

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: 3/2004

September 2004



MINISTER'S LETTER

**The Manse
Thurso**

01847895186

Dear Friends

I heard a story not long ago about a young woman who started attending church in the town where she lived. It was a town with several churches, and the one she chose to attend was not necessarily the liveliest by any stretch of the imagination. Someone was obviously surprised at her choice of church and asked her why now she was attending church she had chosen to make that particular one her

spiritual home. Her reply was very simple: "They watched my baby for me." That simple act of relevant help had been what helped her to believe in the genuineness of the congregation.

I believe that all of us individually need to be challenged by that simple story of an act of help and service which led to someone coming to believe in Christ who previously did not. In our morning services lately, God through his Word has been seeking to mobilise us into being people who look not only after our own interests but consider the interests of others and do what we can for others as opportunities present themselves to us.

I have been challenged in this respect by what Jesus says about his death on the cross in John Chapter 12 verse 32: "I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself." John having recorded these words of Jesus makes this comment following that statement: "He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die." Let me ask a question for you to ponder. Why would anyone be drawn to a dying figure on a cross? Or let us make it more personal. Why did you come to believe in a crucified Messiah? Probably the answer most of us would give is that we saw that he was dying for our sins and came to him for forgiveness. But when Jesus speaks about people being drawn to him on the cross he is thinking of something else as well. We should not only be attracted to the cross for forgiveness but because as we look upon Christ crucified we see here is what true humanness is about. We come to a crucified Christ because in the one who hangs there we see the truest, most beautiful and perfect humanness. We come to Christ because we are drawn by the loveliness of a life that emptied itself, that was not self preoccupied, that loved and served God and man. We are drawn to the Christ who gave himself on the cross not only because we need his death for us but we need the heart and life which he displayed in all his deeds but supremely in his self giving sacrifice at Calvary. This is the paradox. By his cross we are attracted to his life and realise what true life is meant to be about. It is about emptying ourselves and serving, whether that means watching someone's baby, visiting the lonely, helping the poor, etc. etc. etc.

Did you come to Jesus simply because you wanted forgiven? Or were you attracted to him by this longing,

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

“Lord change my heart to be like your heart, my life to be like your life.” I offer the words of hymn 586 in Mission Praise to you as words which you and I might use in our own personal prayers:

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wanderer sought and won-
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have,
Thy gifts so free
In joy, in grief, through life,
O Lord for thee.
And when Thy face I see,
My ransomed soul shall be,
Through all eternity,
Something for Thee.

(Sylvanus Dryden Phelps, 1816 – 1895)

Your friend and minister

Kenny Borthwick

Presbytery News – Stop Press!

I have just heard word that more ministers and more readers are moving away from Caithness. As a result it looks as though I will now have the responsibility of Wick Old Parish Church, so as a congregation you will still be sharing my services with another church! The situation in Caithness is getting serious, almost to the point where it is getting difficult to cover Sunday services in all the parishes, let alone give adequate pastoral cover. With more personnel moving South, that difficulty will increase. Please pray about the situation. Especially pray for the situations where there are long term vacancies and also for the ministers who still feel called to minister in Caithness. There will soon only be 6 left to cover the county and that number may well reduce over the next few years.

We are blessed with a few people in our congregation who are gaining experience in preaching and leading services. They and others will need to be called upon more and more so to do. It is probably fast getting to the point that we need to train people to take funerals as well. If any of you feel that is perhaps something you could do, or would just like

to talk about the possibility, please get in touch with me.

Kenny Borthwick

Service of Blessing

It was a delight to welcome Fallon Campbell to the church on 20th June. She was brought by her parents, Katrina and Neil for a service of blessing.

Weddings

Andrea Ingleby and Laurence Campbell
Caroline Sutherland and Douglas Reid
Michelle Bowser and Andrew Fraser

Funerals

Janet Smith – Pennyland Drive
Gordon Shearer – Strathmore Place
Jean Paul – Pentland View, formerly of Barrock Street
William Cumming – Arbroath
Bessie Sinclair – Davidsons Lane
Margaret Sinclair – Upper Burnside
Tina Overy – Royal Terrace
Margaret Reid – College Place
David Sutherland – Tom Matheson Court
Chrissie Thomson – Smith Terrace
James Dunnett – Pentland View, formerly of Upper Dounreay

We extend our sympathy to those who are struggling to come to terms with bereavement and pray they will know the help and peace of Jesus Christ in their time of need.

* * * * *
* If I have brought a gleam of light *
* To cheer a darkened day, *
* If I held out a friendly hand *
* To help along the way. *
* Then in these acts of kindness done *
* It is not me you see, *
* But glimpses of that Loving One *
* Who chose to dwell in me. *
* -- Found in a Christian Newsletter *
* * * * *

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

A Poem

I carry a cross in my pocket
A simple reminder to me
Of the fact that I am a Christian
No matter where I be.

This little cross is not magic
Nor is it a good luck charm
It isn't meant to protect me
From every physical harm.

It's not for identification
For all the world to see
It's simply an understanding
Between my Saviour and me.

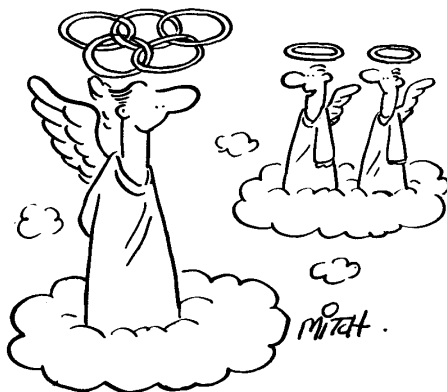
When I put my hand in my pocket
To bring out a coin or a key
The cross is there to remind me
Of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me to be thankful
For my blessings day by day
And to strive to serve Him better
In all that I do and say.

It's also a daily reminder
Of the peace and comfort I share
With all who knew my Master
And give themselves to His care.

So I carry a cross in my pocket
Reminding no one but me
That Jesus Christ is lord of my life
If only I'll let Him be.

A Member of the Congregation



"I HEAR HE USED TO BE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE..."

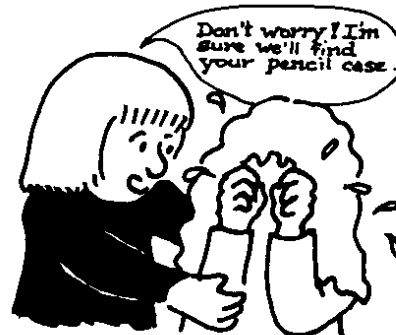
A Friend is someone . . .



... who shares.



... who helps you out.



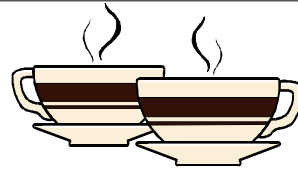
... who comforts



... who makes you feel good.

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



Men's Coffee Morning

Saturday 11th September
2004

10am - 12 noon

Afternoon Teas

2 - 4pm

Thurso Town Hall

COMMUNION

SUNDAY

5 September 2004

11.00 am

SUNDAY

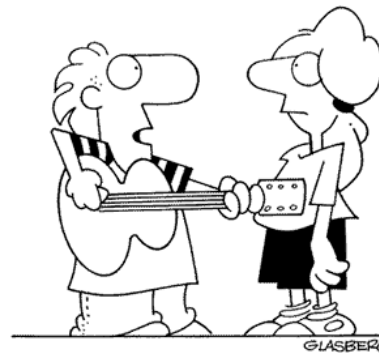
31 October 2004

6.30 pm

GIFT DAY

Details of Gift day will be
given at a later date

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"Writing hymns is harder than I thought!
I can't think of anything that rhymes with
'Hallelujah' except 'glad I knew ya'
and 'we'll tattoo ya!'"



The Church
of Scotland

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

STAND THEREFORE

Preachers seldom face as large an audience as confronted Dudley A. Tyng on a March day in 1858. More than five thousand men were gathered in Jaynes' Hall in Philadelphia to hear the beloved rector. At the time the city was being stirred by a great revival.

There was a singular charm and appeal about this speaker. He seemed to find just the right words to satisfy the soul hunger of his listeners. He was so moving and convincing in his plea that he drew thousands to those gatherings.

But three weeks later he was dead. The city was shocked when it read of the accident that had claimed him as its victim. Mr. Tyng had gone to his home at Brookfield, near Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately Mr. Tyng suffered a fatal accident on his farm.

Shortly before he passed away, he was briefly conscious. Those by the bedside heard him whisper, "Tell them to stand up for Jesus." Undoubtedly it was the message he wanted carried to his friends in the minister's union who were conducting the city-wide revival.

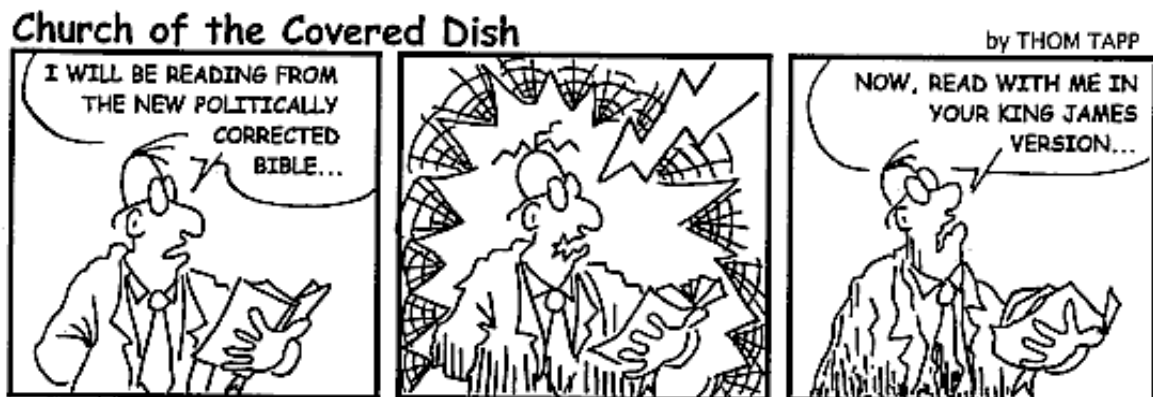
There was one acquaintance in particular to whom these words came as a challenge. George Duffield, pastor of the Fifth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, had been the late rector's intimate associate and close fellow worker. To him it hardly seemed possible that one so beautiful in spirit and so dedicated to the Master's cause could have passed so abruptly from the scene. He began thinking that Mr. Tyng's final words should be translated into some enduring form of memorial.

The following Sunday, when the time came for the sermon in his own church, Mr. Duffield preached from the text in Ephesians 6:14: "Stand therefore." At the close he read a poem he had written, "Stand Up! Stand Up for Jesus!"

Probably he never dreamed that he had written a great hymn. A copy of the lines was given to his Sunday school superintendent, who in turn had them printed on a special leaflet so that they could be sung by all the children.

It could not stop there. The words seemed to fire men's souls throughout the land. When George Duffield made a trip to the battlefield in Virginia a few years later, he was deeply stirred as he heard thousands of army men sing "Stand Up! Stand Up for Jesus!"

By Vincent Edwards



St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

The Most Beautiful Flower

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read
Beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree.
Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown,
For the world was intent on dragging me down.

And if that weren't enough to ruin my day,
A young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play.
He stood right before me with his head tilted down
And said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight,
With its petals all worn - not enough rain, or too little light.
Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play,
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.

But instead of retreating he sat next to my side
And placed the flower to his nose and declared with surprise,
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too.
That's why I picked it; here, it's for you."

The weed before me was dying or dead.
Not vibrant of colours, orange, yellow or red.
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave.
So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I need."

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,
He held it mid-air without reason or plan.
It was then that I noticed for the very first time
That weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.

I heard my voice quiver, tears shone like the sun
As I thanked him for picking the very best one.
"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play,
Unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he managed to see
A self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree.
How did he know of my self-indulged plight?
Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.

Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see
The problem was not with the world; the problem was me.
And for all of those times I myself had been blind,
I vowed to see beauty, and appreciate every second that's mine.

And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose
And breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose
And smiled as that young boy, another weed in his hand
About to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.

Author unknown



The Alternative Gift

“Who can say they received a flock of sheep for a wedding present?”

A few months ago Robert and I were invited to a wedding in Aberdeen. The bride to be we have known since birth as she is the daughter of two of our closest Christian friends. Having eagerly accepted the invitation, I rang the bride's mother some time later to seek ideas for a wedding present. The bride now a fully qualified doctor of medicine and a committed Christian was to marry a man of the same qualification and commitment. The bride's mother explained that as the groom already had a well-equipped flat, there wasn't really a wedding present list. As the happy couple to be hoped in the near future to fulfil their dream, not only by being joined in marriage but by serving God with their medical skills in the third world, they didn't want to acquire a lot of material which required storage. It was suggested that we might like as an alternative to buy something tangible through World Vision. My ears pricked up with curiosity! “What sort of things can you purchase?” I asked. “A herd of goats, a beehive, materials for a school class, a health care kit and many more”, came the reply.



As soon as Robert and I could find a spare moment we brought up the website - www.greatgifts.org . We found an extensive range of gifts priced from £5 to £500+. After a good browse we settled for a flock of sheep to be given to a farmer in Ethiopia to enable him to earn a lasting income. Having made our choice it was possible on the computer to choose a wedding day card personalised with the bride and grooms' names and our own message of best wishes. Within 48 hours the card arrived in the post ready for us to send on. Inside the card was an explanation of the World Vision Gift complete with a picture of sheep.

This gift was being given from us and our three children, so over the following days we explained the present to our son in St Andrew's, our daughter in Glasgow and our daughter at home. The response was one of great delight. There were comments of, “What a brilliant idea!” “That's such a cool gift!” “Much better than having an attic full of things you might never use!” and so before long, “ My mum and dad have just bought a flock of sheep on the net” was being reported in St Andrew's, Glasgow and the High School in Thurso. In turn I mentioned it over coffee to my colleagues at work. I reckon it is probably the most spoken of gift we have ever purchased and everyone who heard about it showed interest and approval.

How often do we find ourselves tearing our hair out to come up with an original gift idea for the person who has everything they need? The World Vision Alternative Gift Catalogue is a quick and easy way of buying a unique gift for your relative or friend, while also giving someone in another country a brighter future.

So enthused was our youngest daughter with the flock of sheep idea that we bought her two chickens as part of her eighteenth birthday present. The two chickens we believe are laying eggs at a Jerusalem orphanage and the eggs are sold to raise money to support the orphans.

Next time you need inspiration for a gift why not log on to www.greatgifts.org . If you're not on the net you can order by post. Just ask Robert or myself for a copy of the catalogue.

Lorna Nicol

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso



THE GUILD

Since the last newsletter the Guild enjoyed a trip to Shin Falls where we shared a meal together with ladies from Orlig, Reay and Strathy Guilds, who travelled with us on the coach. On the way home we called at Dornoch for afternoon tea arriving back pleasantly tired at 8pm.

We are now looking forward to our 2004—2005 session. The Theme being "Dare to care with compassion" and the Topic "Count me in". We will be considering these during the session.

Our year begins with Guild meal at the Royal Hotel on September 6th 5pm for 5.30. A note will be circulated to members before this. At 7 30pm our meeting will be in the hall when Murray Campbell from the Mission will be speaking to us.

Here are just a few of our speakers for this year:

- Thurso Baptist music group.
- Panel discussion, with representatives from heart & stroke assoc. special needs
- With young people, and palliative care.
- Ladies from Wick Baptist Guild.

Our coffee morning is on Friday 22nd October in the Band Room. We always appreciate donations from members of the Congregation towards this.

The Presbyterian Autumn Rally will be held in Thurso West Church on September when the guest speaker will be a representative from the L'Arch Community in Inverness.

Anyone is free to come to the guild either to join or just as a visitor. We will be happy to welcome you.

Please continue to pray for the work of the guild locally and nationally.

Mary Chalmers. (*contact person*)

Are you a Christian?

Little Johnny was walking down the beach, and he spied a matronly woman sitting under a beach umbrella on the sand. He walked up to her and asked, "Are you a Christian?"

"Yes." she replied.

"Do you read your Bible every day?"

She nodded her head, "Yes."

"Do you pray often?" Little Johnny asked next, and again she answered, "Yes."

With that he asked his final question, "Will you hold my 20 pence while I go swimming?"

From Sermon Fodder and Joke A Day Ministries

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.