

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Church Quarterly



Spring 2009

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We need revival

The Church of Scotland is in need of revival, according to controversial artist Peter Howson, profiled in this month's Life and Work. Howson says: "I think the Church of Scotland is being a bit namby pamby at the moment, whatever it says in the press I don't agree with. I think it needs some sort of revival, to get back to its traditional roots."

Howson is also critical of the Church on 'green' issues. "And the whole thing with green issues and saving the planet - that's not the Church's job. The church's job is saving souls. To go with the green stuff is a disaster. It's revolting to me."

"I am a fully paid-up member of the Church of Scotland but I have fallen out with them to some extent. I do have a fondness for the Church of Scotland. I do enjoy hearing a good sermon; I think there is probably a lot of good work going on both at home and overseas. I know a few Church of Scotland people who really walk the walk of Christ."

Thank you Mr Darwin?

As the birth of Charles Darwin, author of 'Origin of the Species', is celebrated, Christians should not see this as a threat, according to this month's Life and Work. Graham Hellier argues that Darwin's work 'drives us back to acknowledge the awesome majesty of God'.

Darwin reminds us, he writes, "that our faith in God has to be an all or nothing affair. The ordinary is extraordinary and we look not for God in the occasional miraculous intervention for the whole of creation must live and move and have its being in Him."

The Young Kirk

Children should be seen and heard according to the Kirk's specialist in children's ministry the Rev. Linda Pollock. In the March edition of Life and Work Ms. Pollock says: "Children are often accused of great naivety, of not having sensible opinions, of being slaves to the terrible culture of celebrity and kitsch that's so prevalent at the moment, but we are missing out so much by not giving them a chance to be heard and more importantly, listened to."

A group of Church of Scotland children, aged 12 - 14 are set to visit Malawi this summer to meet youngsters of their own age involved in the Church. "We're not going there to guilt-trip the youngsters," says Ms Pollock. "The idea is not to show them how poor these children are, and how much they have by comparison. Children don't need that kind of lesson. Most of them are quicker than us adults to see the inequalities present all around them. We're hoping this visit will give them the confidence, the sense of completeness, that they are not alone, that they are part of something glorious and huge, that they are part of the the Christian communion worldwide and that's a family that extends beyond the mortal boundaries of race, colour, age, gender shape or class."

The third Kirk Children's Assembly will be held this year on the Island of Iona when children from the length and breadth of the country will meet together.

"There is no future for the church without children," says Ms Pollock, "Who do we think are going to fill the pews and the pulpits in years to come if not those who are children now?"

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

The View From The Manse



Rev. Roderick MacKinnon
46 Rose Street,
Thurso
Caithness
KW14 7 HN

Tel 01847 895186.

Dear friends,

By the time you receive this letter, Margaret and I will have been more than a month with you as your locum minister.

We have been greatly helped by the warmth of your welcome and by the sense of the presence of God at our worship services. The congregation is to be commended for holding together so well during what has been an unusually long vacancy.

There may be a vacancy insofar as you have no settled minister to lead and to serve you but the whole congregation has risen to the challenge and whilst many church leaders talk about "whole body ministry" you are actually putting theory, ideas and methods into practice. The varied gifts in the congregation have been released and allowed to flourish strengthening the fellowship to the glory of God..

There is, of course, as in every congregation, a need for a firm yet kindly leadership. There is a need to see the whole picture – to fit the particular into the whole and the whole into the framework. The frame sets out the picture, and while in a sense surrounding it, it also contains it.

The whole picture is what is seen and it is important that St. Peter's and St. Andrew's is seen not to be an inclusive isolated part of the church catholic and evangelical but simply a community of faith, separate but within a much bigger framework – the Church of God, praising, serving within the wider church locally, nationally and worldwide.

A missionary church, sure of its place as a servant of Jesus Christ, who has revealed the great generosity of God the Father and who, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, is ready to face the future with a faith unwavering, a hope undaunted, in the sure knowledge that the harvest will come.

So, my friends, seek the things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. having sought the things above, ever remember that we are here below to seek, to learn, to grow until at last we see Christ face to face.

May God richly bless you,

Roddie

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Christian Aid Week May 2009

United Church Service - Sunday 10th
At the St Anne's RC Church 06:30

House to House Collection:
Mon. 11th - Sat 16th

Men's Coffee Morning - 16th
10.00 am - 12 noon

Sale of Work - 16th
10.00 am - 12 noon



Can you help?

If you would like to help with the collections during this year's Christian Aid Week. or if you would like to find out more about Christian Aid, then please contact Iain and Maureen MacKillop (Tel: 01847 892519)

(Collectors must be at least 16 years old)

Communion Dates 2009

Sunday Mar 8th. 11.30 am

Sunday Jun 14th. 11.30 am

Sunday Sep 8th. 11.30 am

Sunday Dec 8th. 11.30 am



Funeral

Adelaide McKay, Bridge of Westfield

Memorial Service

Sandy Clark , Barrock

Baptisms

Christine Murray

Jill McKain

New Members

Christine Murray

Jill McKain

Max Edington

Jo Ann Edington

Hannah Edington

Jesus, to Thy table led,
now let every heart be fed
with the true and living Bread.

When we taste the mystic wine,
of thine outpoured Blood the sign,
fill our hearts with love divine.

Draw us to Thy wounded side,
whence there flowed the healing tide;
there our sins and sorrows hide.

From the bonds of sin release,
cold and wavering faith increase,
Lamb of God, grant us Thy peace.

Lead us by Thy piercèd hand
till around Thy throne we stand
in the bright and better land.

Robert Hall Baynes (1831-95)

*No, I preached last Sunday.
This week it's your turn!*



Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

THE PATIENT AND THE CARER

A Crabbit Old Woman?

What do you see nurses? What do you see?
Are you thinking when you look at me
A crabbit old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit, with far away eyes.
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice 'I do wish you'd try'.
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
and forever is losing a stocking, a shoe.
Who, unresisting or not, lets you do as you will
With bathing or feeding, the long day to fill.
Is that what you are thinking? Is that what you see?

Then open your eyes nurse -you're not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I rise at your bidding and eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten, with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another;
A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet,
A bride soon at twenty, my heart gives a leap.
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
At twenty-five now I have young of my own,
Who need me to build a secure happy home.

A woman of thirty, my young now grow fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At forty-my young sons now grown up have gone.
But my man stays beside me to see I don't mourn.
At fifty-once more babies play at my knee,
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead.
I look at the future, I shudder with dread.
For my young are all busy rearing young of their own.
And I think of the years, and the love I have known.

I'm an old woman now, and nature is cruel
The body crumbles, grace and vigour depart.
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys, I remember the pain
And I'm loving and living life all over again.
I think of the years all too few-gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes Nurse! Open and see,
Not a crabbit old woman, Look closer-see me!



A Nurse's Reply:

What do we see, you ask, what do we see?
Yes, we are thinking when seeming to flee.
We may seem to be hard when we hurry and pass,
But there are many of you and too few of us.
We would like more time to sit by you and talk
To bathe you and feed you and help you to walk.

To hear of your lives and things you have done
Your childhood, your husband, your daughter, your son.
But time is against us, there's too much to do,
Patients are many and nurses too few.
We grieve when we see you so sad and alone
With nobody near you, no friends of your own.

We feel all your pain and know your fear
That nobody cares when your end may be near.
But nurses are people with feelings as well
And when we're together, you'll often hear tell
Of the dearest old gran in the very end bed,
And the lovely old dad and the things that he said.

We speak with compassion and love, and feel sad
When we think of your lives and the joy that you've had;
And when the time comes for you to depart,
You leave us behind with an ache in our hearts.
When you come to the long sleep, no more worry or care
There are other old people, and we must be there.

*So please understand if we hurry and pass
There are many of you, and too few of us.*

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

THE ROCK GROUP

"The St. Peter's and St. Andrew's youth group (a.k.a. 'The Rock Group' taken from Matthew 16:18) has been changing. Just before the new year we began Sunday night services (from 19:45 to 21:00) in the church hall) that include talks, worship and discipleship as well as prayer and offerings to raise money for poor villages. We have had the blessing of seeing our group shift and grow over the past few years and really want to focus on taking things deeper. Discipleship includes reading two chapters from the Bible daily and praying.



After Easter (and quarterly each year) a new challenge will be added. Eventually, Discipleship takes youth to a level where they are comfortable fasting, memorising Bible verses, and really living like the Disciples in a daily walk with Christ. God chose the disciple Peter to build His church, so as the youth of St. Peter's church, we really want to see the church grow and there's no better way to do that than to live as examples of Jesus. As one of the main things that Jesus told us to do, the youth group is trying to help out the poor and needy by giving tithes and offerings. So far we have over fifty pounds raised and are aiming for the ninety pounds that buys a pair of breeding llamas. We also want to eventually buy chickens and other animals to help them out.

Because Sunday nights are more in-depth and focus on growing as Christians, we have re-invented our Wednesday night youth services (from 19:30 to 21:00) in the youth room) with games, drama and music to bring friends who normally wouldn't come to church. The youth worship team has been practising and developing in order to give God our worship and use the talents He has given us to His glory. Some members of the group are working on a dance to show praise through movement. Others still are working on the drama to be used for Light Factory over Easter and this summer. We have also started new games that challenge us physically and mentally such as Bible trivia and various activities that help us to grow as a group. We recently had open mic night to allow the members of the group to show off their God-given talents. Wednesday nights are a great time to relax and have fun, all the while knowing it is a safe environment to bring friends and hang out. Eventually we want to have a spa night for mothers and ladies in the church to come and get pampered by the youth group and a chance to sit and chat to us relaxing with a cup of hot chocolate. We are also organising a Safari supper/Prayer walk where we will walk around Thurso praying and thanking God for our town.

As the year progresses, we will be attending Frenzy (the worship concert held in Edinburgh every year). It is a great event because it interests friends who aren't normally church goers and often they end up joining the youth group. Last year a member became a Christian in the month following the event and joined and has gone on to grow deeply in Christ. It is the highlight of the summer for the youth group as we get to see amazing worship teams such as Leeland, The David Crowder Band and last year the headliner was Delirious?. We are all looking forward to seeing Hillsong London this year.

Light FX is another summer event that takes place the same week as Light Factory but focuses on teens. The Step-Out team that comes during the week puts on events that often lead new people to Christ and re-ignite the flame in those who have been beaten down during the year by school and work.

We are in the process of planning and praying about new events and are always open to ideas for new events to bring in teens from the area as well as fund-raising. We would like to take this opportunity thank everyone in the congregation for their prayers and continued support and hope we can bless the church in return.

Hannah Edington

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

THE MINISTRY

There is a great deal of talk in the church about ministry. Perhaps this is so because we have lost sight of ministry. It is only when we lose something that we become concerned about it.

The Presbyterian system of church government was supposed to bring in to call the whole people of God. The word ministry means essentially service and the word minister means servant.

The minister has been given too high and too low a place in our modern church. He is, of course, and must always be a servant. Is he the servant of the congregation, or of the Kirk Session or of the Presbytery? He is only that in a derivative sense. He is primarily a servant of Jesus Christ. It is Christ who calls him to minister and it is to Christ that he is accountable. He is the servant of the congregation but happily the congregation is not his master.

A minister is called to minister. He ministers primarily the word of God, he is the servant of the word. Some people think that the minister is an expert on the word. Some ministers are. But what no minister can claim is that he has mastered the word. What would be good, as the late eminent minister called Alexander Frazer of Tain said, was that ministers were mastered by the word.

Nevertheless a minister is called to preach the word of God, to explain it and proclaim it, to apply its ancient message to the needs of our day. That is no easy task. There is a cult of relevance which can be fatal to the minister and the ministry of the word. The desire to be relevant is often misconstrued as the grasping after every passing intellectual fashion or theological aberration. It has been said of such ministers that they are so much with it that they are without it.

I believe that the supreme task of the minister is the preaching of the word. That preaching must be in the context of public worship where minister and people are together on one footing praising and worshipping God.

The minister and people aware of the greatness and goodness of God, aware of His mighty and gracious presence in the midst of His people become a worshipping fellowship, a listening people. In that atmosphere the word sometimes takes wings. In that way we are assured that the word is an integral part of the celebration of God and in that spirit becomes relevant to the particular needs of the people.

A minister is called to minister to the people in their

homes where and when these homes are accessible to him. It is no longer true that all homes are accessible.

The minister must not be an intruder and unwelcome because in such an atmosphere ministry is only minimally possible. Sometimes by the grace of a God given sensitivity such unpromising visits do bear fruit. A minister is not doing a social call when he visits - there is nothing wrong with social calls if time permits - he is making a pastoral visit. He may only pass the time of day and enquire of the health of the family and sometimes offer up a short prayer. In times of sickness, trouble and bereavement, an extra person to speak to may be of help and sometimes very helpful.

There are times of crisis when the minister is called to help. It is not always easy to give the answer or propose the solutions which a particular person hopes for. The minister can only speak from his experience and the problem may not be one that admits to an easy answer.

Where human beings are involved there are complications. It is not always advisable to claim that there is an accessible answer.

There is need for humility and grace not only in the minister but also in those seeking help. The rich young ruler did not get from our Lord the ready answer he expected. He got an answer, he did not like it and went away sorrowful even although the Lord loved him. There is the ministry to individuals and there is the ministry to the community. In the church of Scotland ministers are called "to the congregation and parish." The Church of Scotland exercises a territorial ministry and the minister is there to serve not only the congregation but the parishioners. This can be done in many ways. But what of the ministry of the congregation. The minister is only one member of the congregation. The congregation also ministers. Each member professes to be a Christian and is therefore constrained to serve Christ in the parish. The worship on Sunday should equip the members of the church to do so. There are many who do so in our congregation. They are the helpers, the encouragers. They are the church.

The ministry of our congregation is a shared ministry. Shared by the members and adherents with the minister yes. But the supreme ministry is that of Christ. He ministers to each one of us his grace and his gifts and we become not only partakers of his divine nature but co-workers together with him.

It is not us but Christ who ministers through us. It is a wonder he does that considering who we are and what we are - what marvellous grace!

RMK

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Preachin' Georgie's Prayer

"Preachin' Georgie," was an eccentric evangelist who lived and flourished about the close of 18th or beginning of the 19th century.

On one occasion Georgie went up to the pulpit of a country kirk with a fiddle under his arm. After giving out the psalm, he took his fiddle, and having given the precentor the keynote, accompanied him right through the psalm.

Observing some tittering among the congregation, Preachin' Georgie took occasion in his prayer to express himself in this way:

"Good Lord, Thy people - Thine own peculiar chosen people of old - were wont to praise Thee with tabor, and with harp, and with sackbut, and with psaltery.

And Thy douce and loyal servants were seen dancing and skipping, and snapping their fingers to Thy praise; and weel were they rewarded for it.

But nowadays, nothing will serve us but sighing and groaning and squeaking and howling out dismal psalm tunes, wi' feet nailed to the yirth, an' faces an ell lang, an' meikle disloyalty in our hearts after a'.

Gif Thy blessing reach us, it maun surely be mair by Thy favour than our ain guid guiding, I trow."

**From "The Auld Kirk And Its Worthies"
by Nicholas Dickson**



ZACCHÆUS, MAKE HASTE,
AND COME DOWN. LUKE 10.5

Kenneth of the Songs

The Rev. Kenneth McLeod of Gigha often stayed in the Manse. The Padre and my mother considered him one of their greatest friends.

He was small and thin, with a narrow brown face and a black Victorian moustache, and his glistening, deep-set brown eyes could show gaiety and sadness, mischief and compassion, all in the space of about thirty seconds.

At the age of twenty-two he was told he had consumption and only a year to live. At all costs he must give up smoking. Sixty-one years later, kippered with cigarette smoke, he died peacefully and happily, with a lifetime of magic behind him. "Only the good die young," he used to tell us children, "so we're all right!"

Some of the stern, black ministers shook their censorious heads and called him *Coinneach nan Oran*, 'Kenneth of the Songs', in sarcastic disapproval of his lightsome ways. Their conception of religion was harsh and bleak. Kenneth's was different, as is shown by my favourite among his poems:

Dance to your shadow

when it's good to be living, lad.

Dance to your shadow

when there's nothing better near you.

Dance to your shadow

when it's sore to be living, lad.

Dance to your shadow

when there's nothing better near you.

Once, at Assembly time, he invited the Padre and my brother Kenneth (then, as now, minister of Kenmore in Perthshire) to come and see him at his cousin's flat, where he was staying in Edinburgh. When his visitors arrived he was nowhere to be found. Then his cousin spotted a note on the tea-table in the living-room :

'Please give the MacVicars my apologies. I have been called away to an ecumenical conference.'

With her kettle on the boil, his cousin was mortified. 'Oh, damn that Kenneth!' she said. 'You never know for two minutes what he's going to do next!'

'You're right there!' came a voice from under the table, and Kenneth crawled out, laughing all over his face.

He was eighty at the time.

Kenneth MacLeod was in love with people. He was also in love with life, perhaps, in a way, because he lived his own on a lot of borrowed time.

**From "Salt in My Porridge: Confessions
of a Minister's Son" by Angus McVicar. ©
Jarrols Publishers. 1971.**

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Notes From The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on 20th February. We had a long meeting with lots of items on the agenda but there was plenty to encourage us as a congregation.

Robert Nicol

Linkage with Olig

We were joined at the start of our meeting by Myrtle Gillies, the Deputy Convenor of the Presbytery Planning Committee.

It is five years since the Presbytery Plan was adopted and the committee are carrying out a 'grass roots' review of how it has gone so far.

The most obvious outcome for us was our linkage with Olig – which at some time is supposed to become a full union - and Myrtle was interested to hear from us how it is working out.

Our feeling is that the linkage has worked quite well and we are getting to know each other, particularly through the joint Nominating Committee. However, we didn't feel we had done very much yet to foster closer working and we should be discussing with Olig how we can do more together.

We continue to support the plan overall, which we see as an essential response to the lack of full-time ministers.

A related piece of good news is that the Olig manse has now been sold which clears another hurdle out of the way.

Youth Work

We were very pleased and much encouraged to hear about the good work going on amongst the youth of our church, led by Jill McKain.

We confirmed Jill as Youth Leader and gave our warm support to her and the young people.



Parish Assistant

Another feature of the Presbytery Plan was the creation of three new posts for Parish Assistants – one for each of the East, Central and West Parish Groupings. We are part of the West Grouping, along with Olig, Thurso West and North Coast.

In December a number of us interviewed candidates and as a result Shona Johnston has been appointed as Parish Assistant for this side of the county.

Shona has been working with churches in East Lothian and is a trainee for the auxiliary ministry. A management committee is being set up for the Grouping and the convenor will act as her line manager.

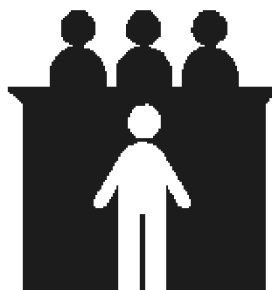
Each Session can put forward tasks for her to do and these will be agreed by the committee. It is important that we don't try to make her a substitute minister – the Parish Assistant is really coming to help us do the things that ministers and lay people are struggling to find the time to do properly, outside the walls of the church at least as much as within.

We are looking forward to welcoming Shona to Caithness in April.

Locums

We recorded our appreciation of the ministries of our recent and current locums, Kevin Cooper and Roddie MacKinnon.

Both have brought something quite different to our congregation's life and we have been blessed by that. Roddie will be with us for several weeks and then we expect to welcome Kevin back from Australia.



Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Body and Soul

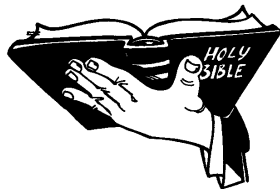
After eight years in charge of the Body and Soul dance team, Jean Brock and Denise Rigg felt it was time for them to move on.

We thank them for all the work they have put into this. It has given our worship a valuable extra dimension as well as providing an outlet for creativity for those who have been in the team. For some of the young people it has been their link into the church.

The group has not folded though because Pauline Mathers, Jill McKain and Susan Bremner have taken it on and we look forward to seeing the fruits of their efforts soon.

General Assembly

It is our church's turn to send a Commissioner to the General Assembly in May. We have appointed Roger Bowser.



Memorial Windows

Some in the congregation (not me) will remember the memorial windows which were removed at the time the restoration work began many years ago.

These stained-glass windows commemorate the fallen from our parish in the First World War. The Session agreed that now the restoration is complete it is time that they were put back on display.

We thought the best plan is to put them in the front vestibule rather than back where they were originally but we will ask the Board to consider the practicalities.

New Members

We were delighted to admit to membership Max, Jo Ann and Hannah Edington. The Edingtons have been attending our church, usually in the evenings, since they moved here from the United States nearly three years ago.

They have been members of several churches in the States and Singapore, latterly in the Heritage Christian Center in Florence, Kentucky.

Max and Jo Ann helped with the Alpha course and Max is a regular at the Men's Breakfast. Hannah will be known to you all as a member of the Praise Group and more recently the choir. We welcome them to full membership here.

Bible Readings

Both Roddie and Kevin have encouraged members to take part in the morning services by reading the scriptures. If you would like to do this please see Roddie – he would be glad of volunteers, and it is nice for us all to hear different voices.

One plea from the Session though – if you are reading, please give a bit of time for those who like to follow the reading in their own Bibles to find the place.

World Mission Project

We agreed in principle to support the Presbytery's project for this year which is to raise money to fund cataract surgery in the Nkhoma Hospital in Malawi.

Each operation costs just £30 but has a dramatic effect on the life of the patients. We will be asking the Board to consider how we go about raising money for this.

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's

Christine's Prayer Letter

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2009 09:40:58 +0545

From: Christine Stone

Dear Friends

There are so many things to be grateful for. The first is that this is being quite a mild winter unlike last year which was one of the coldest. So life is a bit easier and I'm used to having no electricity so enjoy it when I do get it. Everyone gets 8 hours in 24 but 4 of those are sometime in the night and the other 4 can be when I'm at school and only twice a week when I'm at home. But it is good to get some!

Then one of you, who now lives in the USA though I taught him at GBS in Pokhara and remember him as a little boy listening as I read stories with Jude sitting on his knee, has just sent an e-mail saying that his word for 2009 is Rejoice! With the world as it is, is that possible? For Christians it must be. Then I'm grateful to friends who have encouraged me to keep at it, and for new opportunities.

The latest is with a charity/INGO called Room to Read which was started by a boss of Microsoft who resigned his lucrative job after a trekking trip here. It produces superb childrens books, establishes libraries in village schools and gives girls scholarships. I've written several books for them . I've long known that most Nepali children in school can't read Nepali and even if they seem to they don't realise that you can get a story or information from the words. RtR began to think this so got professors to find it out. In Grade 4 20% couldn't read a word and none could understand anything after reading a few lines. So they have started a big programme which will involve producing reading cards with simple stories, pictures to talk about and so on; then

the most important thing will be training the teachers and recording how each child does. The usual Nepali lesson has the children with their meagre government book open The teacher chants a sentence and the class repeats it. They don't need to look at the book. Each sentence may be repeated 10 times, and the same page done till children know it by heart. So getting teachers to teach children to read is a big challenge and I've seen no hope for years. Now there are committed Nepalis who are keen to change things, money to do it and I'm grateful for the chance to share all my ideas and games and methods which are only ordinary but unknown here.

A new challenge for me is helping out in an emergency at KISC where the biology teacher has left with only a few months before A level exams. I'm sharing the load with the head of science who has kindly and very wisely given me the easier topics I have never studied biology or taught it before but am finding it very interesting. Have warned the students I dont know answers to tricky questions but we can learn together.

The country continues to be run by any group that wants something blocking roads and getting it, and a Maoist party busy uniting with other parties to make a big communist grouping. The main source of money is from Nepalis overseas and this is going to go down as countries don't want Migrant workers. But the church continues to grow as it offers hope, which is in short supply, and a solid hope at that!

Thank you for your interest and support.

It means a lot to me,

With my love

Christine

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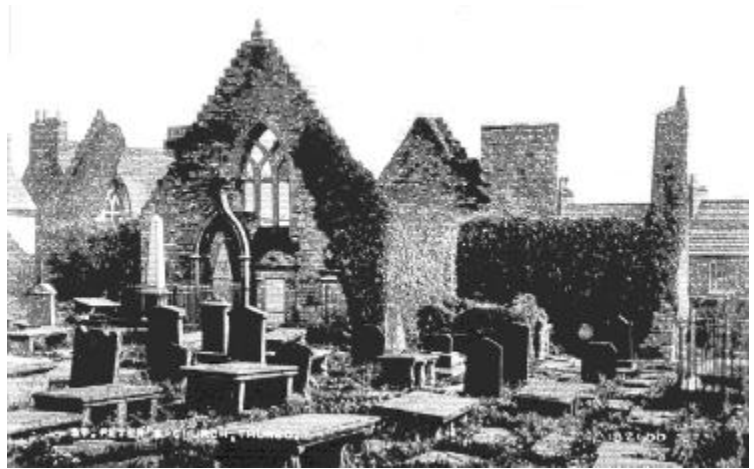
Old St. Peter's, Thurso

(An extract from "Memorabilia Domestica"

by Rev. Donald Sage published Wick, 1899)

The parish ministers were usually subjected to many delays and annoyances by their heritors. I received a letter, dated 12th March, 1830, from Mr. Mackintosh of Thurso, in which he refers to his projected new church. The only obstacle to its erection forthwith was, that the heritors could not unhappily agree about the plan - a most elegant one - which they, with the exception of Sir John Sinclair, thought too expensive.

They would, indeed, have avoided the outlay altogether, if it had been possible. But the dilapidated state of the old church pressed it upon them as a matter of necessity. It was, indeed, one of the oldest relics of ancient times then existing in the county, and was dedicated to St. Peter. It was of limited capacity in proportion to the population, and was besides a tottering, dangerous ruin.



The proposed plan had been for some time on the books of the Presbytery, and the heritors, at their last meeting, had promised to get all things ready for commencing the work, but still it was delayed. He justly adds that, even should he take legal steps, he could not compel them to hasten. It is remarkable that, although Mr. Mackintosh took such an active part in the first stages of these proceedings, and even participated in the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone, he did not live to see the building finished-he never preached in it. In the wise providence of God that honour was reserved for his immediate successor, Mr. W. R. Taylor.

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Dr. Walter Ross Taylor was licensed by the Presbytery of Chanonry 14th Oct. 1828, ordained to the Scotch Church, Chadwell Street, London, 23rd Oct. 1820, and admitted to Thurso 14th Apr. 1831. The last sermon in Old St. Peter's Church was preached by Dr. Taylor on 30th Dec., 1832, from the text "And God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. (Gen. 35.13)"

The new Parish Church of St. Peter's was opened on 6th Jan. 1833. Dr. Taylor joined the Free Church of Scotland at the time of the Disruption in 1843 and preached at the First Free Church, Thurso until the Free Church built a new church (St. Andrew's) which was opened by him in 1870. He continued there till shortly before his death in his ninetieth year, completing a remarkable record of serving as pastor of four churches in one town.

Thurso Saint Peter's & Saint Andrew's



GUILD NEWS : FEBRUARY 2009

Since the last newsletter, we have seen Christmas come and go and started into the last quarter of our 2008-09 programme.

The United Guild Christmas Dinner was hosted by the Baptist Church Guild this year. Many of our Guild members attended the dinner in the New Weigh Inn Hotel and enjoyed the convivial company of members of the other Guilds. The musical entertainment after the meal was provided by Guy and Jennifer Gordon and their daughters who are becoming as talented as their parents.

We held our own Christmas Party on 15th December as our last meeting before the Christmas break. It was well attended by members including Kevin and Jenny Cooper who had regularly come along on our Monday evenings during Kevin's 3-month ministry. They had also stepped in to give us a talk about their life in Australia when one of our speakers, George Gunn, had to cancel, in November.

Rev. Alistair Gray was invited to be our Speaker for the first meeting of 2009. He gave a very entertaining talk on the Christmas Story and Matthew 2, illustrated with animated slides and songs performed by himself and his wife, Fiona.

On Sunday, 11th January the Guild undertook a Soup and Sandwich lunch before Rev. Kevin and Jenny's departure for their home in Australia. Grateful thanks are due to church members who helped by providing some soup or sandwiches and also to those who contributed to a voluntary collection on the day. The wonderful sum of £50 raised will be donated to our Guild's project for this year, "Action for the Adivasi, Bangladesh", a Christian Aid Charity.

On 19th January our next speaker was Mrs Christine Stone. Before her talk, her sons played for us, once again demonstrating wonderful musical ability. It was a pleasure to listen to them, and we thank Christine also for coming to talk on what "Church" in all its aspects means to her and how it affects daily our lives, thoughts and interaction with others.

We are grateful to have so much music in our lives and at our next meeting we were entertained by the Songsters and musicians from the Salvation Army. They visit us every year and are such popular visitors that it is almost a case of 'standing room only' on that evening. They manage to entertain and uplift members with their choice of music and song to illustrate the theme they have decided on for the evening which this year was illustrating some of their preferred 'holiday breaks' providing spiritual refreshment, enabling them to continue with God's work in everyday life.

A different evening was in store for our members at the next meeting on 16th February, especially appropriate perhaps after Valentine Chocolates (if you should have been so lucky!) or still feeling the effects of Christmas goodies. "Healthy Living Eats" was not about dieting, or suffering boring, unappetising food, but about tasty, mouth-watering ways to eat sensibly for our own good. Members had to do some work exercising their minds with a couple of quizzes before trying out some healthy nibbles provided by the Management Team.

There are still a number of meetings and events before this session ends at Easter, so the Management Team look forward to the support of Guild Members and friends and of course would be very pleased to see anyone come along who might find something of interest in our programme. Spare syllabuses are available in the Church or ask a member.

Margaret Stephen (Current Contact Person)

On behalf of the Guild Management Team

Edited by Iain MacKillop for the members and friends of St. Peter's and

St. Andrew's Church Thurso. Many thanks to all who contributed.

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