

## **ROSIE'S LETTER**

**November 2015**

Dear Friends,

Last night I read a news article about alternative advent calendars for adults. They're not filled with chocolates (well maybe very expensive chocolates), but with perfumes, spirits, craft beers, beauty products or jewellery and some of them cost literally hundreds of pounds.

This morning, by contrast, I read the Fife Free Press and a front page plea for Christmas survival packs containing food, clothing and Christmas presents for some of the poorest families in our community.

During Advent we prepare ourselves for Christmas, for the coming of Christ, born in the Bethlehem stable. The Word who became flesh; Jesus who pitched his tent among us.

Advent is a time for us to contemplate how we celebrate. How do we live out Jesus' love and care and compassion in our world today? How do we put the Christ back into Christmas?

If we choose...  
we can be instruments of hope in the world.

If we choose...  
we can counter the voices of anxiety and despair in the world.

If we choose...  
we can fight against the fear that freezes the hearts of many.

If we choose...  
we can tell of the love that conquers fear,  
the love of a child in a manger.

The choice is ours to make...

Yours in Christ

Rosie

## **TREASURER'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2015**

Early this year our annual budget indicated that our income would fall short of our expenses by about £11,000. At the time of writing it now appears that our shortfall is more likely to be £5,500.

Whereas our expenses have more or less stayed within budget, at just over £96,000 for the year, our estimated income has risen. Now it may be suggested that earlier

income estimates were too cautious but I consider that the difference should be attributed to the generosity, commitment and hard work of Abbotshall Congregation.

It is interesting to note that one of our larger commitments this year was the installation of a replacement gas boiler to heat the church hall which cost us just over £5,000. So, we could say that we are living within our means apart from the extraordinary challenge of the boiler. Unfortunately we had little or no options but to install a replacement to comply with present day safety standards. Anyway, the old boiler had served us well over 30/40 years and our new one, being more efficient, should reduce future costs.

### **CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

So, thank you. As a congregation we are contributing very reasonably but we should not fall into the trap of complacency. In our traditional Christmas Appeal there is an opportunity to match the extraordinary cost of our new boiler with some more extraordinary giving.

### **WALKING GROUP AUGUST – OCTOBER 2015**

On **15<sup>th</sup> August** 4 Holy Strollers undertook a circular walk from Ceres to Scotstarvit Tower via Craigrothie and Hill of Tarvit Estate. On leaving the car park behind the Fife Folk Museum we walked along a quiet lane historically called the Waterless Road. It used to be the road from St Andrews to the Pettycur – Edinburgh ferry. Archbishop Sharp came this way shortly before his assassination by Covenanters on Magus Moor in May 1679. Looking across the fields we had a good view of Hill of Tarvit and the monument on top commemorating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. After Denhead Farm we went down a very muddy footpath to reach Craigrothie and then over a picturesque arched packhorse bridge. We entered Hill of Tarvit Estate by the east gate and stopped in a wooded area for a coffee break and watched play on Kingarrock Hickory Golf Course. It was a short walk from here to Scotstarvit Tower which was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is renowned as the home of Sir John Scot. Tower houses several storeys high were the typical residences of the Scottish landed gentry in the late Middle Ages. Scotstarvit has six floors linked by a spiral stair. There is something quirky about it as there is no kitchen, one room has no fireplace and another has no windows. We returned to Hill of Tarvit by the west drive and sat in the Rose Garden to have our picnic lunch. We left Hill of Tarvit by the east drive and walked along a busy main road before turning up the drive to Whitehill Farm. We continued along by some field edges where we had fantastic views up to the Angus coast. We came out on to the Moor Road from Cupar which took us back into Ceres. The Villager Café provided a welcome stop for refreshments at the conclusion of a very enjoyable walk.

On **19<sup>th</sup> September** 6 Holy Strollers took part in the Pilgrim's Way Challenge. This event was organised by Emms International with participants walking or cycling between churches in Fife and raising sponsorship to provide funding for essential

healthcare in Malawi, India and Nepal. Our starting point was Kinglassie Parish Church. Some of the route between Kinglassie and Leslie was on good footpaths but much of it was challenging. Hazards encountered included steep hills, overgrown and muddy footpaths, brambles and nettles. However, the stunning views made up for these inconveniences. A short rest and refreshments at Trinity Church in Leslie was very welcome and set us up for the next phase. This took us across the viaduct over the River Leven adjacent to the Smith Anderson Paper Mill and into Riverside Park Glenrothes. The first section was in the wooded area by the river bank known as the Bat Walk. We stopped in an open area beside a children's playpark to have our picnic lunch. On leaving the park we walked through a built up area to reach Christ's Kirk. We admired the stained glass windows, which were originally in Leslie House, and which now form an attractive feature in the Sanctuary. The last part of the walk took us into Markinch via Gilvenbank Park, a built up area, across the busy A92 main road, through Balbirnie Park and eventually we arrived St Drostan's Church. This church has a very long history as there has been a place of worship on this site for more than a thousand years. We received a warm welcome from all the churches which we visited and enjoyed sharing fellowship with their members. We would like to thank our sponsors most sincerely for helping us to raise £165 for EMMS International.

On **17th October** 5 Holy Strollers continued the Pilgrim's Way Challenge and walked from Markinch to Kennoway. We arrived in Markinch by train and left Markinch by walking over the railway bridge and following the main road past the cemetery to Bellfield Farm. Between here and Windygates the footpath started off by being very good but it gradually deteriorated and we had to contend with overgrown grass, deep ruts, mud, nettles and trailing bramble bushes. The route from Windygates to Kennoway went via Balcurvie on good footpaths with only short muddy sections. We entered Kennoway Den which had a good footpath by the side of the burn. The trees were resplendent in their glorious autumn colours. We stopped for our picnic lunch at the Den Green where we met a group from Kirkcaldy Ramblers. The Den Green was used by the village's flourishing Linen Industry as the site for bleaching the raw linen cloth in the sunshine. After lunch we continued walking through the Den and on exiting it we went to St Kenneth's Church. We returned to Kirkcaldy by bus. The next walk will be in March 2016.

### **Pastoral Care**

The group met on 5<sup>th</sup> November for review and update. The Pastoral Care team continues to visit, send cards and flowers, and provide appropriate support to our church members who may be unwell, bereaved, moving into care or experiencing stressful times. We also enjoy sending cards and gifts to our members to celebrate special occasions. Please do let us know of anybody you think the pastoral care team should know about. Telephone contact numbers are: - Rosie Frew on 260315 or Anne Steward on 262988.

*Thank you for your support.*

## **UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL INITIATIVE to FIGHT TRAFFICKING (GIFT) BOX**

UN GIFT boxes are public art installations about the size and shape of the old police boxes (or the Tardis, if you prefer). They are brightly decorated to look like presents and carry tags suggesting that inside is the offer of, for example, a good job, a better life, opportunities to travel or security for the family. Inside are real-life stories from people who have been trafficked. There are four boxes, one for each of domestic servitude; forced street crime; sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Action of Churches Together in Scotland (acts) hosted two GIFT boxes during the Edinburgh Festival as part of the Scottish Churches Anti-human trafficking Project. I volunteered for a stint and was allocated to the sexual exploitation box at the Salvation Army building opposite the Pleasance Courtyard, a busy Festival Fringe venue. The other box, forced labour, was at St Andrews and St George's West church on George Street. As well as handing out leaflets about human trafficking we collected signatures for a petition to GAP, asking the company to stop buying cotton from mills in India that employ women and children who have been trafficked from remote villages with the promise of a well-paid job. The workers are paid very little and live and work in appalling conditions.

It was an interesting experience. Many people simply walked on by, even although our first words quickly became 'we're not asking for money'. Generally speaking people in their 20s and 30s were much better informed about human trafficking and very willing to sign the petition, whereas my baby-boomer generation were more cynical and often poorly informed. Several people told us that it was nothing to do with the UK and that 'these people' should sort themselves out. We were doing well with the queues outside The Pleasance, but were asked to stop as Fringe acts weren't allowed to leaflet queues, so we couldn't either. One of The Pleasance staff suggested that we asked for passes, which would have allowed us to approach queues inside the venues. These were refused on the grounds that Waverley Care was the official charity for the Fringe. We later spoke to their collectors, who said that there was no conflict of interest as we weren't collecting money. They readily signed the petition. We fed back the information about passes to Miriam, the co-ordinator, who will apply for these in advance if there is a similar event next year.

In the four hours we collected over 300 signatures. Afterwards, with me still wearing my tomato-red acts T-shirt, we had a drink in The Pleasance Courtyard. I was approached by a considerable number of people wanting to know about the project. Maybe that's what to do next time.

Kay Wilkie supplied this item for the newsletter

## **Jenny Featherstone – Zambia – September 2015**

Dear Church friends

Recently I heard about a water scare in Britain where a certain area had to boil drinking water. I smiled to myself to think this could make national news as I have been doing it here in Zambia since 2007! The safest water supply we have here is bore hole water which is pumped up from many metres deep. Even our water companies do not treat water to UK standards and tummy upsets are frequent.

But water is not the main problem at the moment, it is the electricity supply. In a country which has one third of the water in sub Saharan Africa and three major hydroelectric plants, you may think “what’s the problem?” Our 50 year old dam wall on Lake Kariba is unstable and the hydroelectric turbines not in good condition, thus the water levels are kept low to put less strain on the dam. This, plus naturally low water levels, has triggered a huge power crisis which will probably last till the new year when the rains are established again. It is not just the 8 hour a day power cuts (yes, that is 8 hours a day 7 days a week) that is the problem, and many people cope by using charcoal to cook and candles or kerosene lamps when it is dark, it is the knock on effect on the economy that is the looming disaster for Zambia. Mines and agriculture need electricity, but so do small shops, supermarkets, small industries like our carpentry production at Chodort and, of course, hospitals and schools.

One effect close to home was that a misplaced candle set fire to clothes in the house of one of the workers, Mr Chavula. His wife lost all her clothes and the children’s school uniforms. In fact, it is probably the poor who will feel the pinch most. Fuel prices have begun to rise again, a huge increase in inflation (K14 to the pound instead of K10 at the beginning of the year) means that all imported goods have gone up in price. Shops have to use generators to keep open in working hours and are passing on all these increased costs to their customers.

It’s not all doom and gloom however. Our lives at Chodort have been brightened by a succession of visitors. Vicky Williams came over for a couple of months and helped enormously with the marketing and general business advice. She was followed by Rev. Robin McAlpine from Bennochty Church, Kirkcaldy, who was interested in seeing first-hand how everything works here.

### **Items for praise**

For the enthusiasm of all our volunteers/visitors.

For safe journeys so far on Zambia’s notoriously accident prone roads.

For continued orders for our production units.

For good partnership relations with churches in the UK

### **Items for prayer**

For the most effective way to get around the electricity cuts for our production team.

For inflation to slow down and level off.

For a national solution to the power cuts.

For a successful launch of the classrooms in October and wisdom in how we use these new spaces.

For the success of the bid to Comic Relief for funding vulnerable students next year.

With every good wish  
Jenny

### **Thursday Fellowship Group**

At the meeting in September, David Muncey shared with us favourite musical memories. To open his talk David played "All things bright and beautiful" sung by a children's choir. This was one of his earliest memories, playing on his garden swing singing this as he played! He had lots of stories to tell relating to the music played and there was something for everyone to share and remember.

A very pleasant afternoon was shared by all.

At the October meeting Rosie told us about her visit to Peru accompanied by Rebecca. She told us a short history of the Inca people before sharing with us her daily diary of the visit, where they were a party of 11. We started in Lima where we saw some of the architecture and beautiful buildings – in sharp contrast to the dwellings on the outskirts of the town. Many people work from their own homes to try to make a living. Some of the craft work was very simple carrying on traditions with basic materials while other work is more modern. The people who work for Fair Trade are paid a fair price. The Fair Trade trading companies encourage the artisans to produce goods that will sell. For example, this may entail helping them to build bigger looms for their weaving to suit the American market. The Fair Trade premium is used to help farmers buy equipment or new coffee bushes etc. The other towns visited were Cusco and Puno. The craft work they saw included ceramics, weaving alpaca blankets, chocolate products, silversmith, pottery, tea and coffee products – all which are Fair Trade items. Rosie had taken photographs of Fair Trade goods displayed in our stores to show the people how it is displayed here. The party enjoyed hospitality from local families and also visited a school for girls. Before this school was built (with the help of a lady from U.S.A.) girls received no education but now they do and uniforms, books etc. are provided free. Towards the end of the visit they visited the Floating Islands on Lake Titicaca which were very interesting.

Rosie had examples of some of the products made while visiting the various craft workshops and we all had a very informative afternoon and learned more of the work of Fair Trade.

### **Prayer Group**

There are three of us in the Prayer Group and often one of us is unable to attend due to other commitments. We meet on the second and last Sunday of the month at 10.20 for about 10 minutes. Would anyone be willing to volunteer to come to one of our meetings? You are not required to give a prayer but to join with us in prayer.

If you are interested to come on one of the following dates, please give your name to Rosie or to me.

19<sup>th</sup> November, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Anne Gardner (01592 2658760)  
Prayer Promoter

### **Abbotshall Craft Group**

The craft group meets every Wednesday at 10 am in the Kennedy Hall. There are around 9 members at present but they would still like to see more people attend both male and female. If you have a craft hobby or a project you are working on (e.g. modeling, art, sewing, knitting etc.) please bring it along and enjoy fellowship and refreshments.

For further information contact Bett Duncan.

### **BEREAVEMENTS**

We were saddened at the passing of  
Margaret (Margot) Tyrrell in August;  
Isobel Forwell in September;  
David Thomson in October.

### **MARRIAGE – CONGRATULATIONS**

On Saturday 3 October – Ewan Archer and Cheryl Robertson married in Abbotshall.

### **WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES CONGRATULATIONS**

John and Rena Drummond celebrated their Blue Sapphire (65 years) Wedding Anniversary in October;

Jim and Margaret Henderson celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in September;

David and Ruth Chalmers celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary also in September.

### **A BIG THANK YOU**

Barbara Cunningham would like to say a big thank you for the beautiful orchid plant and card which she received from the Church on the occasion of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Update about KART**

The Winter news sheet for 2015 from KART is available to download on our website [www.abbotshallchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbotshallchurch.org.uk)

## **LIFE & WORK MAGAZINE – 2016**

The Life and Work Magazine is again available in 2016.

Why not place an order and read the Church's views both nationally and internationally. The magazine price is £2.20 per copy. If readers wish to subscribe for 2016 the annual is £23 cash, or cheque which should be made payable to "Abbotshall Church" and given to Diane Murray, Life & Work Distributor, as soon as possible. Current subscribers have been notified individually of the above costs. Back copies of the magazine are available in the Church vestibule now if anyone would like to 'try before they buy'.

Diane Murray - Life & Work Distributor

## **The most productive nightmare of all time?**

1600 years ago, Europe's top scholar was an Italian called Jerome; he loved the works of Cicero. One night he dreamt that he had died, and reached the gates of heaven. The gate-keeper spoke to him: 'Who are you?' "*Christianus sum.*" replied Jerome. "I'm a Christian."

"No." said the gatekeeper. "You're not a Christian. You're a Ciceronian!" He went on to explain: "You see, here in heaven we judge people by what they were *most*, when they lived on earth. And you dedicated everything to the classics and the works of Cicero. So we judge you not to be a Christian, but a *Ciceronian*. You cannot enter."

Jerome woke with a start, and made his resolve. Not only did he begin truly to follow Christ, but he bent his academic ability into translating the Bible into the common language of Europe, Latin. It took him years. His translation became known as the *Vulgate* version.

That Bible served Europe for a thousand years. With the Bible's message becoming the foundation of European civilisation, its culture became united. Once take Christianity and the Bible out of Europe - and all that we would be left with is a collection of squabbling, heathen tribes. It's time for Europe - like Jerome - to be woken up again.

How one man's bad dream awoke a whole civilisation...by Richard Bewes.

## **Diary Dates**

Thursday 26 November, 2.00pm – Thursday Fellowship Group with Bob Docherty

Thursday 26 November, 7.30pm – Kirk Session meeting

Saturday 28 November, 10.00am – Christmas Fayre

Sunday 13 December, 11.00am – Gift Service. (Bring a gift for Fife Women's Aid.)

Saturday 19 December, 5.00pm – Christingle Service

Sunday 20 December, 11.00am – Young Church Christmas Service

Thursday 24 December, 11.15pm – Carol singing, Watchnight Service

Friday 25 December, 11.00am – Christmas Day Service

Sunday 27 December, 11.00am – United Service in Bennochry Church

Saturday 9 January, 10.00am – Coffee morning

Sundays 10 January – 28 February – Worship in the Church Halls

**NEXT NEWSLETTER – LENT & EASTER SPRING EDITION 2016**

The close down for the next newsletter will be **Sunday 31st January 2016**. Please send your contributions to Diane Murray on e/mail at

[dianemurray953@btinternet.com](mailto:dianemurray953@btinternet.com)