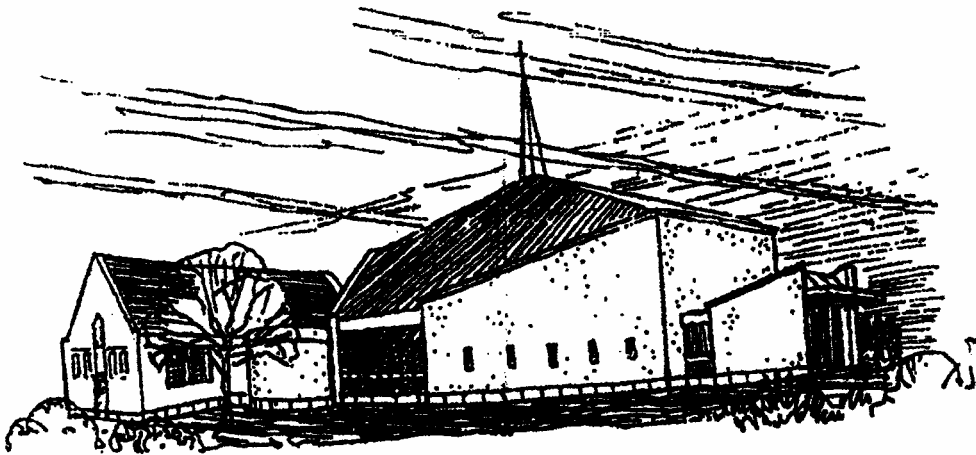

*The Newsletter of St. John's Parish
Church, Kirkcaldy*

"ECHOES"



Melburn Road, Kirkcaldy (Tel 01592 201723)



The Manse,
May 1999.

Dear Friends,

Dr. James Muilenberg, the legendary Professor of Old Testament at the Union Church Seminary in New York, was wont to say to his students, from time to time:-

“Every morning when you wake up, before you reaffirm your faith in the majesty of a loving God, before you say “I BELIEVE ” for another day, read the newspaper with its record of the latest crimes and tragedies of mankind and then see if you can honestly say it again....”

A former student comments:-

“He was a fool in the sense that he didn’t or couldn’t or wouldn’t resolve, intellectualise, evade, the tensions of his faith but lived these tensions out, torn almost in two by them at times”

Given the present state of news in our world, our local communities and our own personal lives, Muilenberg’s recommendations seem to be highly appropriate.

The “War” in the Balkans, with its genocide and ethnic cleansing techniques is something the world hoped never to see again after the Holocaust of the Second World War.

The pitiful sight of the hapless refugees has moved the Western world with both Horror and Compassion. These are people not

in some remote corner of Africa, India or Ethiopia, but in the European Continent barely more than three or four hours flying time from our own homes.

A gun massacre in a High School in one of the most affluent suburbs of Denver, one of the loveliest cities in America, full of some of the finest amenities any society could desire, and always the magnificent Rocky Mountains as a backdrop to the city.

I will never forget Denver, as it was there in 1981. I was nearly given a "ticket" by a traffic policeman for going up a one-way street the wrong way!

My dearest and closest American friend lives in Boulder, a satellite town on the edge of Denver.

The beauty of Denver and its setting somehow makes the massacre at Columbine High School all the worse.

Jill Dando was everyone's favourite TV personality, whether reading the News, evaluating holidays, chasing antiques or helping the fight against crime. Her shocking death has caused revulsion in every quarter, not only for the wanton destruction of such Beauty and Talent, but also because of the Harmful Realisation that such Evil acts can be accomplished so quickly and so easily in our society and in our world, literally on our doorstep.

There can be no doubt, in the light of these examples and so many more almost without limit that there is Evil in the world, and that it is alive and well in all quarters of human life.

In the opening verses of the First Chapter of the Book of Job, God and Satan have a confrontation.

God asks Satan: -

“Whence Comest thou?”

“From going to and fro in the earth,
and from walking up and down in it

(Job1 v 7)

When I left Divinity College in 1966, the then current theological thought was dominated by a clutch of American theologians like Paul Tillich, Thomas Altizer and Paul Van Buren who issued the statement : -

“God is Dead”.

In England, Dr. John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, a decade earlier, had published a slim volume: - “Honest to God” claiming all the traditional arguments for the existence of God and ways of thinking about him had been made redundant by human progress, particularly in the realms of Science, Medicine and Technology.

At the time, all these propositions caused considerable disturbance and disquiet in all strata of the world’s population.

What was never stated openly, to the best of my knowledge, was the converse of the “God is Dead” slogan, i.e. “The Devil is Alive and Well”.

Sixties theology came about largely as the result of Robinson’s idea of Progress, and also the Cuban Crisis of 1962, the Vietnam War, the American Civil Rights Campaign, and the assassination of both President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King.

In the light of such terrible events and crises, people could not imagine a loving God in control of His Creation. He must either have absented Himself for a while, as the Bible occasionally implies, or He was dead.

Little did the world know that horrors and atrocities far worse than those already experienced were still to come, as in Northern Ireland, in the sky five miles above the Scottish town of Lockerbie, and in Kosovo.

Satan has been fully occupied and appears to have achieved great success. He is not likely to be dressed in his traditional costume, nor carrying a large tridentine fork in his hand.

He appears to come as a young man in sports clothes and a baseball cap to plant a bomb in a Soho gay bar.

He appears to come as well-dressed business man with a gun concealed in his pocket to kill an unarmed, helpless woman.

He appears dressed in black trench coat and hat, and sunglasses with guns spraying indiscriminate slaughter to fellow teenage friends.

These are terrible things, but, at the end of the day, remote from us.

When a policewoman comes to a house at 9.00pm to tell the occupants about the sudden, accidental death of two family members, that is a vastly different story.

My wife and I are still trying to come to terms with that news, and again we take this opportunity to express our appreciation and thanks to all who have supported us in any way during such trying times.

We do not know why the accident happened. It is likely that we may never know. It was an inexplicable accident, no more, no less.

Satan for once, cannot be blamed for it, as it appears not to have been the result of malicious interference, either with the persons or the car.

What it has shown is that the American theologians of the 1960's were wrong when they claimed, "God is Dead". From all the help, support and love received it is obvious that "God is alive and Well" and is busier even than Satan in the world, by upholding the weak, healing the sick and comforting the bereaved.

Perhaps there is a case for exploring new ways of interpreting God and His love in Jesus Christ for a society capable of achieving almost miraculous things in Medicine as well as inflicting nightmarish atrocities on that same society.

Job was probably the first Biblical writer to come out clearly in stating the Problem of Evil in the first few verses of the first chapter.

Job was also probably the first Biblical writer to offer a solution, when, in Chapter 19 verse 25, he stated the Supremacy of a living God as well as anticipating the Resurrection of Jesus: -

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand
at the latter day upon the earth,
And though after my skin worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God"

This is the Word from God, which allows us to get up every morning to say: -

"I believe"
secure in the belief that God will live forever, long after Satan and his evil associates are dead.

Yours.

Samuel M. McNaught.

Samuel M. McNaught.

Changes

I take this opportunity to confirm to everyone what I have already stated verbally to the Kirk Session and Board, that it is my clear intention to retire as Minister of St. John's on my 60th birthday, in May 2003, or as soon as convenient thereafter.

For some time now I have felt St. John's needs a new person to lead the congregation into the 21st century, someone with new ideas and a fresh viewpoint on things. I have known of many ministers in the past who have stayed too long in their charges, who have seen a once flourishing congregation dwindle before their eyes and who have almost heard the people praying for the minister's departure. I have no intention of being someone like that. For the greater good of this church I think I am making the correct decision.

There are personal reasons also, not least those linked to my health. Over the last decade I have experienced many problems causing several lengthy periods absent from my duties, not necessarily the best thing for the continuity and stability vital for the ongoing work and witness of the congregation. For this reason I tender sincere apologies.

Apologies, particularly when I was unable to deal with situations and demands in a manner appropriate to them. I cannot see such a situation improving and so I am stepping aside to allow a fitter, more able person to deal with them.

Closely linked to these foregoing reasons is one about which I have never spoken. As a young minister in my first charge at Portpatrick I had close links still with the Divinity Faculty at Glasgow University, and looked forward to returning there as a member of the academic staff.

When I accepted the call to St. John's, I did not think I would be very long here, as my Ph.D. thesis was more than half complete, and that was to be the key to University life. The fire of July 1975 put an end to that, as the years after the fire were, of necessity, filled with more essential work.

The incomplete thesis still gathers dust in my study, a nagging reminder of the past. Perhaps when I retire I will be moved to wipe the dust off it and complete it, purely for my own satisfaction as well as a defence against senile decay!

For these reasons, and a few more of a more personal nature, I will give up the reins of office in four years after almost 28 years which have whizzed by, full of every kind of experience and contact with all sorts of people, both within the congregation and out with it.

For the moment, I want to leave it at that, with the promise to return to it at a future date, with more exact details.

In connection with the above, let me confirm that the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy is conducting negotiations between ourselves and St. Andrew's Church with the hope of effecting a Union between the two churches, once I retire.

If this is agreeable to both congregations, a Vacancy Committee drawn from BOTH congregations would proceed NOW to choose a Minister, who, in the first instance, would be the minister of St. Andrews before becoming the minister of the Joint United Charge on my retirement.

Presbytery, at present, favours locating the new united charge in the St. John's suite of buildings and manse, because of its geographical Position in the town. The St. Andrews properties would be sold and the proceeds held with the General Trustees in Edinburgh for the use of the united charge.

More than this is not known, and negotiations are going on as I write.

I, personally, am doing my best to stay out of things, as I will retire whether or not the Union takes place.

But a new congregation with a new minister would be no bad thing for a new century and a new millennium.

Please approach these matters with an open mind, a spirit of Christian charity, and the courage to embark on a new adventure of Faith for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the continued existence of the Church and the coming of the eternal Kingdom of God.

S. M. McNaught

During Recent Months

By Resolution of the Kirk Session

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 8-11-98 | Mr. David Loch, 27 Oriel Crescent
Mrs Margaret Loch, 27 Oriel Crescent. |
| 2-12-98 | Mrs. McEwan, 43 Longbraes Gardens. |
| 22-4-99 | Mr. Philip Pow, 73 Winifred Street,
Mrs. Jean Pow, 73 Winifred Street. |

**We Welcomed into the Church Family
by Baptism**

Charlene Catherine Burza 13.12.98.
116 Dallas Drive, Kirkcaldy.

Sarah Anne Reid 24.01.99.
108 West Torbain, Kirkcaldy.

Daniel Gordon McLeod 7.03.99.
6 Strathallan Drive, Kirkcaldy.



Jordan Louise Harley 7.03.99.
15 Farne Court, Kirkcaldy.

Lewis McLeod Logan, 25.04.99.
33 Broom Gardens, Kirkcaldy.

We celebrated the Weddings of

Fiona Greig, 171 Dunnikier Road, To 3. 04. 99.
Gary Young, Glenrothes.



Laura McLeod, 39 Ralston Drive, To
Mark Williams, Edenside Cottage, St. Andrews. 1. 05. 99.

We were saddened to Lose



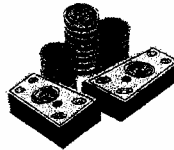
<i>Mrs. Brown, 36 Munro Street</i>	11. 98.
<i>Mrs. Cleghorn, 50 Percival Street,</i>	9. 01. 99.
<i>Mr. Chalmers, 11 Strathkinnes Road.</i>	3. 02. 99.
<i>Mrs. Fenton, 19 Barnet Crescent.</i>	21. 02. 99.

TREASURERS REPORT

For the benefit of those who have not seen the 1998 Financial Statement, I detail below a summary of the General Fund Budget for 1999.

INCOME	£
Offerings	43,888
Other Ordinary General Income	8,927
TOTAL INCOME	51,815

EXPENDITURE	
Local Ministry	31,043
Mission and Wider Work	10,090
Local Congregational Purposes	19,664
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	60,797



DEFICIT **8,982**

At the start of the year, the weekly Sunday Offering required for 1999 was £994. However, as a result of the Spring Gift Day, when a sum in excess of £4,300 was raised, the weekly amount now required has been reduced to £900. At this point in time it is anticipated that our deficit will be approximately £4,000, but I am

confident that this will be eliminated, as in previous years, before the end of this year.

On behalf of the Congregational Board, I wish to thank everyone who gave their support to the Gift Day and enabled us once again to raise such a worthwhile sum for our Church and for the Mission and Wider Work of the Church of Scotland.

Once again may I commend to you the Gift Boxes. Last year we raised £955 in these little yellow boxes. Please help us to raise over £1,000 this year. If you do not already have a box, please uplift one from the vestibule of the Church, and fill it with your small change. When the box is full, empty the contents into a plastic bag, bring it along to Church and hand it to someone on door duty. It could not be simpler.

In March, I received a letter from Mr. Leon Marshall, Convenor of the Board of Stewardship and Finance of the Church of Scotland. I quote part of this letter: -

“I particularly want to express the Board’s thanks to your congregation in meeting your allocation to the Mission & Aid Fund last year. Please pass our thanks to your fellow office-bearers and to the members of your congregation whose givings have made this possible.”

Enclosed with the letter was a copy of the leaflet “Investing in Hope” showing the allocation of the Mission and Aid Fund among the various Boards and Committees of the Church in 1998. So that you may see how your contributions are spent, a copy of the leaflet is enclosed for your information.

Again many thanks for all your support over the past year.

Brian Booth
(Treasurer)

CHOIR

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our Annual Musical Evening arranged for March had to be postponed. Nevertheless, we hope to arrange something for later this year.



Practices have now stopped for the summer, but will resume in early September on a Thursday from 7.15pm to 8.30pm. Once again I make my plea for new members. If you feel you may be able to join the Choir, please have a chat with me over the summer. Better still, come along on a Sunday and meet with us in the New Hall at 10.45am and find out more about the Choir. If a Thursday evening is not convenient, we may even consider meeting at a time more suitable to you!

Once again I wish to thank the members of the Choir for their loyal support on a Sunday and at the weekly practices. Their contribution is very much appreciated by everyone.

Brian Booth

MEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Having had another well attended Indoor Bowling session, we now look forward to our outdoor games. These are held at the Beveridge Park Bowling Green at 6.00pm every Monday, weather permitting. We will welcome any new members, men or women, who would like to have a go at what is no longer "An Auld Man's Game."

Jim Christie

FABRIC



The December issue of Echoes indicated many improvements had been carried out internally to our Church, and I am glad to say their progress is continuing.

The passageways connecting the various halls and exits have been Redecorated, and carpet tiles purchased last year, have now been laid in these passageways. This also includes the Counting House.

Work in the passages was held up as a result of a certain amount of Storm Damage which occurred in December and January, affecting the roof in this area also, but matters were attended to and most of the repair outlays were recovered from our Storm Damage Insurance Cover.

We required to be satisfied that Church and Manse so far as their structures were concerned, were adequately covered by the Church of Scotland Insurance Scheme. This could only be achieved by having a professional valuation undertaken. This was carried out in February, the number of perils covered has been increased without any increase in our 1999 premium.

General maintenance work is always required, and I, on your behalf, thank all those who have given their time and efforts towards this.

Finally, we need garden volunteers. If you can help us, PLEASE give me your name.

Bill Whyte
Fabric Convenor.

GET TOGETHER



By the time this is being read, our summer drive will be past. That and our Christmas party are the two main entertainments of our year. All the other weeks are just plain fun.

We are always looking for new members, so if you have inclinations towards whist, dominoes, scrabble, or our newest game "Uno" (I defy anyone to play it without laughing) just come along any Thursday from 2 pm till 4 pm.

Effie Cooper

THE GUILDS

The Ladies of the afternoon and evening Guilds continue to enjoy each other's company and have held some really successful fund raising events, always with St. John's finances in mind. We would like to thank the members of the congregation for always supporting us by attending our concerts and coffee mornings and giving us the feeling of working together for our church.

Although we are finished now until September, we have quite a few outings to look forward to during the summer nights such as a mystery tour, rallies etc.

We would welcome new members. Don't wait until September, just contact any of the Guild and we will see that you are greeted warmly and made to feel at home – Monday afternoon or evening, on alternate weeks.

Jenny Campbell



RAINBOW GUIDES



"I will do my best to love my God and to be kind and helpful."

We are running with full numbers and a full waiting list, our only problem is trying to make sure that each girl on the waiting list eventually gets a place.

From January to the Easter holidays, our theme was "Our Five Senses" and our crafts and activities were based around this theme. We had two marvellous visits, first of all from Alan Suttie of Fife Society for the Blind and secondly from Debbie and Irene of the Hearing-Impaired Team. Alan brought many items with him that aid the visually impaired such as a spoon that sounds an alarm when the hot water reaches a certain point when making a cup of coffee, a telephone for the visually impaired with oversized number buttons and audio books/tapes, (the adults weren't too keen on the talking bathroom scales!). The Rainbows all had turns at wearing glasses that impaired their vision, which hopefully let them see how useful the aids were that Alan brought with him.

Debbie is a Social Worker with the Hearing-Impaired Team and Irene is a profoundly deaf lady who also works with the Team. They also brought along items which can help hearing impaired e.g. a vibrating alarm clock, a telephone which you can type your message into, flashing door bell, special video tapes and ceefax information. Irene communicated through sign language and although a bit rusty, I was able to communicate with her and soon got back into signing. Debbie and Irene taught the Rainbows how to sing "Happy Birthday" in sign language and how to sign their names. Hopefully the Rainbows will now be aware of what life is like for those with sensory impairment and how, when one sense is diminished, the other senses are sharpened.

We finished off before the Easter holidays by making Easter Bonnets, which were a great success. A lot of work went into the bonnets beforehand, so once again, many thanks to my sister, Karen, for all her help and inspiration when it comes to craft ideas.

Four of our Rainbows moved up to Brownies after the Easter holidays and five new Rainbows joined us. We had a Promise Evening in May when each new Rainbow received her Promise Badge and Promise Certificate.


This term our activities will include our annual trip to the Fire Station as well as a walk along Seafield to see the seals and a visit to KoKo's. We are hoping for good weather, which will mean we can get outside some Wednesday evenings – the big skipping rope is always a favourite with the Rainbows.

As always, my thanks to Liz, Jayne, Lynn and Sara (who is a member of the Guides and comes to Rainbows for the fun of it!). It would be impossible to run without their help, enthusiasm, dedication and talent.

Andrea Ladyka
Rainbow Guider

SUNDAY SCHOOL SECTION (AGE 9 –12)

During the 1998/99 season we've been on an outing to Ten Pin Bowling and a visit to McDonalds up in Glenrothes, which everyone enjoyed.

 In March, after a lot of enthusiastic practising by our talented boys and girls, some of whom can play the piano, the recorder and violin, we entertained the residents of Abbeyfield to a selection of music

and song which included a solo of "Jesus Loves Me" , a rendition of "Will your anchor hold" sung by our trio of boys who are all Junior Boys Brigade members, and excellent piano solos.

The Girls and Boys are very keen to visit and entertain at some of the other Homes in our area during 1999/2000 sessions.

At the end of April we took part in the Forth Road Bridge Walk, along with members of our congregation, who increased our Sponsor money by a really terrific effort. The total collected came to £472.

Well done to everyone who supported us.

I want to say a big Thank You to Lyndsey McKenzie for her great support during the year. We wish her well as she starts her course at University in the autumn. This means that another helper will be required to meet the guide lines.

June Waddell

ST. JOHN'S BOYS' BRIGADE



We are now coming to the end of the winter session which has been very busy and successful. All three sections have taken part in competitions in Kirkcaldy and Fife Battalion Events.

The highlight of the Junior Season was the Football Final for Fife B.B. played at Starks Park. The whole game was videod by professionals who normally work for Raith Rovers and are now available to the Boys. After winning the match I am sure this will be a treasure for the future. The Company Section also had a moment

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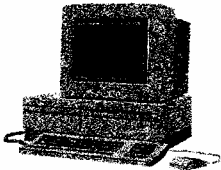
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in History when they won the Scottish Cross Country Intermediate Section.

We are very pleased to welcome two new members to the Company Section Staff. They are Mr. Ronn Gregor and Mr. Roy Daniels and we look forward to the added strength to the B.B.

John Methven.



EDITORIAL CHANGE

As retiring Editor of "Echoes", I wish to thank all members of the congregation who have contributed articles and helped in the production of the magazine. Best wishes to Carolyn Todd who has taken over as new Editor.

Doreen Johnson

What is a senior citizen worth?

Old folk are worth a fortune with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomach.

I have become a little older, a few changes have come into my life and in fact, I have become a frivolous old gal – I am seeing six gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake up Will Power helps me out of bed then I pop in and see Johnny Loo next Charley Cramp pops along and claims a lot of my attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritus shows up and is usually around all day. He doesn't like to stay in one place for very long so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm happy to pop into bed with Johnny Walker. What a life! Oh yes and I'm also fighting with Al Zymer.

P.S. The minister called the other day and said I should be thinking about the hereafter. "Oh I do" I replied, "all the time . On my way home, in the parlour, upstairs, in the kitchen or down in the basement. I keep on saying to myself

"Now, what am I hereafter!"

Author Unknown