
Leith

Elder Memorial

2010 Newsletter
March – April



Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Matthew 25:37-40 (NIV)

From the Manse

Dear Friends,

I was away at the Leverburgh communions at the end of last month for four days and I thoroughly enjoyed being there. Leverburgh is the second largest village on the island of Harris and the Minister there is Ruaraidh Maclean. The church is under redevelopment status which means it has been given time by the Home Missions Board to grow to the size where they can financially look after themselves by remitting the necessary minimum of £25K per annum.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated in congregations on the Islands usually twice a year, though because different congregations celebrate it at different times, if you so wished, you could sit at the Lord's Table every week for up to three months at a time!! So although as a denomination we do not have Communion weekly, in practice in certain places we do.

Being there I was reminded of the blessing these times are. Visitors from all over the Islands come and attend the daily services that are on from Thursday through to Monday and after each service it is the practice for these people to meet in homes for food and fellowship. The times spent in homes is as beneficial as being in church because discussions go on which are meant to deepen a knowledge of the Bible and how that applies to our daily walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thoroughly enjoyed preaching and hearing the other visiting Minister preaching as well, and as I spent time in homes with these people I was amazed at the depth of knowledge and understanding many of them have. Many of these folk have little or no theological training, yet they have come to grasp theological truth and an experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus through making the hearing the preaching of the Bible a priority in their lives and being in these homes where sharing and asking questions and listening and learning goes on, sometimes into the very small hours of the morning. There is no doubt that being together and making the Lord Jesus the centre of attention and the focus of discussion leads to spiritual growth.

This principle was very clear in a particular meeting called the 'Question Meeting' at which a text from the Bible is read out by someone present whose purpose is to have the text's meaning explained by those present. The Minister explains its context and meaning, and then people present are asked to 'speak to the question', that is, explain from their own experience what it has meant to them in their Christian lives. The text at the meeting was *1 Peter 2:7*, 'unto you he is precious'. I have been a Christian for over 23 years and this was the first meeting of that nature that I had ever been at. I was greatly moved and encouraged and blessed as I heard men in very simple terms speak of their walk with Jesus and how he had become precious to them and why he is still precious to them. What they said resonated in my own experience and heart and it was as if my heart burned within me as the

Lord walked with us through the meeting. Again, the principle of listening and learning from others with Jesus as the centre of attention and the focus of discussion was applied.

I hope and pray that we can apply that principle in Leith in ways that are relevant and appropriate – making the Lord Jesus the centre of attention and the focus of discussion for our good and growth and his glory.

Your friend and Pastor

Colin

Big Sleep Out

Will you give up your bed for the night to make a difference in the lives of others? Why not consider getting involved in the 'Big Sleep out 2010'. Basically you give up your bed for the night and raise money for doing so for Bethany Christian Trust who support homeless people in the name of the Lord Jesus by helping them to deal with the issues that have resulted in them becoming homeless.

When is it?

Friday 26 March, 10pm - 7am (Saturday)

Where is it?

City Chambers, Royal Mile, Edinburgh

You can do the sleep out on your own, or with your friends/family/colleagues. The more people who take part, the more money can be raised to help homeless and vulnerable people.

For more information on how to be involved you can phone on 0131 652 5320, email on sleepout@bethanychristiantrust.com or visit the website at www.bethanychristiantrust.com for more details.

Bereavement

We offer our condolences to Gordon Murray whose Grandmother died recently. She was 95 years old. Please do remember Gordon's mother, father, brother and sister at this time (John 6:68).

Please also remember the Lawton family after the sudden death of Mark in January. Mark had been unwell for the most part of his adult life and yet retained a bright and resilient Christian witness throughout. Please keep Rhoda and her children, Kathryn, Eleanor and Aonghas in your prayers (Psalm 121:1-2).

Men's Meeting

Iain McGill, Conservative parliamentary spokesman for Edinburgh and North Leith, spoke at the first Men's meeting of the year. This was well attended and promoted a fair bit of discussion and debate. Iain spoke as a Christian in politics and encouraged us all to be as involved in the democratic process as possible because, he said, the more we are involved as Christians the more impact the Christian voice will have. He strongly urged us not to be disengaged as that will have no effect whatsoever.

Women's Meeting

The Women's Meeting now takes place on the third Friday of each month. This should make it easier to remember!! In January and February we continued in our Bible study on the topic of *Wisdom*. This continues to be a source of blessing to us all as we meet together to sing, pray and study the Bible.

Jessie Macleod

Food 4 Thought

The first of four '*Food 4 Thought*' sessions begins on *Monday 8 March at 6pm*. We'll have food from 6-7pm and then a very short talk on a particular topic followed by time for questions, discussions etc in small groups. The evening will conclude at 8pm. If people would rather come for the *thought* part and not the *food* part then that's fine.

The focus for discussion each night will be as follows – Monday 8: the Bible; 15: God; 22: Humanity; 29: Jesus

We want to encourage people from the congregation to come along as well as people from out with the congregation. Check out the church website for more details. Flyers are available to use to invite people along. They're on the tables in the hall and the entrance foyer. Please do pray for these sessions that the Lord would be present to open up hearts and minds.

20:30

Over the past few weeks and months 20:30 has continued to be a source of fellowship, fun and encouragement for the students and young adults in our congregation. Meeting every second Sunday evening, Colin has compiled lists of discussion questions relating to the sermons which have proved very useful and have provoked much in-depth debate and discussion. We have also had the privilege of listening to some visiting speakers. We were visited by Dr Lorna Nunn, a Christian G.P. Who gave us an insight into working in the medical profession as a Believer. It was an excellent opportunity to hear how Dr. Nunn approached her work and it was of particular interest to our large Student Nurse/Nurse contingent.

On two occasions we have also invited the congregation to join with us for an interview with the ministry students. Both Alistair MacAulay and, most recently, Hugh Ferrier, gave us an insight into their lives both before and after their conversions and spoke about the call to Christian ministry, what it means to them and how they find life as a Free College Student.

Please continue to pray for us as a group as we seek to know each other more and, ultimately, to strengthen each other in our walk with the Lord.

Donald McIntosh

Treasurer's Report

2 Corinthians 9:7. *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (TNIV)*

First we give thanks to God that we were able to meet all our commitments last year. We were encouraged at the level of giving and especially grateful to have received an anonymous donation of £8,000.

As we set out on a new year there is a revised financial arrangement now in place. We have been asked to submit £26,100 this year to cover ministerial costs. This covers such items as minister's salary, pension cost and student training. This also allows a congregation to maintain a full-time minister. We have submitted £3,400 so far this year towards this figure. In addition to this we are asked to contribute £1,150 as an administrative levy.

We also would like to acknowledge a donation of £1,000 towards our Light Lunch. This means of ministry is a great blessing to many. Furthermore you will be interested to know that we also received another donation from someone else for £1,000 for the general funds of our church. Both these amounts have been Gift Aided which means we are able to claim a total of £560 back from the Inland Revenue.

Roof repairs. Over the past months there has been a lot of work carried out on the roof and skylights of our church. As a result the amounts we have in funds related to Fabric need topping up. You will have an opportunity to contribute towards the Fabric Fund during the month of March. Envelopes for this purpose will be at the door.

The 2009 accounts are now available, if you would like a set of these accounts please let me know. They will be handed out at the congregational meeting later on this month.

Charles Douglas Treasurer

Monday Drop In

This has been going on for some time now and has worked out the way we wanted it to, that is a time for talking and listening around hot drinks and home baking. I would like to remind the congregation that whilst this is essentially an outreach venture I am more than happy to use that time to meet with people who come along to the church and who may want to talk about something. So please make use of the opportunity.

Congregational Fellowship

I hope to have a regular congregational fellowship on the third Sunday of each month after the evening service. The focus for this will be discussions around issues arising from/questions relating to the sermons preached that day or any time in the month. I know that many people have lots of questions that they want to ask, so this will be a good forum to do this in.

Time of Evening Service

The Kirk Session has begun discussions around moving the time of the evening service to 5.30pm for a number of reasons. We have decided to consult with the congregation between now and when we meet at the end of March on your feelings about this. Please do make your views known. This will help us in coming to a decision which, if there was to be any change, would be on a trial basis in the interim.

Deacons' Court

The congregation's deacons meet normally on the last Saturday morning of alternate months. Their main responsibilities are administering the finances and taking care of the buildings. Highlights from the most recent meeting include:

- A welcome to the newest deacon, Donald McIntosh
- A report of recent works carried out on the church building:
 - an air extractor installed in the back toilet, which will soon be repainted
 - an electricians survey, required by law, duly completed
 - repairs to the roof : broken slates, stolen lead, damp areas
 - heavy duty carpet laid in the Session room/crèche
 - checking ingress of water to the boiler room
- Approval of the draft trustees' report and financial statements for the annual congregational meeting, arranged for Wed 17 March
- *Decision to have a special thank-offering each quarter over and above the regular givings.* These will be: 1st Quarter – Fabric Fund; 2nd Quarter – Support of Rahmat's ministry in central India; 3rd Quarter – Home Missions; 4th Quarter – International Missions. With respect to our support of Home Missions and International Missions, everyone is encouraged to take and read if they haven't already done so, the very informative and attractive brochure prepared jointly by these two bodies. There are plenty copies on the entrance table.

John MacPherson

Leith Sunday School Christmas Party

Leith Sunday School had their annual Christmas party on the 12th of December. A good crowd of the young and the young at heart of the congregation gathered to celebrate the end of the year and of course, the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Christmas. There were lots of games, prizes, food, music, presents, balloons; everything a kid's party should have. It was great to see everyone together having a good time and I must admit some of the games were quite intense. All the children received presents which caused great excitement and as sugar levels were already high it was quite an atmosphere.

A huge thank you to all who helped with the party, making food, helping set up the hall, helping with the games and much more, which all contributed to a great day. As Sunday school teacher, I would like to thank all the parents who bring their children along to learn more about the Bible. It is a privilege to be able to share the good news of Jesus with them.

We value the prayers of the congregation for this work with our young ones and thank you for your support.

Christina Macritchie

Engagement

Congratulations to Calum 'Honda' Macmillan and Christina Macritchie who got engaged 2 weeks ago. We pray the Lord's blessing on them both as they plan for the forthcoming wedding.

Birth

Congratulations to Calum Murdo and Johan Smith on the birth of a son, Danny Alexander, born at 11.38pm on Wednesday 17 February, weighing 8lbs 3ozs, a wee brother for Joni and Marissa. Both mum and baby are doing well.

Birthdays

Congratulations to all the following who have Birthdays in the next two months: Fraser will be 16 on 8 March, and in April Theo will be 6 on the 11th, Lydia will be 13 on the 17th, Kate will be 3 on the 20th, George will be 8 on the 24th and David will be 6 on 29th. We hope you have a great day when it comes. Please make sure you keep some of your birthday cake for the minister. He's so thin he's wasting away!! ☺

Dates for the Diary (please remember these in prayer)

March

Monday 1	Drop in café in the hall from 2-4pm and every Monday thereafter. Free home baking and hot drinks and a time to chat. All welcome.
Tuesday 2	Men's Meeting at 7.30pm in the Manse. William Gibson speaks on <i>'My Faith and my job as a Lawyer'</i>
Wednesday 3	Open prayer for men at 7.30pm in the hall
Friday 5	Free lunch in the hall from 12-2 and every Friday thereafter
Saturday 6	Breakfast in the hall at 9.30am followed by time of open prayer from 10am onwards
Monday 8	<i>Food 4 Thought</i> from 6-8pm in the hall: <i>The Bible</i>
Sunday 14	Hugh Ferrier preaching. Colin speaking at Niddrie Mission weekend away
	20: 30 meets in the Manse. Calum Ferguson speaking on <i>Mission Opportunities in the Free Church</i>
Monday 15	<i>Food 4 Thought</i> from 6-8pm in the hall: <i>God</i>
Wednesday 17	AGM in the hall at 7.30pm followed by light refreshments.
Friday 19	Women's Meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm
Saturday 20	Kirk Session meets in the Session room at 10am
Sunday 21	Congregational fellowship after the evening service.
Monday 22	<i>Food 4 Thought</i> from 6-8pm in the hall: <i>Humanity</i>
Sunday 28	20:30 meets in Gordon Murray's flat
Monday 29	<i>Food 4 Thought</i> from 6-8pm in the hall: <i>Jesus</i>

April

Saturday 3	Breakfast in the hall at 9.30am followed by time of open prayer from 10am onwards.
Sunday 4	Andrew Pearson, 1 st year Free Church Student, preaching today. Colin preaching at Dornoch.
Tuesday 6	Men's Meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm. Walter Livingstone talks on <i>what the Bible says about prayer meetings</i> .
Friday 16	Women's Meeting in the Manse at 7.30pm.
Sunday 18	Congregational fellowship after the evening service.
Saturday 24	Deacons' Court meets in the Session room at 10am