enough to eat, and are starved of affection.

In Khurshed's case, his family's situation was made harder because of his poor health. Until he was 12, he had to walk on crutches. 'After two operations the doctor succeeded in fixing my bones,' he explains. 'My family wanted to buy a house, but they used the money for the operations. Life became very difficult for us. So now we live in a hostel.'

For ten years, Zumrad has given children such as these a richer education and deeper relationships than are possible in an orphanage or hostel. They offer camping expeditions in the mountains, with teenage children learning a range of climbing and environmental skills.

'I thought I would never be able to walk as normal, but I have been hiking with Zumrad for four years,' says Khurshed. 'At first it was really hard. But it is so important for me. When I come on hiking trips, I feel at home. I'm not afraid of the difficulties now. I'm going to be an artist. So I am not just looking around; I am studying the countryside and keeping it in my head.'

By attending local clubs several times a week, the young people also learn the sewing skills they need to make their own rucksacks, tents and clothing. Courses in computing and English mean that they can improve their potential. But perhaps most important of all is that Zumrad provides a safe place where children find genuine care and can develop higher hopes for the future.

A £25 gift to Christian Aid buys the materials for ten young people to make their own rucksacks for a camping expedition.

By supporting Christian Aid Week, you are among millions of people who think poverty is a scandal we do not have to accept. Your actions, commitment and contributions will bring about a better life for people in poor communities all over the world.

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Revival And The Bible

What's the problem? Is the Bible an outmoded and old-fashioned book, which is irrelevant in today's modern, sophisticated, and technologically advanced society?

After all, it is a book born of an ancient camel era. Surely it cannot speak very well to our rocket propelled society. But wait a minute! The fact that people today do not understand the Bible is really not the book's problem. You see, although scientific discoveries may have given us new ways to travel and communicate, these same scientific discoveries have not changed the human heart.

People today have the same problems and joys experienced by people centuries ago! Greater conveniences in the home have not changed the way we think and feel. So the solutions to our deeply personal problems, which are offered in the Bible, are still as relevant today as they always have been.

The problem is that we rarely look into the Bible for help. When we do, we find it difficult to understand and apply. So we blame the book. We would hardly take the step of blaming ourselves. But perhaps the teaching of the Bible would be helpful here too.

When the disciples of Jesus did not understand the Scriptures, Jesus did not blame the book! He knew that the words of the Bible were God's words. He confessed to God "Thy Word is truth!" (John 17:17). Jesus saw that the problem was in the disciples. So, "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

Yes, Jesus took action. He exerted supernatural power on the minds of the disciples so that they could understand the word of God and apply it to their lives. This is what men and women need today. They need to open their minds so that they really can understand the Bible and live by it.

Contributed by Dr. Dennis J. Prutow

Church Family Outing

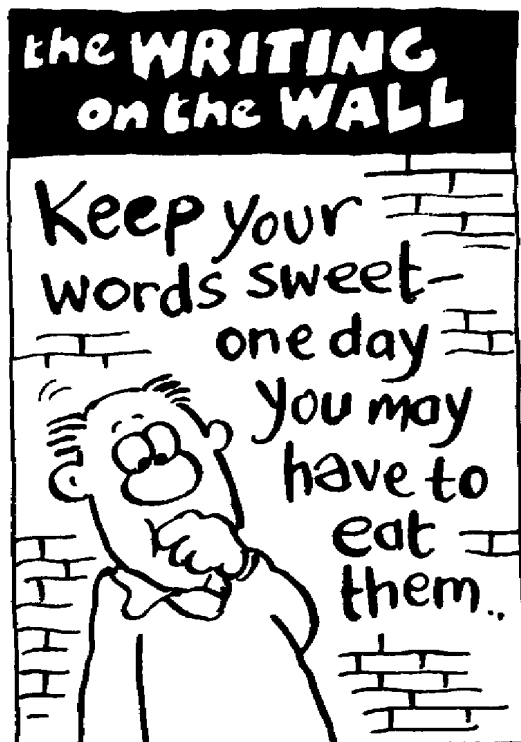
This will take place in June and we'd love to see all the Sunday Club children and their families for this day of fun and games.

Details to follow soon.

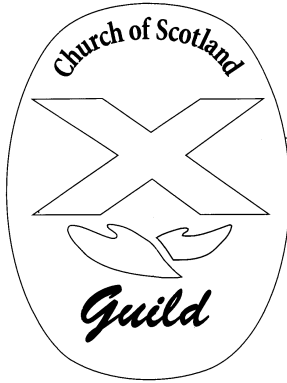
Prize Giving

This will take place on
27th June at 11:00 am

and the children will be taking part in this family service.



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THE GUILD

Over the last few months we have had very interesting groups as our guests. A very pleasant evening with children from Olig Church with their leaders giving us a delightful programme of music and song, which included a short musical of Ruth by five very young children, March 1st St David's day was another night when Rev, John Stevenson about this national Saint interspersed with singing from friends from the Episcopal church. Our only disappointment was we thought some of them Dared to care with Courage and worn the Welsh National costume!! Mr and Mrs Guy Gordon a very talented couple from the Baptist church gave a very spirited programme of both instrumental and vocal music Some of which Guy had composed himself; this was a wonderful evening to which we had invited ladies from the West Church and Halkirk Guilds. We were guests at the Salvation Army

Rally a time when we met ladies from other churches. A wonderful evening of music and praise the highlight being songs by the children. After we shared a cup of tea together.

Easter Praise was held in the West Church when representatives from some rural as well as town churches joined for the celebration to the Risen Lord.

The Guild A.G.M. No change was made with office-bearers. Three members of the Management team stood and were thanked for service to the guild. One new member was nominated and approved. She will be joining us soon as we plan our programme for 2004-2005

The Contact person gave a short report. £250 was sent to the project of our choice. We have planned the Guild outing to Shinfalls on 12th June, there may be a few spare seats if you are interested please contact me 892883.

Throughout this last guild year we have tried to "Dare to care with courage" When we return in September our new theme will be "Dare to care with compassion". Another challenging subject! And the Topic "Count ME In". Can we count on you either by joining us or praying for us?

The Guild wishes the congregation pleasant days during the summer months.

God bless you all

*Mary Chalmers
Contact Person.*

Friends of Achvarasdal

Summer Fete at Achvarasdal House

Saturday June 26th

2.30p.m. -- 4p.m.

Teas/Entertainment/Stalls

Free bus

(see posters)

Entrance (inc. tea) –

Adults £1.50, Children 50p.

Help & contributions to stalls gratefully
accepted.

Come & enjoy the afternoon.

CONTACT NO.:- 893537

Advance Notice

Church Coffee Morning

2nd July 2004

*see intimations for details nearer the
time*

*Worship the Lord
With all your heart*

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.