

Dates for the Diary (please remember these in prayer)

January

Friday 1	New Year's Day service at 11am in the hall
Friday 8	Free light lunch from 12-2pm resumes today and continues weekly
Monday 11	Drop in from 2-4pm resumes today and continues weekly
Friday 15	Ladies' meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm
Saturday 30	Kirk Session meets at 10am in the Session room

February

Tuesday 2	Men's meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm. Iain McGill, Conservative candidate for Leith and North Edinburgh speaks on 'what the Bible says about political involvement'
Saturday 6	Breakfast in the hall at 9.30am followed by open prayer meeting
Sunday 14	Communion service taken by the Minister Congregational meal after the morning service
Friday 19	Ladies' meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm
Saturday 20	Deacons' Court meets at 10am
Sunday 21	Rev John Macpherson preaching. Colin preaching in Falkirk
Sunday 28	Hugh Ferrier, 1 st Year Free Church student, preaching. Colin at Leverburgh Communion

Free Church of Scotland

Leith

Elder Memorial

2010 Newsletter
January – February



I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept
the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)

From the Manse

Dear Friends,

As we begin both a new year and a new decade, may I say to you all, 'The Lord be with you; the Lord bless you' (Ruth 2. 4).

One of the things that I really love about New Year is that it's the one time in the year when it is appropriate to speak to people who would on every other day of the year be complete strangers!! To wish them a 'happy New Year' is totally acceptable and always evokes a similar response; I love it; communicating good wishes to fellow human beings, every one of us united together in this one fact – we are all made in the image of God!!

But what do we mean when we say 'a happy New Year'? Do we mean that we hope we will be happy all the year round? That God will make us happy and only give us happy circumstances in 2010? Apart from the fact that life itself teaches us this is highly unrealistic to wish for, the Bible tells us that it is sometimes, and maybe even more often, as a result of the sad times that we come to know and experience the Lord Jesus giving us strength and support and comfort so that we come through tough times actually stronger, better Christians! (Ps 119. 67; 1 Peter 1. 6-7; 2 Tim 4. 7)

When I think of bidding someone a happy New Year, it reminds me of the story of Ruth in the Bible. She was to marry a man called Boaz who owned fields and servants who worked the fields; and as he was passing through the fields one day Boaz called out to his workers, 'The Lord be with you', and they replied, 'the Lord bless you' (Ruth 2. 4). It's lovely to read of what is essentially an employer-employee relationship being as good as this, isn't it? What they were communicating was the same thing, expressed in different ways – the two greetings were synonymous. Boaz's wish for the Lord to be with his workers was reciprocated in their wish for the same thing for him – that the Lord would bless him. The Lord's blessing you means the Lord being with you.

So I think that when bid someone 'a happy New Year' what we are saying is 'the Lord bless you in this year' because the word 'bless' in the Bible translates a word that can mean 'happy' (Ps 1.1 and the beatitudes in Matt 5), but also a word that means 'may the Lord prosper you' (Nu 6. 24-26). Two words which relate to one another in that when the Lord is prospering you primarily in a spiritual way, you will know happiness ... even if that means times are hard and circumstances are unfavourable. We may not rejoice in our hard times, but whatever our circumstances we can rejoice in the Lord (Phil 4.4; Habakkuk 3. 17-18).

Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to David and Chrissie Bryce who celebrated 60 years of marriage on 1 December. We thank the Lord for blessing them with long life and a long marriage. May He continue to bless and keep them for many more years.



Birthdays

We wish a happy birthday to the following children who have birthdays in January and February: in January, Catriona Cullen who will be 9 on the 10th, Eloise Bulbeck will be 3 on the 22nd and Anna Maria Stewart will be 8 on the 29th. In February, Sarah-Jane Bulbeck will be 6 on the 21st and Martha Cuniffe will be 9 on the 25th.

Free Church Youth Camps

Many of you will be aware of the great blessing the Youth camps have been over the years and the significant role they have had to play in the conversion of many young people. We give thanks to God for that and pray that they will continue to have an even greater impact on the lives of young people.

The Camps Supervisor, Rev Colin Morison, has asked to let congregations know that it is possible for individuals to provide financial support to the Camps to enable the leaders and cooks to assist in the way they do without having to pay for themselves to be there. Many of the helpers are students and find it difficult to fund their fees for camp, and after all they are giving up a week and sometimes more of their time to help run the camp.

So if you would like to financially support the work of the Camps then donations forms are available on the table in the entrance foyer.

Women's Meeting

The final meeting of 2009 was on 20 November when Eleanor Robertson came to speak to us. This was to be her last meeting as a TEAR craft representative, a role she had been playing for many years. Funnily enough when the Women's meeting started up following the start of Colin's ministry in Leith, the first speaker at the meeting was Eleanor and she has been at our meeting once every year since.

As usual Eleanor had the opportunity to sell TEAR craft goods on the night, but as well as that she shared something of a project that she and her husband Mickey have been involved in for some time. The project is called the 'Asha' project, a community health and development project which deals with over 350,000 people in over 50 slum colonies in and around New Delhi, India. This was set up in 1988 by a Christian doctor and focuses on empowerment (helping uneducated and underprivileged people to fight for their rights), healthcare (improving health by supporting new healthcare initiatives) and environment (helping improve the sanitary facilities which are the cause of so many health problems). To find out more about the project you can access their website at www.asha-india.org.

We hope that Eleanor will come back and tell us how the work of the Asha project is progressing at a later date.

The next Women's meeting is on Friday 15 January at 7.30pm in the Manse and thereafter we will meet on the third Friday of each month. All ladies in the congregation are very welcome to come along.

So at the beginning of this year, this decade, what I want to say is ‘The Lord be with you; the Lord bless you’. May you all come to know God who came to us in the identifiable, tangible and recognisable form of a man, Jesus Christ, who lived the life of the saint and died the death of the sinner ... and all so that we would be saved, become disciples of Jesus and through thick and thin be able to rejoice in Him.

Your friend and pastor
Colin

From the Kirk Session – Presbyterianism in Action

It is no idle claim that Presbyterianism far exceeds other forms of Church government, having sound Biblical support. The Free Church of Scotland is governed in accordance with the Westminster Confession of Faith, which contains *inter alia* the following affirmative statement: (a) The people have a right to a substantive part in the government of the Church.

This right has recently been afforded and exercised by the members of the Congregation, when it was found desirable that new Elders and Deacons were required. These are not *appointed* by the Kirk Session, but are *elected* by the free vote of the Communicant Members of the Congregation, subject only to the Kirk Session being satisfied as to their suitability for ordination and induction.

During October members of the Congregation elected James Bethune to the Eldership, and Donald McIntosh to the Deacon-ship. The Kirk Session approved these choices, and following the sermon at the forenoon service on 20 December both men were formally ordained and inducted to their respective offices, and given the right hand of fellowship by the members of the Kirk Session.

Please remember them and all the Office Bearers in prayer, as they engage in the oversight of the affairs of the Congregation.

Donald Jack, Session Clerk

Condolences

Mrs Janet Smith who had a long association with Elder Memorial, passed away on Friday 4 December 2009 at the age of 89 years. Her funeral took place at Mortonhall Crematorium on 11 December. We pray the Lord’s comfort and support for her daughter Catriona and son Iain, and their families, in these difficult days.

Dumisani Theological Institute – *Serving the South African Church*

Alistair and **Jenny Wilson** who work in the Dumisani Theological Institute in King William's Town, South Africa spoke recently at a joint meeting held in Buccleuch. Alistair, who is the principal of Dumisani, first of all introduced us to the mission team: **John** and **Elizabeth Ross**; John is teaching Church History, Missions and Pastoral Counselling and Elizabeth helps with correspondence courses, the Bible women and also in the bookshop; **Norman** and **Angela Reid** who are also involved in many different and practical ways. We were asked particularly to remember Angela in work she undertakes in a local soup kitchen and pray for her safety in the difficult situations which can sometimes arise.

Jenny then spoke very enthusiastically of the work in which she is involved and particularly the impact Sunday School training has made, not only in Sunday Schools but also in classrooms, as Christian teachers have put into practice strategies which they learnt from that training.

One of the main events for Dumisani in 2009 was the celebration of their 30th Anniversary year. Then there was great encouragement at the appointment of **Victor Nkatha** to the post of Sunday School Project Worker/Junior Lecturer. He is an academically gifted Dumisani graduate who is also passionate about the church and who knows and loves the institution and its students. His appointment marks the first appointment of a full-time Xhosa member of the Dumisani academic staff. Please join with us in thanking God for this appointment and praying for Victor's ministry.

Alistair then introduced us to their committed team of colleagues:

Hombakazi Tshandu: who is involved with dealing with students at an administrative level.

Lilitha Mshweshwe: who is the receptionist and is also involved in correcting Xhosa correspondence courses.

Nomaphela Kwikwi: who works in the library and has successfully completed a course of studies in librarianship. We were particularly encouraged at this news since Nomaphela was enabled to undertake her studies with the help of funds raised through the Southern Support Group.

Ikho Magodla: who helps with the printing of materials.

Due to the dedication of John Ross and John MacDonald, Dumisani is open to the world! This is due to them regularly updating their web site. Also, as a result of Facebook, Dumisani has "virtual" friends all over the world.

Alistair also informed us about their 30th Anniversary Challenge. He spoke of the significance of a small action, how a very small amount of money can make a huge impact when combined with many other similar donations. Pray that the Lord will provide for their needs through His people.

To support the work in Dumisani you can find out more by emailing Alistair or by checking out their website.

E-mail: admin.dumisani@gmail.com

Web: www.dumisani.org

A Congregational Fellowship

After the evening service on Sunday 8 November, a Congregational Fellowship took place in the Hall on the theme of '*Congregational Singing and Precenting*'. The speaker was Colin Rogerson, an elder and precentor in St Columba's Free Church.

Colin (an obvious musical enthusiast) began with a brief but interesting history of Psalm singing in the Reformed church. His main point was that, until the Reformation, congregational participation in the public services of the church was minimal. The people were spectators, rather than participators: worship was offered by others – the priests – on their behalf. With the recovery of the Biblical truth of the priesthood of *all* believers, the Reformers restored congregational praise to its rightful place in public worship.

Until 1994, the Free Church used the 1650 edition of the Psalter in the public worship of God. In that year, a new Psalter, entitled *Sing Psalms*, was produced by the Free Church. This is a more accurate translation of the original Hebrew, together with many new tunes and metres.

After filling in the historical background, Colin then went through some of the new tunes with us. He gave some useful advice to our precentors as to choice of tune, correct pitch and pace, as well as giving the rest of the folk a chance to sing through some of the more unfamiliar tunes.

It was a most enjoyable evening and a timely reminder of the important part the praise of God has in the Christian life.

Praise the Lord, for this is fitting.

He is good; his praise proclaim.

Praise the Lord, for it is pleasant

to sing praises to his name. Ps 135:3. Sing Psalms

John Scoales