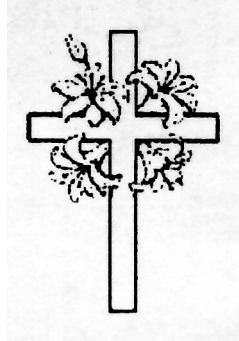


St. John's Parish Church, Kirkcaldy

"Echoes" March 2005



Dear Friends,

Most of us I suspect have a favourite time of year: perhaps you love the long, warm summer days or the changing colours in autumn. The church too has its seasons and Lent has long been a personal favourite. I like this traditional season of preparation for Easter which encourages us to pay closer attention to how we choose to live our life and to examine our relationship with God in particular.

It has been said that Lent is a time for coming to ourselves, of realising the distance we have put between ourselves and God, a time for recovering our "desire for God." For hundreds of years, Christians have sought to deepen their relationship with God through a variety of spiritual practices from silent prayer to fasting (a challenge I'm delighted to see taken on by the Boys' Brigade this year).

Lent is also a time for journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem, for becoming more deeply aware of the love of God reflected in the self-giving actions of Jesus. Each year we make this journey which we know will lead to a cross on a hill, and although the final destination is the same, I hope that each year you find the journey is different.

Towards the end of January I travelled down to London with a friend. It was the first time I had been in London since working there after graduating from university and this was a very different experience. Whilst we were there, we spent most of our time visiting ancient places of worship including St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral- wonderful, grand old buildings with high vaulted ceilings and stained glass windows depicting biblical scenes. Each one has a great sense of history, testimony to the generations of Christians who have worshipped in and visited these places of pilgrimage, but I was also struck by the visible signs of God's people at work in the present, from ongoing restoration work to displays of current parish projects to new artwork depicting the resurrection.

At the end of my time in London I worshipped at Hillsong- recently featured on Songs of Praise- which meets at the Dominion Theatre. The contrast between the exuberant, high

energy, high tech service and traditional worship was startling and a sharp reminder of the very different ways which Christians find to encounter God.

However you choose to journey to Jerusalem this year, I pray that it will be deeply meaningful for you and that you will feel yourself drawn ever closer to the One whose love and grace know no bounds.

Wishing you God's grace and peace this Lent and Easter,

Nicola

Lenten Bible Study on the Beatitudes

Over the course of Lent, the minister will be leading a 5 session course on the Beatitudes. Jesus lived out the Beatitudes in his earthly life and called his followers to do the same. Participants will explore the challenge of living out their message in their daily lives under the headings of living well, living openly, living purposefully, living lovingly and living differently. The sessions will be held on Sunday mornings from 9.30-10.30a.m. in the "wedding room" on 13th and 27th February, 6th 13th and 20th March.

Young Adult Group

The young adult group's first outing to Dundee's Megabowl was a hit. Since then a church outing to Starlight Express at the Playhouse in April has been finalised and there are plans underway for our next rather more adventurous activity — the aerial assault course at Ratho! For more information, please speak to Nicola.

Men's Association Bowling Group

The indoor games continued after the Christmas break. While attendance has fallen, the enthusiasm of those who attend has not diminished. Nicola attended our Christmas game and showed she could be a good bowler if she found the time to practice.

I'm hoping we have more players before the outdoor season starts. So come on lads and lassies, young or old have a go. All welcome.

Jim Christie, Convenor

World Day of Prayer

The first Friday in March brings the World Day of Prayer to Christian communities in over 180 countries; services are held in over 1,000 languages; men, women and young people worship and pray together on a common theme. This year it is the Christian women of Poland who have prepared the service and they have chosen as their theme 'Let Our Light Shine', challenging each of us to shine like light for Christ in a dark world.

At this year's service we are welcomed with bread and salt, which in Poland are symbols for hospitality and friendship, In the words of St. Matthew's Gospel we are encouraged to be 'the light of the world', 'the salt of the earth'.

The Christian church has been in Poland for over 1,000 years. The Scriptures have been a significant factor in Polish faith and life for centuries; the Word helped to nourish people through the Communist era, and in the Solidarity period. As an independent Poland now joins with the rest of Europe, the new challenge is growing secularism and materialism. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest church in Poland and has played a crucial role in preserving Polish traditions and independence. There is a strong ecumenical movement, and the women who prepared this year's service represent nine denominations of the Christian church.

This year in Kirkcaldy, services have been planned for St. Maries's in the afternoon, Templehall and Dysart in the evening. St. John's Church undertakes to hold a shortened service each year both in Marchmont Home and in Abbeyfield Home. Such services are greatly appreciated by both the residents and the women from the Guild who take part.

Offerings from the World Day of Prayer services in Scotland help to fund the work of the Scottish Bible Society and the Feed the Minds organisation, as well as assisting in the work of the World Day of Prayer internationally.

Although there have been World Day of Prayer Services since 1887, the first service in Scotland was held in 1930. This then is the 75th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee, and three services of celebration have been planned for 2005.

Edinburgh — Saturday, 16th April at 2.30 in St. Giles Cathedral; speaker Sister Marie Gallagher.

Glasgow — Sunday, 17th April at 2.30 in St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Cathedral; speaker Dr. Alison Elliot.

Inverness — Saturday, 23rd April at 2.30 in the Old High Church of Scotland; speaker Maxie Richards.

Resurrection: There are times when all being darkness and loss,
There is nothing for it but to pick up my cross
And dance with it.

Ann Lewin

MORE OF OUR HISTORY - Mary Sherrard

Thanks to papers recently recovered by Mr. Walter Simpson, we are able to learn more of the beginnings of St. John's Church, and to get a glimpse of a bit of church life in Kirkcaldy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

At that time seat-letting — 'sittings' — was the practice in churches. Many will remember the procedure. A family paid 'rental' for a pew, which then had attached to it a card bearing that family's name. A pew was reserved for the Manse family, and some pews were left unmarked 'to provide for an adequate number of free sittings for the accommodation of the poor of the Parish'. The Congregational Board of St. John's Church operated a system such as this until the end of 1965.

Before the coming of church newsletters and magazines, it was the practice of ministers to write a single sheet 'supplement', which was inserted in the pages of the Life and Work magazine of the national church. This was distributed to members.

One such supplement from Kirkcaldy Parish Church, dated April 1899, gave the thinking behind the 'Proposed Church Extension in the District of Balsusney Road'. Five reasons were given by the Kirk Session for the purchase of a site on Meldrum Road for the new church.

1. There was now a population of 3,600, even perhaps 4,000, 'beyond the railway'.
2. It had been found that of Presbyterian population there, a majority belonged to the Church of Scotland.
3. Of these, a number had come from various parts of the county and had as yet no definite local church connection.
4. Of the Parish Churches in the burgh, Abbotshall had more communicants than sittings; Pathhead, St. James and Inveriel were full; there was difficulty in providing for new families.
5. It was the view of the Home Mission Committee that the present Kirkcaldy Parish Church could not provide for the large and increasing population in the part of the parish beyond the railway. 'Even if we had fullest power over our pews, people will not go so far for accommodation. We have enough to do to get many to go to church on any terms. They will not go unless it is at hand.'

A committee was formed to consider the project. The church would be in the form of Nave and Transept, and would be built gradually as funds were provided. We know from the recent history booklet about St. John's, that the Nave was completed in 1908. It was not until 1959 that the Transept was built and dedicated. (But between those years much building took place — a gallery, a manse, a chancel, a suite of halls).

A further supplement from Kirkcaldy Parish Church, dated July 1909, pays tribute to the enthusiastic fund-raising of St. John's congregation, and to marked success achieved by the minister, Rev. R.B. Wiseman, who in five months added 120 to the roll, giving a membership of nearly 420. 'This result is abundant justification of the policy of building in this district of the parish'.

Presbytery

The Presbytery of Kirkcaldy is a Court of the Church of Scotland between the General Assembly of the Church at national level and the Kirk Session at local level. The Presbytery is made up of the Minister and Presbytery elder from each congregation with retired ministers attached to the Presbytery, a balancing number of elders and a range of corresponding members from different branches of the Church. St. John's is represented by Rev. N. Frail and Sandy Rae as Presbytery elder, John Wooton serves as an additional elder and Janet Ferguson as a corresponding member. Meetings are constituted by the Moderator and are fairly formal. Members stand for the entry of the Moderator, a hymn or psalm is sung without accompaniment and there is usually a reading from the Bible. Members stand for the opening prayer and again for the benediction. Normally Presbytery meetings are held in public but occasionally move into private session. At present the Moderator is the Rev. R. Baxter of St. Kenneth's and Presbytery Clerk is A. Moore of Leven Parish Church. The business of the meeting is set out on the agenda, which is sent to all members and reports are made by the committees' convenors. These committees cover many varied topics which relate to the life of the Church.

The Church and Community committee has recently reported on the continuing concern for both the direct and indirect victims of Aids, famine, political repression on an international level and at a local level the Affect of Domestic Abuse on Children.

The Congregational Development committee is responsible for Superintendence. This is where a church is visited by representatives of Presbytery and a report is sent back to Presbytery. St. John's received their visit during January and February. This committee also advises on Child Protection issues, training of elders, youth education and wider elements of the Church Without Walls report.

The Ministry committee covers the placement of students for the ministry and can offer advice to churches on how to use all the talents available in the congregation in the conduct of worship.

Resources and Reappraisal is involved with many aspects of the work of the church. This committee has drawn up a long term plan for Presbytery. Within this committee ministerial vacancies, fabric matters, Congregational allocations to the Mission and Renewal Funds are some of the many responsibilities of this very important committee.

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

The financial result for 2004 was excellent, with a small surplus of £2. Thank you all for your continued financial support. I detail below an abbreviated summary of the Financial Statement for 2004. Full copies of the Statement (along with the Budget for 2005) may be uplifted from the vestibule of the Church. If you have any questions, please let me know, and I shall be delighted to answer them.

Abbreviated Financial Statement 2004

Where did the money come from?

	£
Weekly Freewill Offering Envelopes	40,500
Tax reclaimed	7,200
Open Plate	1,500
Other offerings, donations and Gift Days	3,850
Regular Fund Raising Events	3,850
Congregational Organisations	4,000
Weddings	550
Gift Boxes	850
Miscellaneous (use of premises, Sunday Coffee, Quizzes etc.)	2,150
TOTAL INCOME	£64,450

Where did the money go?

	£
National Ministry Fund	29,100
Mission and Wider Work	10,950
Repairs and Maintenance	2,050
Insurance and Council Tax	3,900
Heating and Lighting	2,550
Local staffing costs (inc. Minister's expenses)	10,100
Upkeep of grounds	1,650
Miscellaneous	4,150
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£64,450

TOTAL INCOME = TOTAL EXPENDITURE

So what about 2005?

Detailed below is an abbreviated version of the Budget for 2005 which has been approved by the Congregational Board.

Abbreviated Budget 2005

	£
Offerings	53,066
Other Ordinary General Income	12,351
TOTAL	£65,417
	£
National Ministry and Mission & Wider Work	40,285
Local Staffing Costs	10,887
Building Costs	13,285
Other Local Costs	4,794
TOTAL	£69,251
DEFICIT FOR 2005	£3,834

The Budget has been prepared as follows;

- Assuming the Offerings will remain at the 2004 level
- Assuming there will be a Gift Day 2005
- Assuming the Social and Fund Raising Team will raise at least £2,500

To eliminate the estimated deficit of would require an increase of approximately 7% in our Offerings. This will be discussed by the Finance Committee and the Congregational Board.

FREEWILL OFFERING ENVELOPES 2005-2006

To reduce costs many numbers have been reallocated. It would be helpful, if, from 3 April 2005, members would use their recently received envelopes. Thank you.

GIFT AID

The Gift Aid scheme continues to be a vital part of our Christian Giving. If you are a UK tax payer you can add 28% to your giving by signing up to this scheme. After signing a form you do nothing!! We are able to claim back the tax from your giving to the Church.

Many of our Congregation now use standing order to give to the Church, no more rummaging for money on a Sunday morning!!

If you would like more details about either of these schemes, please speak to Audrey O'Malley after Church any Sunday, or contact her on 266169.

Thank you to all who are already using the above.

Audrey O'Malley

Gift Aid Treasurer

Fabric Committee

2004

With our new Minister settling in at the Manse it was clear that several items of work should be put in hand there as a priority and over the year we have completed two main projects internally, the fitting of thermostatic valves to radiators and the installation of a burglar alarm, while externally the Manse has benefited from the tidying up of the grounds and hard landscaping (including dog fencing!) for which my thanks go to all who participated in this work, including our Minister.

Whilst concentrating on the Manse, the Church and Halls complex have received very little attention. However, a small number of alterations were carried out during the year to form an office in the Vestry area previously known as "The Beadle's Room" and we now have a fully functioning office including a computer with e-mail facility together with a printer and a photocopying machine.

Meanwhile, drawings were being prepared in-house for the new accessible unisex toilet (the new title for the unisex toilet for the disabled) to be located within our existing ladies toilet area and after negotiations with the Local Planning Authority, building warrant approval was obtained for this work in August. Quotations were obtained from several local contractors and work commenced early in January this year. Joiner and electrical work is now nearing completion and our ladies toilet is currently functional albeit with only one wash-hand basin located in our new accessible toilet. Full completion of this facility is expected to be May/June of this year. Latterly in 2004 it was decided that the conifers should be removed from the Church grounds and this was accomplished just before the start of the Christmas season.

Looking forward we have two major projects to tackle. Firstly, to form a new access ramp to the front of our Church and alterations to the existing ramp to our halls to comply with the new Disabled Access Regulations. The second project, for which consultation is already underway, is the upgrading of our kitchen.

R. Sellars, Fabric Convenor

ACTFAST 2005

What began as badgework for the Junior Section Boys, ended up with 28 boys and a rota of 12 adults having fun, raising money for a good cause and marking Lent in a meaningful way by fasting for up to 20 hours. The boys competed in chess, darts, hockey and table tennis competitions, and were also given a table tennis demonstration in a match between Nicola and Margaret Simpson. At the same time, Walter Simpson was giving the older boys some driving lessons (golf, that is!) in the main hall. When the junior boys arrived, we had a Blankety Blank quiz, which was a good icebreaker and a lot of fun. Some of the boys were involved in making a composter which will remain behind the church for the next year. We hope the boys will bring waste, which can be recycled into compost for the church gardens. Nicola gave us a talk on Lent, and we all took a lesson from that. Next on the programme was the musical spot when we were entertained by the praise band from St. Ninian's in Glenrothes. This proved to be a hit with the adults as well as the boys — they even joined in the praise! They had free time after that when they were allowed to play their own music, or their computer games, play board games or make up a jigsaw. At 10.00pm, ahh... silence. Well, almost. At 10.00am in the morning, after prayer, we broke our fast — AND HOW!!!

I don't know at this stage exactly how much was raised in sponsorship, but I'm sure that Domasi Mission Secondary School in Malawi will benefit in a big way as a result of our small effort. Boys and adults all benefited from this event in some way, and the officers would like to thank everyone who was coerced, er,,, who helped to make it such a success. To those who donated to our cause, and to those stalwarts who just seem to turn up where they're needed and get their sleeves up, we are so grateful.

Dianne Waddell, OC Junior Section Boys' Brigade

GET TOGETHER

I told you in the Christmas Echoes what you were reading would most likely be past. Well hopefully, here is an item which is perhaps still in the future. I refer to our "Tea Afternoon" which is being held around about March or April — keep your eye on the intimations.

As you are aware we support various charities etc. and this year our chosen good cause is the Tsunami Appeal. So please come along and bring all your friends. We would like to see not only all the tables filled, but also a queue at the door to come in. Our only stipulation is that you give a donation of £1 minimum please.

Since our last written contribution, the club has lost a very dear friend in Mrs. Clark, who, although not a church member, contributed in every way she could. Our condolences also go to Mrs. Ina Michie and the family of the late Miss Isa Page who came regularly for her game of Scrabble when she was able.

The membership is slowly being depleted in several ways, mainly by death, but there has been a lot of illness in recent months and some have had to go into eventide homes or leave the town to be near relatives. So you see, we do need YOU very much. If you are free on a Thursday afternoon even irregularly, you are assured of a warm welcome between 2pm and 4pm

The first forty years of life give you the text, the next thirty supply the commentary.

In Rochester Cathedral.

CHRISTIAN AID — Angela Stewart

Kirkcaldy Christian Aid Committee, which consists of a representative from most churches in Kirkcaldy celebrated the Week of Christian Unity in a 'Trade for Life' evening in Torbain Church on 21 January, 2005. Congregations from all churches were invited. Thank you to all from St. John's who attended.

Our guest speaker was Marjorie Clark, the Christian Aid Area Co-ordinator for Fife, Central and North Scotland, who is currently based at Perth, and who gave a very interesting talk. Marjorie started by saying how we have all been appalled at the awful devastation caused by the tsunami and the plight of those who have lost family, homes, livelihood and hope, yet people are now talking about the second wave — the wave of solidarity and public generosity from all over the world. She also assured everyone that the money given is supporting the work of our partners particularly in India and Sri Lanka. It is a sad truth that the same number of people die in Asia, Africa and Latin America — every week — from poverty related illnesses and disease — poverty which is itself exacerbated by the continuing inaction of world leaders on issues like International Trade, Debt and Aid. It is the equivalent of a man made tsunami every week and the livelihood of millions of poor people are going to be affected by decisions on trade and finance - decisions which will be made by the leaders of the richest countries in the world. We have the chance to act as an early warning system to our politicians and leaders.

Marjorie then made us aware of the Make Poverty History Campaign which is focusing on Aid, Finance and Debt and was brought together by over 100 groups — Christian Aid, Tearfund, Churches, trade unions, youth organisations and celebrities, in mobilising popular support for action on international development issues, particularly trade, aid and debt. They have come together because 2005 is a year of unprecedented opportunity for UK leaders to influence key decisions in the G8 (held in Gleneagles in July), the EU, the IMF and the World Bank.

Every country depends on international trade but because world trade rules were made by the rich countries, they are not helping the poor. Poor countries are being forced to open up their markets and this results in local markets being flooded with cheap food from countries where farmers receive subsidies and industry is highly mechanised, resulting in local producers being undercut or unable to sell their produce. We are calling for Trade Justice — not Free Trade. The poor countries should be allowed to choose their own economic policies and be able, if so desired, to protect their own producers and infant industries.

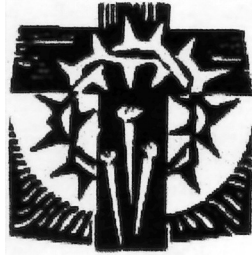
Marjorie ended by saying that working together for justice is what the churches do really well and whatever denomination — we share a common faith in Christ. "I have come to bring good news to the poor and to set at liberty the oppressed." Few are more oppressed than those who are bowed down under the weight of poverty in our present unfair world.

After a very interesting question and answer time a light supper was provided by the Christian Aid Committee and Bruce Stuart from the Fair Shares shop in Burntisland provided a stall selling Fair Trade goods.

Dear Lord, So far today am I doing all right? I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I have charged nothing on my credit card. But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think I will really need your help then.

Whether we gaze with longing into the garden or with fear and trembling into the desert, of this we can be sure — God walked there first!. And when we who have sinned and despoiled the garden are challenged now to face the desert, we do not face it alone. Jesus has gone there before us to struggle with every demon that has ever plagued a human heart. Face the desert we must if we would reach the garden, but Jesus has gone there before us.

James Healy, "*Starting Point*"



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday

A traditional Palm Sunday service with procession of palms

20th March at 11.00 a.m.

Wednesday Open Church

The church will be open for those seeking a quiet place to pray or reflect brief series of prayers and reading at 12.30 p.m.

You are invited to come and go as your schedule allows.

23rd March from Noon to 1 p.m.

Maundy Thursday joint service with St. Andrew's Church

An informal communion service when we remember Jesus' last supper with the disciples.

24th March at 7.30 p.m. (St. Andrew's Church)

Good Friday joint service with St. Andrew's Church

A traditional evening service when we recall Jesus' passion.

25th March at 7.30 p.m. (St. John's Church)

Easter Sunday

A joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord.

27th March at 11 a.m.