

Pollokshields Church of Scotland Glasgow

VISION

December 2009
January 2010

Minister: The Rev. David Black 423 4000
Session Clerk: Mrs. Mary Morrison 632 1659

“He comes
whose advent-
trumpet drowns
the last of
time’s
evangels”

E. Bickersteth
CH4 248



“Hark! Hark! The
trump of jubilee
proclaims to every
nation, from pole to
pole, by land and
sea, glad tidings of
salvation.”

ibid

Advent Sunday - 29th November

Cover Comment is on page 4

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Forthcoming services:-

- Sunday 6th Dec 11am Sacrament of Holy Communion
3.30pm Scottish Asian Christian Fellowship
- Sunday 13th Dec 11am Gift Service and Junior Church
Promotions
2pm Remembering and Hope Service
- Sunday 20th Dec 11am Junior Church Nativity
- Thursday 24th Dec 11.15pm Carol singing
11.30pm Watchnight Service
- Christmas Day – All Age Celebration at 11am.
- Sunday 27th Dec 11am Service of Lessons and Carols
- Sunday 3rd Jan 11am Morning Service.
3.30pm Scottish Asian Christian Fellowship
- Sunday 10th Jan 11am Morning Worship
7pm Hear I AM, New Year New Church?
- Sunday 17th Jan 11am Morning Worship
3pm PCT service for Christian Unity
7pm Hear I AM, New Year New Church?
- Sunday 24th Jan 11am Morning Worship.
7pm Hear I AM, New Year New Church?
- Sunday 31st Jan 11am Morning Worship
7pm Hear I AM, New Year New Church?
-

Copy date for the next (FEBRUARY) issue of VISION will be
Sunday 21st February

The Minister's Message

To a world of instant gratification or compensation, the Advent themes of waiting and anticipating come as a direct challenge of God to our demand that He dance to our tune.

As we are asked (tempted) to spend earlier and earlier to get the things we “need” and the presents we “ought” to give, so there comes a challenge to listen for the voice of God under all the shopping centre Christmas muzak.

What was your best Christmas ever? The best present you received, the best you gave?

The witness of the church, God’s faithful people, is that whilst the answers to these questions may involve trees and lights and food and party, most crucially they will involve people – loved ones and strangers and the blessings they give us and draw out of us.

Christmas is God involved with us as people. God becoming a person in Jesus that he might share our history and we share in His. The birth stories we celebrate in the Nativity all point to the fact that this is something new, wondrously new, which God is doing in our world – becoming fully involved in it.

May God bless you to find somewhere midst all the stresses and strains of wrapping and buying and giving, something of the amazing gift that Christmas is - to understand the hope it is for our troubled world that a child is born who is called “Emmanuel; God with us”.

With all good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

David R Black

“Hear: IAM”

Listening to God in 2010

The first set of topics will be on the theme:
“New Year, New Church – Resolutions and Revolutions”
and will be led by the Deputy Session Clerk Ken Symon and friends.

These will take place in the Session Room on Sunday evenings from 7-8pm starting on 10th January for 4 weeks to 31st January.

Everybody of all ages is welcome.

In February we will be exploring issues of Poverty and Justice, when our present Session Clerk Mary Morrison, former Clerk Alex McCutcheon along with Yvonne Sandlan and Shona Morrison shall facilitate our reflections.

The minister Rev David Black writes;

“ Having had the courage to embrace this listening project, it has been tremendously heartening to see those who have key leadership roles in the congregation take the lead in this new venture in spirituality.

“The energy and enthusiasm it has already engendered is a positive measure of the life of the church and this can only grow as the congregation have the courage to join in as well.

As I said before this is a venture which is about listening and a large roll of gaffer tape has been purchased to ensure my silence during these evenings!”

The theme ‘HEARING’ was introduced by a special morning service on 22nd November. Please see the report opposite.

‘Remembering’ Sunday

There is so much remembering already in November that it seemed right for the Minister to take on board Joyce McCormick’s and Marion McAlister’s idea of a ‘remembering’ Sunday. We could at that service share our stories across the generations and in that way learn to listen more to God.

The fulfilment of this idea was on Sunday 22nd November, when during the service we split up into eight groups, each with members of the congregation, children and leaders of the Junior Church. The children asked questions of the adults of their early life and perhaps gained an understanding of how or why they came to faith.

The Minister admitted that he and his colleagues in the professional ministry were good talkers but that in some ways they had lost the insight into how we can best communicate God’s love for each one of us.

“The Kirk Session will next year lead us in ways in which we can listen to what God is saying to us today. *They* will lead - not me! My job will be to listen!”

The teachers in the church should be telling us not so much how to do things but rather how to be faithful, and how to recognise God’s faithfulness to us, past, present and future, by telling and re-telling stories of faith, stories found in the Bible and in our lives.

If children hear these stories when young, then when the time comes for them to make their own decisions they may perhaps be only able to say “Yes!”



Trumpets

What wonderful imagery there is in Edward Bickersteth's great hymn of witness and encouragement!



Our season of Advent concerns itself mainly with the coming of Jesus at Christmas. On earth there were heard only the angels' voices but surely there were trumpets in heaven!

However the phrase "the last of time's evangels" can equally apply to the Second Coming. About this St. Matthew writes, "They (all the nations of the earth) will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."



Another great reference to trumpets, not in the Bible but in what many would regard as inspired writing, is in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's progress*. It follows Mr. Valiant-for-Truth's farewell speech, "I am going to my Father's. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battles, who will now be my rewarder."

**"So he passed over,
and the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."**

Who could ask for a better welcome?

People in the Bible

Cyrus

God uses all sorts of people in his service. He chose Cyrus, Persian king of Babylon, to return the Jewish exiles there to their own country, even though Babylon was the traditional enemy of the Jews.

Most kings at that time were either 'goodies' or 'baddies', and the 'baddies' were really bad. Several kings' initial action was to slaughter all their predecessor's offspring to protect their own position. And the women could be just as ruthless - Athaliah destroyed the whole of the dead Ahab's remaining family to maintain her power and authority as Queen Mother.



How refreshing it is to read about Cyrus, (one of the 'goodies'). Cyrus became King of the Medes by conquest and then founded the Persian empire. He overcame the mighty Babylonia and became its king.

The Old Testament regards Cyrus as a benevolent ruler. Himself a Zoroastrian, he respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered. His own decree setting out his aims and policies has been regarded as 'the first declaration of human rights.'

'As God's instrument' it was he who authorised the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and ordered the repatriation of the Jews exiled in Babylon.

from **Colin Johnston**

c/o The Scots Hotel
PO Box 104
Tiberias, 14100



The Scottish flag flying over Galilee. A view over the Scottoe Garden. The small turret is part of the Ottoman city walls - I would love to turn it into a small chapel C.J.

The sun gradually edges its way over the top of the Golans, starting to shed its light over the early morning scene. I am still waking up Africa-time, so I am up for the dawn over the Sea of Galilee. It is a magical experience, especially with the awareness that this landscape has been similar for thousands of years and the Jesus and the disciples would have witnessed something similar. Though what they would not have experienced would be the noise of traffic which also starts early.

I have been in Tiberias for a week, yet already I feel at home. Admittedly I was a volunteer here 28 years ago, just before I went to study Theology, so there is a familiarity to the place, though, very obviously, much has also changed in that time. Tiberias itself is, however, still a rather unattractive busy, sprawling town surrounded by the most wonderful scenery. Sadly, a few historical buildings like the old mosque lie crumbling away, litter strewn around it, neglected and unloved.

In marked contrast is the famous (and controversial) Scots Hotel. The historic buildings and tiered gardens making up the complex have been subtly transformed into a modern 4/5 star establishment (I am now about to market the hotel!)- and believe me there

is a special atmosphere about the place. More about that in future letters.

It was the hospital for the eastern Galilee area up until the 1950s, run by Dr. Torrance until his death, then by his son Herbert. The graves in the cemetery by the lake shore point to their commitment and sacrifice. They treated everyone who was brought to the hospital, regardless of religion. Today this is reflected in the make-up of the staff, who are a mixture of Jew, Moslem and Christian - and there is even Druze handyman, Shamir. The inter-faith aspect of being here excited me. I will obviously have an involvement in the hotel, both to the guests staying here and especially to the staff. But there is a small congregation as well - the emphasis being on the small, with only one active member, Joanna, who lives in a kibbutz on the other side of the lake.

Sunday was my first service, and I rather expected that it would only be Joanna and myself, but there turned out to be eight of us. Two Dutch women were tourists (and excellent singers) but the rest were all residents, two of whom had travelled for one and a half hours to come to church. Because Sunday is a working day in Israel, the service is in the evening. This does mean that I have the morning free to visit other congregations. I am looking forward to going with some of the Christian staff members to their various churches in the Arab villages in Galilee.

The Church building is in an ideal position near the front, so we do have a number of people dropping in. It is also used at present by a group of Messianic Believers for they worship on Shabbat (The Jewish Sabbath), and there was a sizeable number at the service, which was led in Hebrew, but simultaneously interpreted into both Russian and English. (In recent years a lot of Russians have immigrated to the Tiberias area.) The believers are mostly, though not exclusively, from Jewish backgrounds, but they believe in Jesus as the Messiah, though they would never be comfortable with the term 'Christian'. I will need to find out more and tell you in a future letter.

Concerning the Moderator

For how long should a Moderator hold office?

by K.G.Ross

I see from the papers that the Moderator Designate of the General Assembly of 2010 has been nominated. He is the Rev. John Christie of St. Andrew's Church, West Kilbride. I am sure we will all want to wish him well in the coming year, when he will represent our Church throughout the country and abroad.

However, I feel that a year is simply not long enough for a Moderator to make any real impact on the job. The Moderator is the figurehead for the church. He is our representative. People outside the Church look to him as the face of the Church. The Media want to know who will speak for the Church of Scotland. If he is only there for a year, he will be gone in no time at all, and a new face will replace him, and then another new face, and so

forth. I suspect there are very few people in Pollokshields who will know who the present Moderator is, or even who the last one was, or the one before that.. How many former Moderators can you name? I bet the only one most people will name is Willie Barclay. Perhaps the Editor will give a prize for the most complete list of Moderators - no cheating now!

“Our opinions are not asked for. We are not represented.”

I heard that one ex-Moderator from Glasgow, when his year was over, was introduced at a civic function as “The Rev. David -----, the ex Moderator of the General Assembly, and Margaret, his ex wife.”

This just shows the confusion and misunderstanding that

our present system causes. When- Cardinal or an Archbishop. Our ever a matter of moral or social opinions are not asked for. We are concern arises, and the media want not represented. We do not count the opinions of Christians, who do simply because we do not have a they turn to? It is invariably a figurehead.

Furthermore concerning the Moderator

The Moderator for the General a hundred of us, gathered round Assembly of the Church of Scot- him in a big circle and prayed for land 2009 was the Rev. Bill Hewitt him. It was quite moving. from Greenock. The previous Moderator was the Rev. David By the way, Willie Barclay was Lunan, formerly Clerk to he Pres- never a Moderator. He was in- bytery of Glasgow. When he left vited, but he declined on the to take up his appointment, the grounds that he had too much to Presbytery had a dedication ser- do. He died soon after. I have al- vice for him and his wife in ways felt that this was a great loss Sandyford Henderson Church. At to the Church, as I think he would the end of the service we all, over have made a great Moderator..

What is Aid for?

“It’s an extension of the ancient proverb, ‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for life’

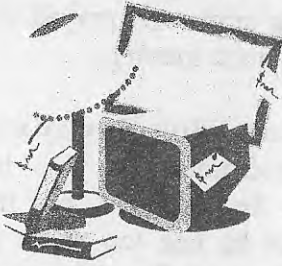
“Aid-funded projects are never going to change the world: only poli- cies can, and that’s why all aid organisations campaign for climate jus- tice, for trade justice, and for human rights.”

Maggie Lunan, quoted in World Mission Newsletter October 2009

Christmas Gift Service

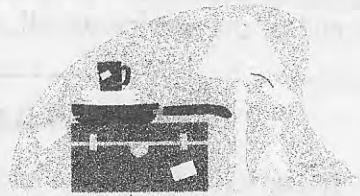
Sunday 13th December will be our Christmas Gift Service, when the congregation are asked to bring gifts for a designated charity. This year the Kirk Session have decided to give the gifts to *Starter Packs*, who are based in Govan and whom the Church has supported in the past.

Starter packs help those who are making the transition from homelessness to the taking up of new permanent tenancies by making up packs of household goods. These are predominantly on a re-use basis but they are very



We have traditionally brought presents for children at this service but as Sarah Findlay, their Development Manager, pointed out it is good for the children to have presents to give as well as receive, i.e. to their parents and family.

Sarah has said “that in addition to children’s presents, which we certainly can pass on to clients, ideal are board games, arts and crafts sets and toiletries for teenagers... for Mums: candles, toiletry sets, perfumes, chocolates, jewellery (not meaning Tiffany!!)... for Dads: socks, after-shave, toiletry sets, watches (not meaning ‘designer’!!)



“We would also very gratefully accept any donations of towels, bedding, crockery, curtains and clothing... we are so busy and last week exceeded the number of clients that we helped throughout last year - I currently predict that we will have helped over 30% more households this year than last buy Christmas Eve.”

continued →

As before please don't wrap the gifts as it is then much easier to distribute them appropriately.

You have been so generous at this service in the past and I am sure this will be no exception as this is a very worthwhile charity. Further info available at www.starterpacks.org.uk



Thank you,

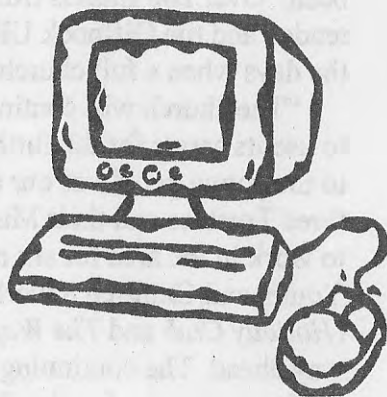
E. Mary Morrison

Help!

A New Computer for the Church

As you may be aware the Church's 10 year old computer stopped working about a month ago. We replaced it with a Dell computer from PC World at a cost of £688.33.

The Finance Group are wondering if any kind soul(s) might want to contribute to the cost of the new computer as a one-off gift? This can be gift aided.



Your Finance Group

Pollokshields United Reformed Church

Special Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration for the Years 1899 to 2009

The end of anything which has been "*true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report*" is an occasion for sadness, but the celebration of 110 years of Christian witness showed that the end of the URC ministry in Pollokshields was no reason for misery. On the contrary, the final service there struck a very positive and encouraging note.

The Rev. Paul Jupp writes:-

"On Friday 20th November a special service of Celebration and Thanksgiving was held at the church in Fotheringay Road to mark 110 years of the Fellowship and a significant change in the life of that church. Sadly it has been decided that the small elderly numbers cannot continue as the Worshipping Community they have been. Over 200 friends from local churches all over Scotland attended and the Giffnock URC choir helped bring back memories of the days when a full church lifted their voices in praise.

"The church will continue to exist as an organisation and try to use its assets for the furtherance of the local churches' outreach to the young people of our area. John Park will remain as one of the three Trustees and their Minister, the Rev. Paul Jupp will continue to work in the area for six months, concentrating on the existing Youth and Children's work of Pollokshields Churches Together (*Holiday Club* and *The Way*) and supporting the URC in finding a way ahead. The continuing presence of the church was confirmed by the concert on Sunday 22nd November when the Fotheringay Players and very special guest Neil Black (oboe) helped to raise funds for Christian Aid." (A note on this concert appears on page 14.)

The Guild

St. ANDREW'S DAY CONCERT

Monday 30th November at 7.30 pm

Liam Devlin - organist

Pupils of St. Aloysius' College

Pollokshields Church Choir

Calum and Lewis Morrison - Pipers

Offering in aid of Nairobi School for Orphans

Monday 7th December 2.00 pm Christmas tea

Monday 14th December 7.30 pm Christmas party

No meetings in January

The Guild Glasgow S.W. Council appeals for Christmas gifts for local homes and hospitals - toiletries, tissues, sweets, gents socks

Odd Man Out

In each of the following two groups one item is the 'Odd Man Out'. Which one?

1. Tabernacles

Weeks

Purim

Jubilee

Atonement

2. Boils

Blindness.

Hail

Locusts

Frogs

Answers are on page 18



Christian Aid The Fotheringay Players in Concert

Sunday 22nd November

Symphony No. 39.....Mozart

Oboe Concerto..... Richard Strauss

They are a mixed bunch - experienced professionals, teachers, gifted amateurs and others, but David Bruce has drawn them together into an orchestra which produces lovely music and makes us realise what high level entertainment there is here on our own doorstep.

On Sunday 22nd November they showed their musicianship as they supported Neil Black's beautiful playing of Richard Strauss' Oboe Concerto. Mozart's symphonies have been, perhaps ungraciously, likened to a string of lace doyleys joined together. However The Fotheringay Players, led by Muriel Berry, gave the lie to this as they brought out the best in this great and lovely music.

Neil Black has been the Principal Oboist in some of the most prestigious British orchestras, including the London Philharmonic, The Academy of St.-Martin-in-the-Fields and The English Chamber Orchestra.

He was appointed OBE in 1989 for his services to music.



David Bruce has been conducting orchestras and choirs since his student days at Edinburgh University.

He particularly enjoys working with mixed groups of professionals, amateurs and young people.

On Harvest Sunday last month the Minister explained that while few of us harvest our own crops, we all have a harvest of memories, we can gather in...

A Harvest of memories

40 years ago...

...in November 1969 **Alan Pettigrew** and the Rev. **Harry Thomson** launched *The Pollokshields Gazette*. The Rev. **John Young** Minister of the Congregational Church, was the first editor. Later **Walter Wyndling**, The Rev. **Keith Steven**, Professor **Edgar Lythe**, the Rev. **Rebecca Beggs** and others joined the editorial team.

What was happening then?

- St. Ninian's R.A.T.S. performed *Joseph and his Technicolor Dream Coat*
- The Rev. Donald Macleod left Sherbrooke St. Gilbert's for a new appointment in Blairgowrie
- The Holiday Club opened its doors to young *Desert Detectives*.
- The Guild celebrated 25 years of Worship, Fellowship and Service
- The Local Charity Shop donated £22,000 to *Enable* and other charities
- Assorted Christians, atheists and Unitarians met in Sammy Dow's to thrash out Muriel Young's assertion that *Christ is a Git*, and other controversial questions
- *Pollokshields Churches Together* took over from the *Pollokshields Council of Churches*.

Whether or not this stirs up some memories, VISION would be glad to hear of others, personal or 'churchy'. (school days, holidays, family activities, children's games, the war - evacuees? - rationing, etc. etc.)

Cyprus



Barnabas came from Cyprus, so he was no doubt delighted that St. Paul, on his first missionary journey, decided to visit it. There was already a small Christian presence there.

Today a popular tourist destination, it has through the ages been a political, strategic and economic prize, and has been invaded by Romans, Persians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Crusaders and Venetians. The Greek, Byzantine, Turkish and British occupations have also left their traces. Not the least of Cyprus' attractions was its copper - indeed our name for copper comes from 'Cyprus'.

After the two missionaries arrived at Cyprus' port of Salamis they made their way inland to Paphos. Here they met the Pro-Consul Sergius Paulus. He had been favourably impressed by what he had heard of 'The Way' and wanted to know more. However he had an attendant, Elymas (who also called himself Bar-Jesus.) When this sorcerer opposed Paul too strongly the latter rebuked him and through the Holy Spirit made him blind.

The Bible does not say what happened next, but we do know that later Paul and Barnabas split up, and it was Barnabas with Mark who revisited Cyprus.

D.D.M.

Keswick 2010.

It is not too soon to be thinking about Keswick Convention 2010.

The Convention is a coming together of many different events - Bible Teaching, worship, fellowship, exhibitions and activities, all in the wonderful (and not always underwater!) setting of the Lake District. There is no fixed programme - one can attend as many or as few as one feels like.

The Convention lasts three weeks, but many people gather for just one week, or two or all three.

Week 1: 17 Jul-23 Jul

Week 2: 24 Jul-30 Jul

Week 3: 31 Jul-6 Aug

No booking is necessary - just turn up. And there is no fee!

For further information tel: 017687 80075

e: info@keswickministries.org

internet: www.keswickministries.org

or write: Keswick Ministries, Skiddaw Street, KESWICK,
CUMBRIA, CA12 4BY.

Accommodation, listings and availabilities from Keswick Tourist Board www.keswick.org or **017687 72635**

THE LOCAL CHARITY SHOP



RECENTLY we have had some unwanted visitors. Despite the fact that Rabbie Burns wrote a poem *'To a Mouse'* and we loved the cartoon characters of Mickey and Minnie, we do not like mice in our homes or place of work. Rentokil tell us there is a surfeit of mice in this area at present.

At a recent committee meeting we decided to close for the Festive Season on Wednesday 23rd December at 4 p - re-opening on Wednesday 6th January at 10 am. This gives the ladies a well-earned break to spend with friends and families.

We wish you and yours a Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

J. Provan

Odd Man Out

Answers to the quiz on page 13

1. Jubileee. *The others are all Jewish Feasts*

2. Blindness. *The others are all included in the ten plagues which preceded the Exodus (One of the last plagues was 'Darkness'. Admittedly this caused three days blindness, but the blindness was not the plague - only its result.)*

A “Hello!” from Princeton

A letter from Sarah Brown, our recent student placement

I just wanted to send a hello from Princeton to say you are not forgotten! Mostly I wanted to say THANK YOU for a wonderful year at Pollokshields.

Getting to know everyone was a real joy and I felt loved and supported throughout my time on placement and I appreciated those that made it to my graduation service too.

Life in Princeton is good. I'm enjoying my classes very much and have met some lovely people that I'm getting to know.

The time already seems to be flying and soon I'll be homeward bound for my brother's wedding at Christmas.

Hope all is well with you. I think of you often.

Best wishes,

Sarah

Photos

For clarity of reproduction in print please note that photos by e-mail reproduce better than paper prints, so if possible e-mail to Douglas <nodogmiller@hotmail.com>

Points for Prayer

for Advent, Christmas and the New Year

For the World **“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”**
Pray that all people may hear and enjoy the Good News of God’s coming to earth.

For Our Country **“Let earth receive her King”**
Pray that amid all the sensual joys of the festive season our nation may hear the true story of Christmas.

For our Church **“Let all their songs employ”**
Pray that our own Advent and Christmas joy may spread out beyond our four walls and be heard by the whole community.

For Ourselves **“Let every heart prepare him room”**
Pray that we may all examine our own hearts and make them a suitable welcome place to receive the Christ.

For Colin Johnston, our Missionary Partner in Tiberias, as he proclaims **“the glories of his righteousness”**

Give thanks **“for the wonders of his love”**
Pray that we may be truly grateful, and show this in our lives.

“I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations - to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians, to Tubal and Greece, *and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory.* They will proclaim my glory among the nations.”

Isaiah 66.19

THE GUILD
CHRISTMAS
FAIRE



Saturday 5th December
10.am - 12noon

Stalls
Tearoom

Views expressed by contributors are their own
and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors
nor of The Church of Scotland

The purpose of VISION is to record the life and work of the congregation. No editors on their own can know all that people do and feel and want, so it is up to you, whether you are an office bearer, the leader of an organisation or an ordinary member, to keep us informed.

Be in touch!

***Send us original articles, views, snippets of news –
anything you would like to share with other people***

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