

'Echoes' of ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH KIRKCALDY

No. 20

March, 1985

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The Manse.
March, 1985


Dear Friends,

A visit to Lochore Meadows Park showed me what great steps have been taken by our local authorities to remove the scars of industrial pollution left over from previous generations.

Grassy meadows, play areas, a loch for water ski-ing, boating and paddling, a nature trail and more all make a very pleasant spot for an afternoon outing not too far from home. Congratulations to those who have seen the scheme through, with the hope of their example being copied elsewhere in Fife, and beyond.

Other varieties, of pollution are not removed so easily, e.g. Noise, one of the worst pollutants of our modern society.

All our supermarkets and big stores have piped 'muzak', as do hotels, restaurants and cafes. Young people cannot do housework, unless the T.V. is on, or music from a radio or tape-recorder.



Even the tearoom of a psychiatric hospital I visited recently had piped music blaring to the extinction of any conversation. I myself must confess to finding it almost impossible to write anything without the hi-fi playing in the background! Noises, pleasant or not are all round us, as much a pollutant if used wrongly as asbestos fibres or nuclear waste. Even the Church is affected. In Scotland there has been the tradition of an organ

voluntary before the worship begins, as if there was a fear of the silence being too much for the assembling congregation to bear. However, in recent times, organists have had to compete more and more with a fairly high level of noise from the congregation as it gathers, with the voluntary being cut short or dispensed with altogether. Friend meets friend, news and comments are exchanged. This is right and natural, but it may be the noise levels in church prior to worship are getting a bit too loud.

Many come to Church to meet friends, whom otherwise they would not see - but others come with problems, fears and anxieties in their minds. Or they bear the scars of illness and/or tragedy and grief, and crave a time of peace in Church before the worship begins.

No-one would want a tomb-like silence in Church. Perhaps a good rule of thumb might be to curtail noise once the organ voluntary has begun, about five or six minutes before the first hymn. That would give quietness for all, with the chance to focus on why we have come to Church and what we want from the worship; and to judge our contributions - not financial in this respect - we will make to the value of the worship.

ON THE "JACK"

by Pres., "Mac" Michie

The Men's Association are now the proud owners of two handsome sets of carpet bowls, and in addition, a beautiful rose bowl trophy.

These were purchased thanks to a donation of £200 from Mrs. A. Darling in memory of her husband, Alfred.

When he was well, Alf enjoyed coming to the church hall each fortnight to do battle and we shall think of him as we enjoy our games on the carpets with the new bowls.

The rose bowl will be competed for each season and the eventual winner will be the proud possessor of the "Alf Darling" trophy for one year.

We look forward very much to competing and the members of the Association extend their grateful thanks to Mrs. Darling for her very generous gift.

We are at present looking into the possibilities of replacing both our carpets and once again extend a warm invitation to any interested member of the congregation to come along and join us each alternate Monday evening. Who knows - your name could be the first on the trophy.

If you are "in doubt" - "call out" and any member will be pleased to furnish the details you require

In passing - the tea and biscuits we serve during the course of the evening are enjoyable as well. Come along - we'll be delighted to see you.

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Jesus used Silence as a time of gathering His strength before returning to the life of the world, to preach, teach and heal.

Many a time in the Gospels we read of Jesus and His disciples departing to a lonely place for this time of quietness, rest and prayer; and even then, Jesus went apart from the disciples to be quiet on His own. (See Mark 1, 35-37 and 45; 6, 30-32; 6, 45-46; 14, 32-36).

In a sense coming to Church is our withdrawal to a place of quietness and prayer. It is self-defeat if we bring the noises of the world into the tranquility of the sanctuary. Jesus described the Temple as 'a house of prayer' (Mark 11, 17) and prayer demands concentration which, in turn, needs a measure of Silence

I would never want St. John's to be known as a unfriendly Church where the visitor or stranger is made to feel unwelcome because no-one spoke to them. But I would not want the natural expressions of friendship to over-reach themselves and change the sanctuary into a talking-shop.

In the Old Testament book of Habakkuk, there is a verse to guide us in our thinking about the use of Silence in Church:-

"The Lord is in His holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before Him"
(Chapter 2, verse 20).

There are plenty of opportunities during worship to make 'a joyful noise' (Psalm 95) in our hymn-singing, opportunities we will enjoy all the more when they make vivid contrast to the periods of silence and meditation before and during the service.

Let God's House be unpolluted by anything spoiling its place as a House of Prayer and Praise.

Yours,

Samuel McNaught

H E L D O V E R

Due to lack of space certain items have unavoidably had to be held over. The Editor regrets this, but hopes the next edition of "Echoes" should see the back-log brought up to date. Let's hear from more folk.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPRING DRIVE

Ladies of the Work Party are busy making arrangements for their summer drive which will be held to the Trossachs on the first Tuesday in June.

The winter's harsh weather has taken its toll healthwise so all are now looking forward to the Spring.

The oldest member Mrs. Watt celebrated her 90th birthday on January 17 with congratulations from all.

Two members, Mrs. C. Rigby and Mrs. Nan Duguid are now home from hospital and best wishes are extended to both.

BROWNIES and GUIDES

New leaders have been found to operate a Guide company. The guides meet in the Small Hall on Wednesdays from 6.30p.m. - 8 p.m. The Company has several girls and more are welcome.

Former Brownies or girls interested in guiding activities should feel free to come to the hall and hear about the interesting programme of activities.

The Brownies - 6.30p.m. - 7.45p.m. also Wednesdays are ten strong and new recruits are invited by leader, Mrs. Anderson.

"KNIT-IN" RAISES CASH

Fourteen members of the Woman's Guild raised £113.70p. with a sponsored "Knit-In" for the Arthritis & Rheumatism Council for Research. The event lasted an hour and was good fun. Thanks go to all who knitted and, of course, their sponsors.

The monthly afternoon meetings are proving very popular and all ladies will be made most welcome.

The recent Jumble Sale realised £112 and again thanks to all concerned.

The outing this year will take place to Inverness on Tuesday, May 14.

MISSIONARY PARTNERS

New Missionary partners are Mr. Thomas Wilson and his wife, Moira, who are now working at the Murree Christian School in Pakistan. They are no strangers to missionary work as this is their second stint overseas. Mr. Wilson is supervising an extension to the hostel for senior boys while his wife helps on the secretarial side. The couple have two daughters, Glenda and Sandra.

STILL PROVING POPULAR

The "Get Together" continues to enjoy a steady membership.

Paper back books would be most welcome as many of the members are great readers.

There was a warm welcome back for leader, Mrs. Nan Duguid, when she was able to attend her first meeting for many months. She showed her determination by arriving in a wheelchair pushed by voluntary driver, Mr. Jim Walkingshaw to be greeted with great applause.

The Christmas party at which Mr. & Mrs. A. Christie entertained, accompanied by Mrs. L. Danks, was a great success.

CHURCH NOTICES

CRADLE ROLL

"Suffer the little children to come unto me"
by Barbara Winton

1984

NOVEMBER 4

Pamela Moira Sinclair, 21 Duddingston Drive
David Douglas Preston, 13b Balsusney Road

DECEMBER 16

Heather Margaret Rae, 2 Lauder Road

1985

JANUARY 20

Adam Alexander MacKenzie, 69 Turnberry Drive

MARRIAGES

"Whom God hath joined together"

1984

OCTOBER 27

Janice Riddell, 1 Lakeside Road to Graham
Garnham, Durham

NOVEMBER 3

Lorraine McCauslin, 15 Cheviot Road to
Robert Lyall, Markinch

DECEMBER 12

Catherine Stewart, 35 Valley Gardens to
Robert Elliot, New York, U.S.A.

A T R E S T

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"
by David Winton, Keeper of the Roll

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OCTOBER 15

Mrs. Janet Lawson, formerly 74 Balfour Street
16

Mrs. Malcolm, 1 John Street
20

Mr. Leon Burza, 60 Pentland Place

DECEMBER 4

Mrs. Gray, 53 King Street

28

Mrs. O. Bease, 85 Winifred Street

ADMISSION by CERTIFICATE

1984

OCTOBER 8

Mrs. Margaret Elliot, 61a Balfour Street from
Carrick Knowe

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DOING WELL

The aim of the new Project committee to encourage more social meetings within the church is going well. Although they have not made fund raising a specific target funds now stand at well in excess of £100. If enough cash can be accumulated it is hoped to purchase a public address system for the large hall.

Events so far have proved popular and forthcoming attractions may include choral evenings, brass band concerts, beetle drives, discos or any other events which might be suggested.

Any members or friends having difficulty with transport for events should contact their Elder or a member of the committee.

The tea and coffee sessions after church services were also very popular. The committee hope these gatherings can be organised on a regular basis with perhaps other organisations hosting this function.