

Rosyth
Methodist Church

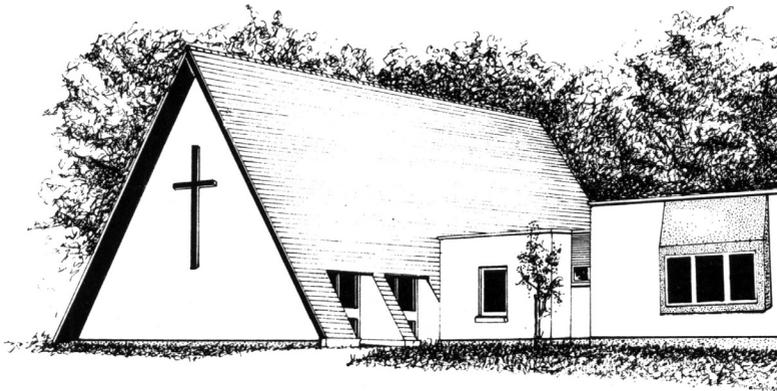
St Margaret's Scottish
Episcopal Church



Contact

the newsletter of the partnership between

Rosyth Methodist Church and
St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church



Issue 76

December 2014/January 2015

**Rosyth
Methodist Church**

Scottish Charity SC028559

www.rosythmethodist.org.uk

**St Margaret's Scottish
Episcopal Church**

Scottish Charity SC028426

www.stmargaretsrosyth.org.uk

in partnership

Our partnership is formally recognised as a Local Ecumenical Partnership,
with a constitution and Covenant signed on 14 June 2000

Ministers:

Deacon Sarah McDowall
01383 611000

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01506 464567

Co-ordinating Steward:
David Salthouse 01383 889212

Pastoral Secretary:
Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779

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Sandra Wilson 01383 415885

Treasurer:
Dave Ward 01383 414944

Interim Rector:

Very Rev Jim Mein 01506 834317

Vestry Secretary:
Sandra Young 01383 415021

Treasurer:
Alan Taylor 01383 823902

our regular pattern of worship

Sundays (except 4th)

9.30am Episcopalians Sung Eucharist
(occasionally 9.15am – see diary pages for details)

11.00am Methodist Morning Worship
(including Sunday School)

2nd Sundays (during term-time): for the Young Church

9.00am Breakfast and “Messy Church”

4th Sundays: Worship together

11.00am Joint Communion Service

6.00pm “Sunday@Six”

where to find us

Our postal address is Queensferry Road, Rosyth, Dunfermline, KY11 2JH, and you'll find us at the junction of Queensferry Road and Woodside Avenue. The car park is behind the church, and limited local on-street parking is available, but there is lots more space in the parking area at the junction with Park Road.

A view from the study ...

Helen Jenkins writes

I hate Christmas.

There, I've said it. I hate the countless times my three-year-old will be asked what Santa's bringing her, as though acquiring stuff was the most important thing. I hate the pressure people feel under to buy ever bigger and better presents that people don't even really need, thus getting into debt. I hate the demands people have from relatives to spend the day with them whether it's practical or not, meaning that no-one actually gets any quality time with the people they want to be with. I hate the sense that this one 24-hour period has to be perfect, leading to stress and arguments when it's not working out.

Like I said, I hate Christmas.

OK, so that's not entirely true. Actually I love seeing the delight in my daughter's eyes when a tree appears in our living room, and then decorating it together. I love giving and receiving presents that are valuable not in monetary terms but in the love and care they demonstrate. I love the excuse to spend time with friends and family while people are off work.

But most of all I love the opportunity to share and celebrate something of God's love with people inside the church and out. I love the fact that schools want people to tell the story, that people who don't usually come to church will turn up on Christmas Eve or for a carol service. I love the opportunities that this season brings to share the mystery of the incarnation: "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man."



In this centenary year for the First World War you'll find this symbol scattered throughout the issue. Our special section "In Flanders Fields" starts on page 28.

It can be hard though, to stay focussed on the reason we celebrate in the midst of all the pressures and busyness. Advent is a season of spiritual preparation which runs alongside all the practical preparations for Christmas, but it's so easy for it to get lost, for us to skip straight to nativity plays and carol services. This Advent, will you join me in trying to take time to stop and think, to wonder at what it is that we're preparing to celebrate, so that when the day finally arrives we will be caught up not just in when to put the turkey on and who's bringing the crackers, but in the amazing truth that God loves us enough to have become one of us so that he might walk among us, teach us, and die that we might be drawn close to him.

If you can put aside any Scrooge-like tendencies you share with me, we have various opportunities to celebrate together this Christmas time, as you'll see as you read the rest of this issue.

What's in this issue ...

This issue we have:

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plus our regular items

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Getting ready for Christmas

Advent Study Group

The Group will meet at 7.00 pm on **Monday 1 December** at St Columba's, South Rosyth, when we will watch the whole of the BBC production of *The Nativity*, which was first broadcast two years ago. Thereafter – for the following three Mondays – we will revert to our usual start-time of 7.30pm, when we will discuss various aspects of this story. All are most welcome to join this very convivial group of members from most of the Rosyth churches. We usually finish by 9.30pm, after a cup of tea and a piece of cake (sometimes)! Speak to Jack or Alan for more information.

Nativity Carol Concert

The carol concert this year is on **Tuesday 2 December**, in the Parish Church on Queensferry Road, starting at 7.00 pm. The four Rosyth primary schools all take part in this very traditional event, during which the Christmas tree lights will be switched on.



It is an all-seated, ticket-only event – but tickets are free, and available from each of the churches and the primary schools. Tea and mince pies will be served after the concert, and a donation in aid of CLASP – Edinburgh children's cancer charity – will be taken on the night. Tickets are available from Alan or Sarah – but you need to get them early as they are always in great demand!

Christmas Cards

As usual there will be a post box in the Church crush hall over the weeks up to Christmas. This is a means of exchanging cards with friends in the Church. A full address is not required, but please ensure that surnames are included on the envelopes. The cards are sorted and laid out in racks on the worktop in the lounge to be collected after the service. **There is no delivery service**, so please do not put cards in the box for people who do not come to Church regularly.



Our Explorer Scouts are taking part in the West Fife Scout Christmas Post and cards can be sent to most parts of Fife for 30p (see poster for further details). There will be a separate post box in the Church crush hall for these cards.

The deadline for receipt of cards is 5.00pm on **Wednesday 10 December**, so please “post” your cards in good time. Cards and money should be placed in a plastic bag or envelope with a note of your name and contact details in the event of any queries. Please include postcodes on the cards. The cards will be delivered by local scouts in the period from 13–20 December.

Seasonal lunch

The annual Church meal will be a lunch at the Hideaway, Halbeath, at 12.30pm on **Tuesday 6 January**. As before the cost will be totalled and divided by the number present.

David Slater and Dennis Cook

Services at Christmas

“From hurt to hope”

A different kind of Christmas service

As we all know Christmas is a very joyful time of year and rightly so as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It's impossible to go very far in the weeks during Advent without hearing the traditional Christmas music, seeing the brightly coloured decorations and all the other reminders of the Christmas season.



All of the excitement and celebrations can make things difficult for those of us who perhaps do not feel like joining in. We may have memories of family and friends who are no longer with us. We might feel lonely and have no one to share our feelings with. We might be already struggling with debt and wonder how we will be able to meet the costs of Christmas. We might be facing illness, or be recently bereaved. We might be fearful of threatened redundancy and unemployment and all that that will mean and want to worship God quietly and reflectively as we bring to Him all our concerns. These concerns can lead to thoughts of guilt because we do not want to spoil anyone else's Christmas.

“From Hurt to Hope” is a different kind of Christmas service where through prayer and song we will offer our feelings to Jesus the comforter whose birth we celebrate.

All are welcome to join us at Rosyth Methodist Church on **Thursday 18 December** at 7.30pm.

Witness at Christmas and the New Year

Do join us ...

... on 21 December

6.00pm Sunday@Six: a service of Nine Lessons and Carols, with mince pies to follow. The offering at the service will be in aid of CHAS (CHAS Gift Aid envelopes are available from Marc Tempelhoff).

... on Christmas Eve

3.00pm Making of Christingles followed by Christingle Service at Holy Trinity with Very Rev Jim Mein

4.00pm “The Grumpy Shepherd” Nativity at our church, led by Rev Dr Helen Jenkins and Deacon Sarah McDowall

11.30pm Midnight Mass at Holy Trinity, led by Very Rev Jim Mein

... on Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion (1662 Prayer Book) at Holy Trinity, led by Rev Ross Kennedy

10.00am Family Service at our church led by Mrs Mary Kidd

10.00am Holy Communion for Christmas at Holy Trinity, led by Very Rev Jim Mein

... on 28 December at our church

11.00am Joint Communion Service led by Very Rev Jim Mein

... on 25 January at our church

11.00am Joint Covenant Service led by Rev Dr Helen Jenkins

6.00pm Sunday@Six: traditional Evensong, led by Myra Tarr

Music for Christmas

There are a number of musical happenings involving members from both churches (see the diary pages for concert details)

Saturday 6 December at 3.00pm & 7.30pm
Dunfermline Choral Union has a programme of Christmas-themed songs and carols to celebrate its 140th anniversary year, with special guests the Dunfermline Junior Chorus, at the Vine, Dunfermline.

Monday 8 December at 7.30pm
The Kingdom Singers is 20 years old and is holding its winter concert in St Andrew's Erskine Church, Dunfermline.

Friday 12 December at 7.30pm
The Woodmill Singers Christmas Concert is in Dalgety Bay Parish Church.

Sunday 14 December at 2.00pm & 3.45pm
Kirkcaldy Orchestral Society perform *On the Winter Watch* with the Langtoun Singers in the Old Kirk, Kirkcaldy.

Sunday 14 December at 7.30pm
Dunfermline Gilbert & Sullivan Society in a Concert of Carols and Christmas Music in St Margaret's RC Church, East Port, Dunfermline.

On **Friday 19 December**, from 5.00pm to about 7.30pm at Tesco, Duloch Park, you will have a chance both to shop and to listen to carols sung by members of the Dunfermline Gilbert & Sullivan Society. Naturally the buckets will be out, collecting for the Whitefield Day Hospital at Queen Margaret Hospital.

We've also received invitations from friends elsewhere

Thursday 4 December at 7.30pm
Christmas Celebration Concert of music from around the world, favourite carols, brass ensemble, and tubular bells will be held in CEMC, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9BX. Tickets £10 (£8 concessions) Children free. All proceeds to the Pipe Water Project, Ghana.

Saturday 6 December at 7.30pm
Light of the World celebration of Christmas will be held in Liberton Kirk, Kirkgate, Edinburgh, EH16 6RY. The Exile Band, choir and orchestra will present a programme of Christmas music and carols. Tickets are free and can be ordered from 0131 228 1155, or online at www.originscotland.org.

Sunday 14 December at 6.30pm
Candlelit Supper and Carol Service featuring "The Band" in Dunbar Methodist Church, 10 Victoria Street, Dunbar. All invited and welcome. The Carol Service begins at 7.30pm.



One minute, please

What did Jesus say?

“Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.”

Matthew 18:20 (GNB)

Visit our Remembrance section, starting on page 28, to find out why and how this card arrived on our communion table.

***T**helma and David
Couch wish everyone
the Season's Blessings and a
healthy and happy New Year.*

***E**ve and Julie
Denning send their
Christmas Greetings to both
congregations. May the sun
always shine on you all.*

***D**ennis Cook
wishes everyone at
the Church a peaceful
Christmas and a happy
New Year.*

***M**ary
Dempster
wishes both our Church
Families Love, Joy and
Peace at Christmas and
throughout 2015.*

***M**yra and
Martin Tarr
wish all their friends
at church a very
happy Christmas and a
peaceful New Year.*

***L**esley
Yellowlees
wishes friends in both
churches a Happy
Christmas and
blessed New Year.*

***P**auline Fisher
wishes all in
both churches a very
Happy Christmas.*

***J**ock and Audrey
Headden wish
their friends from both
congregations a Happy
and Holy Christmas.*

***B**etty Terry
wishes everyone in
both churches Merry
Christmas and Happy
New Year.*

***D**avid Slater
sends Christmas Greetings
to all readers of Contact.
May the Peace of the Lord be
with you.*

***J**ohn and
Rosemary Cowell
wish all their friends in
both congregations a Merry
Christmas and a Happy and
Healthful New Year to follow.*

***T**hank you to all those who have decorated our Christmas
tree, and given generously to charity for the privilege!*

Invitations and requests

Memorial Book

The next update of the memorial book will take place early in the New Year. Anyone wishing to make suggestions should make them to David Slater or Dennis Cook.

Bookshelf

Although we do not plan to hold any more book sales, the bookstall in the Crush Hall continues to bring in a small weekly income and we are keeping this going. If readers have paperback books in good condition which they no longer require, please bring them to church and we can use them to rotate the books currently on display.

Return of BibleWorld to Rosyth

We have a provisional booking for the return of BibleWorld to Rosyth for the week commencing **16 February 2015**. It will be two years in February since the last visit and, in the main, the return visit will cover children who did not attend on the previous occasion. The vehicle will be sited in the car park just behind the Parkgate Centre, which makes it more visible to the community. It will be available for the churches or members of the public on two evenings.



As before, we need volunteers for each day to help when the classes visit. Volunteers need to have PVG cover, which can take a while to get, so if you would like to volunteer please speak to Alan or Marc soonest. The visit last time – much appreciated by the schools – was an excellent opportunity for the churches to get to know each other, as we usually tried to get people from different churches working together to cover the different sessions.

Say it with flowers!

May I remind you that there will soon be a new Flower Rota on display in the Crush Hall with a list of the Sundays for 2015, and one for flower arrangers. You may wish to add your name to one or both lists, maybe for a special Sunday, a birthday, anniversary or in memory of a loved one. St Margaret's supply and arrange the flowers on the 4th Sunday of each month when we have a joint service of Holy Communion and usually a Sunday@Six evening service. May I thank all those who have contributed to the Flower Fund and undertaken the arranging of flowers when I haven't been around.

Don't forget that flowers may be taken to people who are ill at home, or who would like to know we are thinking of them.

Please do contact me if you need any help or advice.

Mary Kidd

Brambles update

In previous issues of Contact the need to increase the numbers of children in the playgroup in order to achieve sustainability has been a recurring theme, and measures that help or hinder that goal identified. However, it has become clear that the current level of running five sessions a week is not sustainable. Accordingly, parents of children currently registered at Brambles have been invited to a Special General Meeting on **4 December** to consider Brambles' future. Meantime we have continued to enjoy great support from both parents and supporters who have been helping to raise funds.

Howard R Kirby (Chair)

Children and young people at RMC

Gwyneth Kirby writes ...

Four of our children having recently moved to worship in another Church, numbers at Sunday School are sometimes very small, but we will keep going with the children we have, and hope that more will join us soon.

We have been having great fun at Messy Church, and have been joined by some new faces over the last couple of months, which is really exciting. Having spent a couple of months looking at some of the parables of Jesus, we put those ideas away for November and concentrated on a theme of Remembrance and Peace for Remembrance Sunday. Some of you will have already seen the banner created by the children (with a little help from Jean!!).



More of our activities can be seen by those of you who use Facebook. Yes – I have been dragged into the 21st Century and regularly post photos and snippets of information about Messy Church. Don't forget to have a look.

Christmas is fast approaching, and our next Messy Church on **14 December** will have a very Christmassy flavour – in more ways than one! If you want to know more you will have to come and join us, or wait for the photos on Facebook! I'll give you just one clue – it will involve jelly babies.

Do you remember the children's performance of Michael Mouse last Christmas Eve? And who could forget the parts played by the adults? Hens and sheep come to mind, with appropriate sound effects of course. This year we are going to present *The Grumpy Shepherd*, and we are looking for budding actors and actresses, children and adults, who would like to join us in performing – no previous experience required and definitely no auditions!! If you can't get along to rehearsals on Sunday mornings you can still take part on the day, but I can't promise you a starring part.

Still on a Christmas theme. All our children, Sunday School and Messy Church, are invited to a Christmas party on **Sunday 21 December**, starting at about 12.15pm (after the morning service) and lasting until about 2.15pm. I am hoping that Santa will have time to fit us into his busy schedule. If you would like to come to the party, please let me know by **14 December**, either by phone (01383 624779) or email (gmkirby@hotmail.com).

Finally, I don't know how many of you are aware that four of our young people took part in a District Weekend at the activity centre at Dalguise in September, together with Katie Cameron. I had been hoping to go as well, but numbers didn't allow this, so reluctantly (!!!) I let Katie accompany the youngsters. They all had a great time, and it was a fantastic opportunity for them to meet with young people of all different types from the whole of Scotland. Thanks to Katie for looking after them, and taking part in all the activities.

Fellowship News

In our thoughts

We remember **Dorissia Forsyth**, whose mother died just as Dorissia was returning to Dunfermline after visiting her in the Seychelles. We hear that just as Dorissia was due to board the plane home she got a phone message from her brother to say that her Mum had died. The journey home must have been dreadful for her, and we offer our love, sympathy and prayers.

Please remember **Jean Hall** in your thoughts and prayers as she makes a good recovery from major surgery.

Our thoughts are with **Adrian and Sue Masson** on the recent death of Adrian's mother.

All change

In 2015, the sequence to lead the monthly joint communion services will change. From January, the Methodist services will be the odd months and the Episcopal the even months. This means that the Methodist Covenant Service in January will be led by Rev Dr Helen Jenkins, rather than by an Episcopalian minister, and the all-age Harvest thanksgiving in September will also be Methodist-led.

Orchardhead House

We will continue to lead services at Orchardhead on Sunday afternoons this year, with just one change. The services will be on the *third* Sunday of the month, instead of the second Sunday. This change has been made to make it easier for people who help both at Orchardhead and Messy Church.

[More about our Orchardhead commitment on page 14]

A visit from Bishop David

We welcome the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Primus of the SEC and our Diocesan Bishop to St Margaret's on **Sunday 14 December** when he will celebrate and preach at the 9.30am Eucharist. On a previous occasion after Bishop David had been with us he wrote favourable comments on his blog about our hymn-singing, so we hope he will be similarly impressed this time.

St Margaret's Day celebration

After our AGM on 16 November most of the congregation and some of our Methodist friends enjoyed a 'bring and share' lunch. This was a happy occasion and the hall looked festive with red table clothes and little floral displays (arranged by Mary Kidd) on the tables with a red rose and a pearl included to remind us of our patron saint. We were spoilt for choice with the food. Marc and Pierre served up their usual tasty hot food and hot potato salad – full of rich ingredients, and other delicious hot choices were chilli con carne, hot curry and rice. The cold platter was equally appetising – fresh local trout, salmon mousse, quiches and other savouries and salads. As for the desserts we were tempted to triple chocolate and double chocolate cake or mousse, lemon cheese cake and raspberry roulade, with a variety of cheeses, biscuits and grapes to round off a gourmet meal! A big thank you to Lesley Yellowlees who organised the event and worked tirelessly to ensure it was such a success and to everyone – too many to mention – who provided the excellent food, helped with the washing up and generally contributed to a lovely lunchtime of food, friendship and fellowship.

Sandra

Fellowship News

Well done Margaret!

Our friend and former lay representative Margaret Dineley, who was licensed as a lay reader by Bishop David in August 2013 to serve St Finnian's Church, Lochgelly, told us on 18 November of her exciting news.

"I have been going through discernment for ordination since January and this culminated in attendance at a Provincial Panel 10 days ago. The Panel recommended me for ordination, to ultimately act as Assistant Priest (i.e. non-stipendiary) to be principally deployed at Lochgelly.

I am absolutely delighted - and somewhat overawed (what - God calling me at my age!!!!) and I am so very pleased that I have had my vestry and congregation behind me 100%".

We congratulate Margaret on her achievement. Our prayers and thoughts are with her as she now prepares for ordination.

St Margaret's AGM

The AGM held on Sunday 16 November was attended by a large number of the congregation. Both our lay representative, Valerie Leslie, and our alternate, Erica Lock, were re-elected to serve for another year.

Lesley Yellowlees stood down from the Vestry after more years than anyone can remember and was thanked by Jim for her valuable contribution during this period. We were delighted to welcome Gordon Pryde, one of our newer members, in Lesley's place.

Members of the Vestry for the next year are: Sue Forman, Mary Kidd, Valerie Leslie (ex officio), Erica Lock, Sue Masson, Gordon Pryde, Myra Tarr, Alan Taylor and Sandra Young.

Vestry will appoint the Secretary and Treasurer at the next meeting on 20 January 2015.

News of a new Rector

Bishop David sent the following message to the Vestry Secretaries of Holy Trinity and St Margaret's which was read out at the service on 2 November.

"The Vestries of Holy Trinity and St Margaret's interviewed a candidate for the post of Rector on Thursday last. The Vestries believe that this candidate will be an excellent Rector for the two congregations and have Presented the name to Bishop David for appointment. Bishop David has made clear that he is happy to accept the Presentation and the candidate has confirmed acceptance.

"There are however circumstances in the candidate's present parish in England which have led the Bishop there to ask for a delay in the completion of the appointment process. He and Bishop David have therefore agreed that the appointment will not be confirmed and made public until immediately after the New Year. The normal notice period would then apply.

"We are naturally disappointed that we have to wait a little longer. But we are confident that we now have the prospect of a new Rector and a new and exciting chapter in the life of our two congregations. We continue to be very grateful to Very Revd Jim Mein and to Revd Ross Kennedy for all that they do to sustain the life of our congregations."



Do look at our Remembrance section to see what we were up to on 23 November! Sunday at Six takes many forms: you will be welcome on:

21 December for Nine Lessons and Carols

25 January for traditional Evensong

Fond memories of our friend Jimmy Lawson

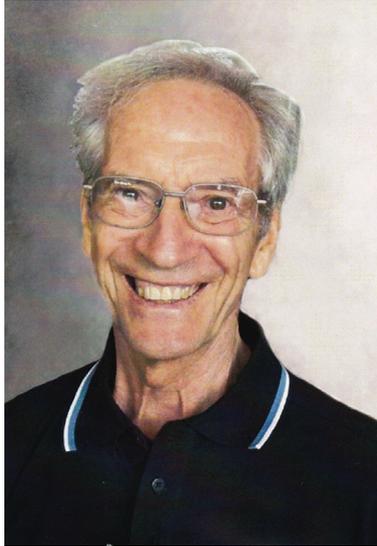
Contributed by some members of our fellowship who knew him

My memories of Jimmy lie in the late 40s and early 50s when, as a teenager, he was among the number of young people of our Church. As a very energetic young man he became a member of the 13th Fife Methodist Scout Troop and loved playing various sports.

He met a young lady named Olive Smith and they were married in the Methodist Church in Parkgate Rosyth. The Church was very important to Jim and Olive and they brought up their family within it. However they decided to move to Australia, when Jimmy was nearing retirement age, but I have been privileged to have kept in touch with them through Christmas cards and letters and also that they were able to visit my home whenever they were on holiday in Scotland.

Jack Fowell

We will all remember Jimmy as a very energetic person in every way even in his 80s. During a visit to his and Olive's home in Australia, and having recovered from a broken neck, he was in the garden playing games with our 5-year-old grandson. I was speaking to Colin Rogers about when we went carol singing back in the early 60s and Colin reminded me about an occasion when an angry householder said the singing was keeping his children awake and Jimmy approached him and assured him the group would move on and then was handed a £5 note by the man! When we finished singing around the streets on Christmas Eve we walked to Limekilns to Mr & Mrs Wilson's



Jimmy Lawson
19 January 1931 – 29 September 2014

home for supper and carried on singing with Jimmy leading with such enthusiasm and belief. Derek also remembers Jimmy as a very enthusiastic instructor at the Dockyard College where he taught Naval Architecture and inspired his students.

Jennifer and Derek Irvin

Our family arrived in Rosyth from Belfast in the summer of 1961, initially for a few months. The first Sunday we located and visited the Methodist congregation in Parkgate

Rosyth receiving a warm welcome from many of those there that morning, among them was Jimmy, Olive and family. Jimmy, we could never forget, made us feel at home very quickly and his enthusiasm for so many events in life made him a human magnet that attracted many people to him. His kindness and understanding made a living example of how all Christians should live. He also was involved in many social events and Thelma never forgets being taught the "St Bernard Waltz" by Jimmy. He was a lecturer at the Dockyard School for apprentices, who benefited a great deal from his teaching and example and everyone who knew him was full of praise in all respects. When they left to relocate in Australia they left a big vacuum in peoples' lives which we think has never been filled. "Goodbye Jimmy" but we hope to meet him again some day!

Thelma, David,
Priscilla and Lorraine Couch

In the 70s and 80s, before Ron and I became members of Rosyth Methodist Church, we attended the annual Pantomime, usually with our dear friend and neighbour Eileen Purches, whose husband Owen and Jimmy were usually the comedy double act – just like Morcambe and Wise! Also at Christmas-time the carol singers came into our street, led by Jimmy playing the guitar and running up and down the street encouraging the singers to sing louder and also the householders to put money in the boxes. A few years ago when we heard that Jim and Olive were to be coming to Scotland and would visit Rosyth it was decided that it would be nice to hold a “Songs of Praise” evening followed by supper at which we managed to invite people who knew them but hadn’t seen Jim and Olive since they left Rosyth. It turned out to be quite a nostalgic



This picture of Jimmy and Olive Lawson was taken during their visit in 2010. The letter Jimmy wrote afterwards is in our Contact web archive for October 2012

night – Jim’s beautiful smile never left his face and when I think of him I shall see that wonderful beaming smile.

Mary Dempster

Rosyth Parish Church Community Project

Alan Taylor reports ...

We have all noticed how nice the parish church looks now that the front of the building and the tower have been painted white. But we also notice the boarded-up windows, and the grey walls of the rest of the church. So, what is going on? Has the work stopped? The answer is “No”! It’s a big project, as considerable remedial work was required tackling dry rot and other issues before “visible” work could start. The external work has been completed and all of the church windows have been repaired. The internal work of restoration, heating, lighting and insulation is out to tender. Work needing planning control



has been passed. Funds are still needed for the work for the rest of the church, so if there are any benefactors out there ... ? The Community Payback Squad – which we have used so successfully in our own church – are involved in completing painting of the remainder of the external walls, the gates and railings. The mandatory felling of trees on Queensferry Road has opened up the vista of the church, so I think we can anticipate a beautiful building once the work is done. And when the rest of the church buildings have been modified for community use, then we will have an asset of real value in Rosyth.

Wednesday Fellowship

The Fellowship has enjoyed very interesting afternoons this session with a variety of speakers and topics.

It was good to welcome Lou Davidson back again to give us an update on the more recent work being done on LaGonave, at the orphanage for children, and at 'The Poor House' for elderly people who have no means of support. (HaitiHelp sends regular donations of money to supplement their basic diet of rice and beans).

Last year the children moved into brand new purpose-built accommodation, which has made a huge difference to their lives. This year the nurses took two dentists and an optometrist to check and screen the children in the orphanage. The team managed to see and treat many of the local people too. Prescription glasses were supplied for the children and staff who needed them, and all the children were given a pair of sunglasses after getting their eyes tested.

There are several ways of supporting this outstanding voluntary work, and leaflets are available for more information. Books in good condition are always being collected

and are on sale at our local surgery in Charlestown. Maybe you would like to knit or crochet a small blanket which can be used as a comforter as well as for warmth when the nights are chilly?

I'm not going to worry any more about what happens on the afternoons when unexpectedly we have no speaker. We're blessed with having in our membership several members who can give an interesting talk at a moment's notice, and without hesitation, and to them I express my personal thanks. I also thank the members who offer transport to those who need it.

Christmas will soon be here and we look forward to our celebration with the visit from our Brambles Playgroup, and to our fellowship lunch at The Elgin Hotel.

During our winter break the committee will be meeting to plan the Spring Session beginning on **4 February**. Already some excellent suggestions have been put forward, so ... interesting times ahead! Please do come and join us and be a part of this happy band – and, yes, "we are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road".

Mary Kidd

Orchardhead House services

As it says on page 10, services at Orchardhead will continue on Sunday afternoons, but now be on the *third* Sunday of each month.

Thank you to all the people who volunteer to lead these services, and to all those who go along to help. All at Orchardhead are very appreciative, and keen for these services to continue.

As most of you will know, Jack Fowell has been responsible for organising the services, and for leading many of them. He no longer feels able to continue with

this, but will still be leading a couple of the services as part of the new rota. I will be taking on the responsibility of finding people to lead services each month. I'm sure you would like to join me in thanking Jack for all that he has done over many years at Orchardhead, and hope that he will be able to continue to take part for as long as he wishes to.

If you would like to lead a service in the future, or go along to help, please have a word with me.

Gwyneth Kirby

Diary for November/December 2014

Sunday 30 November

Advent 1/St Andrew	9.30am	Sung Eucharist	Rev Ross Kennedy
	11.00am	Morning Worship	Rev Helen Jenkins
			Deacon Sarah McDowall

Monday 1 Dec 7.00pm Advent Study Group, St Columba's Church
BBC DVD of 'The Nativity' (see page 4)

Tuesday 2 Dec 10.00am EDWJ Group meets in Mary Kidd's house at Limekilns
7.00pm Christmas Nativity Carol Concert with local schools,
Rosyth Parish Church. Entry by ticket only (free) from
Alan Taylor (see page 4)

Wednesday 3 Dec 2.15pm Wednesday Fellowship
Guest speaker Lynn Prestwood – Credit Union

Thursday 4 Dec 7.30pm Christmas Celebration Concert at CEMC. Proceeds to the
Pipe Water Project, Ghana (see page 6)

Friday 5 Dec 7.00pm Choir practice

Saturday 6 Dec 3.00pm Dunfermline Choral Union Christmas Concert of music
and 7.30pm and songs at the Vine Church, Dunfermline
Tickets £9.00, £8 (concession) from Gwyneth Kirby,
Mary Kidd or Myra Tarr

7.30pm Light of the World celebration in Liberton Kirk,
Edinburgh (see page 6)

Sunday 7 December

Advent 2	9.30am	Sung Eucharist	Very Rev Jim Mein
	11.00am	Morning Worship	Prof John Sawkins

Monday 8 Dec 7.30pm Advent Study Group at St Columba's Church, Torridon
Lane: 'The Nativity' (see page 4)
7.30pm Kingdom Singers 20th Anniversary Winter Concert in
St Andrew's Erskine Church, Robertson Road, Dunfermline
Free entry for Associate Members, £5 for Non Associates

Wednesday 10 Dec 2.15pm Wednesday Fellowship:
Christmas Celebration and Brambles visit

Friday 12 Dec 7.00pm Choir practice

7.30pm The Woodmill Singers Christmas Concert in Dalgety Bay
Parish Church. See Myra Tarr or Julie Denning

Diary for December 2014/January 2015

- Christmas Eve** 3.00pm Making of Christingles followed by Christingle service at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline Very Rev Jim Mein
- 4.00pm “The Grumpy Shepherd” Nativity
 Rev Dr Helen Jenkins and Deacon Sarah McDowall
 See page 9 for an invitation to take part!
- 11.30pm Midnight Mass at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline
 Very Rev Jim Mein
- Christmas Day** 8.00am Holy Communion (1662 liturgy) at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline Rev Ross Kennedy
- 10.00am Family Service Mrs Mary Kidd
- 10.00am Holy Communion at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline
 Very Rev Jim Mein

Sunday 28 December

- Christmas 1 11.00am Joint Communion Service Very Rev Jim Mein

Sunday 4 January

- Christmas 2 9.30am Sung Eucharist Very Rev Jim Mein
- 11.00am Morning Worship Mr Iain Hampson
- Tuesday 6 Jan 10.00am EDWJ Group meets in Mary Kidd’s house at Limekilns
- 12.30pm Church Annual Lunch at the Hideaway. Halbeath
 (see page 4)

Sunday 11 January

- The Baptism of our Lord
- 9.00am ‘Messy Church and Breakfast
- 9.30am Sung Eucharist Rev Ross Kennedy
- 11.00am Morning Worship
 Mr Archie and Deacon Sarah McDowall
- Friday 16 Jan 7.00pm Choir practice

Sunday 18 January

- Epiphany 2 9.30am Sung Eucharist Very Rev Jim Mein
- 11.00am Morning Worship Rev David Easton
 David Salthouse (Worship Leader)
- 3.00pm Service at Orchardhead House, Rosyth
- Tuesday 20 Jan 6.30pm St Margaret’s Vestry meeting in Myra Tarr’s home

Diary for January 2015

Sunday 25 January

Epiphany 3 11.00am Joint Covenant Service Rev Dr Helen Jenkins
6.00pm Sunday@Six: traditional Evensong, led by Myra Tarr

Thursday 29 Jan 7.30pm St Andrews West Area Council meeting at St Paul's,
Kinross

Friday 30 Jan 7.00pm Choir practice

Sunday 2 February

Candlemass 9.30am Sung Eucharist Very Rev Jim Mein
11.00am Morning Worship Mrs Margaret Freeman

Monday 3 Feb 7.30pm Ecumenical Study Group at St Columba's Church,
Torridon Lane
6.30pm St Margaret's Choir taking part in the community choir
class in the Fife Festival of Music at the Adam Smith
Theatre, Kirkcaldy

Wednesday 5 Feb 2.15pm Wednesday Fellowship Opening Meeting

Friday 7 Feb 7.00pm Choir practice

Area Council meetings 2015

29 January at St Paul's, Kinross

26 February at St Serf's, Burntisland

21 May at St Margaret's, Rosyth

3 July: the annual social at Nan Kennedy's home near Kinross

6 September: Annual Area Council church service at St Columba's, Aberdour

19 November at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

Please put these dates in your diary and do come along to any of these meetings. They are always enjoyable and informative and open to all members in the St Andrews West area.

From the Superintendent's Desk

Rev Andrew Letby writes ...

Dear friends

All you eagle-eyed 'Plan watchers' may already have noticed that my name does not appear as leading any services during this quarter. Writing this letter is actually one of my last tasks as I prepare to start my time of sabbatical.

"For Methodist presbyters and deacons, a sabbatical is a time of grace allowing them to spend time with God doing something different."

For three months 'normal' life will be put on hold as I get the precious opportunity to do different things and do things differently. My last sabbatical pretty much got lost in preparations for an unexpected change of job and our move to Scotland. This time I'm determined to grab the opportunity to experience new things and new places.

I could have taken the sabbatical at any time during the current connexional year but chose now as Advent is my favourite season in the Christian calendar. The time of preparation and expectation of encountering 'God with us' offers a moment to look for the signs of divine at the heart of the ordinary. So in new places, in pictures I see and try to make, in history, in traditions and in contemporary life, I shall be trying to get beyond the traditional images of virgin and child, or stars and stables, and find new ways of seeing and representing what faith means for me. I don't know what all that will look like – but I intend to enjoy finding out. I am going to be doing things which take me out of my comfort zone and striving to fulfil challenges which I have set for myself and others have set for me.

What will I actually do? Well, I shall reveal the details as I go – but I'm going to have a

pretty good go at indulging all my passions – so watch out for tales of planes, trains, drawing, pasta making, art galleries and a few special places familiar to Saint Paul.

Meanwhile circuit life will continue. I am blessed with a great team of colleagues, circuit and church stewards who will ensure that 'life goes on'. Many things will be done differently and some things will not be done, the chance to re-evaluate is one of the gifts of a sabbatical to the circuit as a whole. In very practical terms, Rev Helen Jenkins will have authority to act as superintendent in relation to financial, legal and other formal matters. However she will not do everything that I normally do, especially in relation to the many meetings which fill my time, she has her own ministry to fulfil! Please respect that and do not make inappropriate demands. Please also remember that Belinda will not automatically pick up any of my roles and she should not be expected to convey messages etc. to me. Generally speaking the first point of contact for matters which would normally be addressed to me will be Louise in the circuit office. My phones (landline and mobile) will be diverted to the office, as will my email. Louise (in consultation with the circuit stewards and the staff) will deal with any enquiries, pass to others if necessary or schedule things for me to deal with when I return.

I hope that the staff will benefit from my sabbatical in one particular way. My friend, colleague and mentor Rev Dean Fostekew, an Episcopal priest, will be facilitating staff meetings during my absence. His expertise and objectivity will doubtless challenge and encourage the team. I am grateful for his offer to help out in this way.

/cont'd overleaf

The official information about sabbaticals says this:

“Being faced with taking a sabbatical ... may feel like taking a trip into the unknown. It is usually a place of growth and development ... Nearly all ministers who have taken that step into the unknown have found it more fulfilling and re-invigorating than they expected. Sabbaticals were introduced to be part of the armoury to prevent burn out and reduce stress amongst presbyters and deacons. They are part of all ministers’ continuing development; a time for refreshment and renewal, a time to be able to hear the still small voice of God.”

I am already aware that the hardest bit will be coming back to circuit life in March. All sorts of things will have moved on by that time and I will not have been able to influence those. I too will have moved on – I can’t predict what the effects will be, but I have witnessed others returning from sabbatical with new insights, priorities and attitudes. I hope the same will be true for me.

I pray that your Advent journey will be filled with learning and adventure too and that you will approach Christmas with fresh understandings and blessing.

Yours

Andrew

Our Covenant Service

Helen Jenkins writes for our website ...

On **25 January** we will share in a joint covenant service, a service that is one of the riches of the Methodist church and which has been taken up by others from different traditions.

The start of a new year is a time for all sorts of reflections, but the covenant prayer we will be using leads us to think about our commitment to God, in the context of God’s commitment to us. What does it really mean to us to say that we are followers of Christ? What difference does it make in our day-to-day lives?

I don’t know about everyone else, but when I come to pray this prayer I have to take a deep breath first. It’s not an easy thing to really mean, and although I try my best to mean it and live it, I know that I don’t always manage. Probably that’s why we return to it every year.

So at the beginning of a new year, take some time to read the covenant prayer, to pray it, and to think about what it means to live it. As you face the challenges it

offers, remember that a covenant is always between two parties, and no matter how well or otherwise we do at keeping up our end, God is always faithful and it is in God’s strength that we pray and live.

“I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me
with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you,

or laid aside for you,

exalted for you, or brought low for you;

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things,

let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly
yield all things

to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven.”

13th Fife Scout Group

The Scout Group reported another successful year at their AGM held earlier this month. The Group camp at Dalguise in March was the highlight. It is very difficult to run events which can cater for the wide age range of our youth members (6- to 18-years old), but the weekend away for the Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts, with the Beavers having a day visit on the Saturday, was as close as we could get to a combined event. The various sections have held their own outdoor activities suitable to the ages of the members. These have included visits, sleepovers, hikes, camps (including an international camp at Windsor) and expeditions by bike, canoe and on foot. The regular weekly meetings in the hall enable members to prepare for these activities and also to work on their challenge badges. There was success in some of the District competitions with the Cubs winning the 5-a-side football competition, and the Scouts winning the Safety Competition and Totem camping competition.

Each year we hold a Group barbecue in September – usually at Silver Sands in Aberdour. This year we changed the venue to our Scout campsite at Fordell Firs, where children and parents were able to take part in some of the many activities on offer. The weather was good to us and an enjoyable time was had by all. A surprise item was a presentation to me to mark my 50th anniversary as a leader (and 60th anniversary as a member of the Group). A number of former leaders were invited along for the occasion and some memories shared along with a celebration cake. This theme of adult service continued at our AGM when our Explorer Scout Leader, Terry O'Neill, was presented with his 15-year Long Service Award and our former Group Scout Leader, Stuart Fowell, with a 40-year Long Service Award. Congratulations to both of them.

We were saddened to hear recently of the deaths of Jimmy Lawson and Terry Biles. Jimmy (see pages 12–13) was a scout in the fairly early days of the Group but he sometimes camped with the Scout Troop in the 1950s and early 1960s. Terry was a Scout in the 1950s and was later the Scoutmaster in the early 1960s. We give thanks for their lives and their service to our Group in days gone by.

Martin Rogers,
Assistant Group Scout Leader



Stuart Fowell being presented with his 40-year Long Service Award



Terry O'Neill being presented with his 15-year Long Service Award

Ed: A picture of Martin's surprise can be found on our back cover!

Methodist Leadership Team

David Salthouse, Steward, explains ...

Many of you will have heard mention of the Leadership Team but I'm sure some of you may be wondering what the format and purpose of this team is. Hopefully I can provide answers to those questions.

To provide some background, the Church Council appoints a number of committees to manage the administrative and pastoral aspects of the life of the Church. These include the Pastoral, Finance and Property Committees. The responsibility of these committees is to take delegated authority from the Council to manage the issues directly relating to the areas covered by the committee. They are still responsible to the Church Council and will normally provide a report to each Council meeting detailing work undertaken under the delegated authority along with any recommendations requiring approval from the full Council members.

In the same way the church stewards are corporately responsible with the ministers responsible for the Church to give leadership and help over the whole range of the church's life and activity. In performing this responsibility the stewards are encouraged to draw other members with appropriate gifts and skills into a Leadership Team. This team is appointed by and responsible to the Church Council and is charged with holding together the range of activities that are contained within the one ministry of the Church.

The Leadership Team currently comprises the Stewards (Mandy Ward, Evelyn Kenny, Sue Salthouse, Howard Kirby and David Salthouse), the Pastoral Committee Secretary (Gwyneth Kirby) and those with ministerial responsibility for the Church (Sarah and Helen) providing guidance to the Church Council and also acts upon the

decisions and policies of the Church Council. The Leadership Team typically meets prior to each Council meeting to discuss any matters which need be brought to the attention of the full Council meeting and also to provide any recommendations or proposals to be discussed and if appropriate approved by the Council.

If any members of the Church or the wider church family know of anything that they feel the Leadership Team should be aware of they should raise this with one of the Leadership Team where it will be raised at the next scheduled meeting or, if necessary, by convening an extra meeting. Details of when these scheduled meetings take place will be advised in the normal Church notices.



Did you read in our Remembrance section (page 30) about the display at the back of the church? Martin Rogers had brought together the Commonwealth War Graves Commission certificates for some 60 Rosyth men who perished during the First World War.

This was of course in the very earliest stages of Rosyth's development, and the list may not be complete, so do let Martin know if you can add any names.



Responsibility, not reward

The sermon on Matthew 25.14-30

preached by Jim Mein on St Margaret's Day, 16 November 2014

That was not one of my favourite parables – “To those who have more will be given but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away”. Now there is a true reflection on our world – on all that I dislike about our world, the unfairness of it. If you have money you can save money. The powerful always screw the less powerful. Big shops bully their suppliers to lower their prices, and are then able to undercut small shops and put them out of business. But this story of the talents is, in different forms, found in both Matthew and Luke so they felt it was important.

So, a reminder: the first two doubled their inheritance – 5 to 10, 2 to 4, but the poorest just returned his 1 for 1. He didn't steal it, or lose it, or waste it, he just kept it safe and handed it back. If it was going to be taken off him at all, leaving him destitute, I wish at least it had been given to the less rich man – the one who now had 4 rather than the guy with 10! It all seems very sad, even immoral. It surely reflects how the world is rather than how it should be. Surely the whole thrust of the Gospel is that those with much should share with those who have little. So I want to reject this story, ignore it, or at least take it off the list of bits that we use in our Sunday readings so I don't have to preach on it.

But perhaps this is why it is important; because it makes me angry; perhaps I should think about it more. Well, what I want to suggest is that the Bible really does speak to the real situation of the world and our lives. We know that talents, whether intelligence, personality or wealth are not distributed evenly – we are all different and some are dealt a better hand than others.

And those dealt a better hand find it easier to improve it further – good family, good education, articulate, attractive, these people often (not always but often) get on in life. We know it's true that to those who have, more will very often be given. Life is not fair. The story of the talents in today's Gospel is what does often happen.

But I want to bring in another Biblical verse Luke 12.48 “From everyone to whom much has been given much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.” I think there is a natural law, and a spiritual law. The natural law is what I've been talking about, the spiritual law is the fundamental thrust of the Bible – and of human development. I think this is the heart of our Christian tradition about original sin. That was never a story meant to be taken literally – a perfect world existing without death or decay, spoilt by a snake or a woman or an apple – but it is a story containing a deep truth. We know a good deal about how our world evolved and there was always suffering, decay and death. The point is that suffering, decay and death are not what is most important, most significant. Most significant is that the creation is evolving, changing, developing. To the best of our knowledge it has evolved towards humanity, towards those who have choice, who have responsibility.

The parable today is about responsibility, not about reward. It is about using the responsibility we have been given, and not hiding it away.

/cont'd overleaf

The story would have been told initially in a context. People listening would have known the basic thrust of Jesus' teaching about generosity and responsibility. They would have known he was much tougher with those in positions of power – the rich landowners and the Pharisees and scribes – than he was with the poor and outcast.

And we too read this story in a context, in the context of the whole Bible and in the context of the teaching of those who have studied the Bible. We can't take one story and assume its most obvious teaching is actually expressing God's will. The point I want to take from this parable is that if those who appear to have few talents refuse to use them, it simply puts more responsibility on those who have more. It leads to a dictatorship by the few over the many. The truth is that even those who appear to have few talents need to use them if they are to live their full humanity – and if they are to make their proper contribution to the welfare of the whole.

One of our most deeply embedded ideals today is democracy. But democracy can only work if all the different talents in

society are used properly. If people refuse to participate, not voting, not contributing, then democracy is taken over by the few – the guys with 10 talents

And this is not just true in politics but in all our interactions with each other. It's true in the workplace, it is true in our families, it is even true in our Churches! If the masses refuse to use their talents the few at the top will run things to their own benefit and the masses will be left with nothing as the parable predicts.

And one more thing: It is not that the 1 talent man should use his talent for his own benefit, only in his own interest. We all have the responsibility whether we have 10, 4, or 1. Of course those with more may be able to be more generous, have the resources to do more – from them more will be required; but we all know that the poorest can often provide what is really most needed – that one to one care, based on an understanding, a fellow feeling. Every one of us has at least 1 talent. It is not good to think we are at the bottom of the heap, too old, too poor, to make a difference. We all have at least one talent and we have the responsibility to use it.



The Act of Commitment from our 23 November service

When you go home, tell them of us and say;
For your tomorrow we gave our today.

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that makes for peace? **We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war? **We will**

Will you work for a just future for all? **We will**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love; may we accept the hope that you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, courage and mercy, through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen.**

Working together

Area Council Meeting

Valerie Leslie reports:

St Andrews West Area Council held its last meeting of the year at St Peter's, Inverkeithing on 20 November. The guest speaker was Paul Wilson who works for Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland.

Paul gave a very illuminating presentation on the mission and aims of WPCS within the workplace and in the community of Fife.

Paul said that over half the population are in work, but few of these attend church, having either lost touch with church life or never known it in the first place. The challenge is how to translate the Good News into language relevant to these people – the language of the modern workplace – and show empathy and compassion for everyone there, not just Christians.

Paul was keen to explain to the meeting that WPCS's aim was to work in partnership with mainstream churches throughout Scotland, including Fife, and to foster long term partnership with them.

In Fife, WPCS has a presence in fire stations, shopping centres and retail parks, and the Royal Mail, and shortly they will provide support to workers in Fife Council offices.

WPCS provides a listening ear and signposts people who are in real need to resources in the community that will try to help them. They can even direct them to local churches if that is what individuals feel they need. Paul was, however, very clear that the aim of WPCS is non-proselytising. They do not seek to make converts of the people they come into contact with, but they will put people in touch with clergy and church should they wish to discuss deeper faith issues.

Paul's presentation was excellent. There are leaflets on the noticeboard in the foyer. Please do have a look at them for more information about this excellent resource.

Rosyth Foodbank

Erica Lock writes:

Rosyth Foodbank continues to open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 4pm to 6pm. Over the Christmas period it will be open on Monday 23 and Tuesday 23 December during the same hours, and extra supplies will be issued to cover the holiday time.

On Friday 11 November we said a sad goodbye to Dorothy Hood and two session leaders who have resigned. They will be greatly missed by volunteers and public alike, as they all gave many extra hours outwith the Foodbank opening times to ensure its smooth running, and their support and dedication is a great loss.

The Crush Hall donations continue to be delivered to the Foodbank weekly by Mandy and Dave Ward and are a welcome additions to our supplies. Please keep up your generous gifts – your support is really appreciated. The updated list of needs will be in the Notice Sheet each week. Many, many, thanks.

It is a privilege to be involved with the Foodbank and I will do my best to keep you in the picture at intervals over the year.

2015 dates

Dates for next year's Area Council meetings are in the diary section on page 18.

Please put the dates in your diary and do come along to any of these meetings. They are always enjoyable and informative and open to all members in the St Andrews West area.

Lent 2015

Jim Mein asks for your comments ...

With Ash Wednesday on 18 February, I've been thinking of what we might do during Lent next year (the Wednesdays would be 25 February, 4, 11, 18, 25 March).

In 2013, we looked at aspects of Church life: Spirituality wheel, Polarities, Different size congregations behaving differently, and what makes for a 'healthy' congregation.

In 2014, we read and studied the whole of St Mark's Gospel.

In 2015, I thought we might try and look at various 'divisive but important' issues using broadly the pattern of the Province in their 'Cascade' discussions.

The theory behind these conversations is that we are not seeking "the right answer" but rather opening up a subject to gather the variety of views.

A "working agreement" for the evenings may include the following:

- We will respect others, permitting one voice at a time and not interrupting even if we disagree.
- We will listen to one another and seek understanding rather than agreement.
- We will be open, honest and gracious with one another.
- We will take responsibility for what we each say.
- We will not attempt to dominate the conversation but give time to others.
- We will maintain confidentiality about any personal details, opinions or stories expressed and share our wider learning without attribution of names to individuals.

Each session might be introduced by our listening to a conversation between two invited people, preferably with differing views.

Possible topics (there could be many others):

- Continuing the cascade discussion in the Church about same-sex marriage.
- Sharing thoughts about 'end-of-life' issues.
- Homelessness in our cities – causes and possible answers
- A 'world issue' – Israel/Palestine? or global warming? or immigration?
- What might be helpful for inter-faith relationships?
How far can we compromise?

The overall aim is to help us as congregations recognise that there are many strongly-held but sometimes differing views amongst us, and to see if this can be a creative situation rather than divisive.

Discussions would be in a Christian context with some worship, and we could, if we wished, open this up to other congregations besides Holy Trinity and St Margaret's – either through the Diocese or in our communities.

I'll be discussing this with the Vestries before starting to invite visiting "introducers" and any comments from any of you will be very welcome.

jim@meins.plus.com
01506 834317

On Not Being a Burden

adapted from a recent post on "Pam's Perambulation",
a blog by Rev Pam Webster, a Methodist minister

'Being a burden' has to be one of the biggest fears in our society. We don't want to reach the place where we can no longer control our own lives. We don't want to have to rely on anyone else. We desperately don't want to put anyone else out.

Paul says to the Thessalonians: "You remember how night and day we struggled to make a living, so that we could tell you God's message without being a burden to anyone." [read 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13]

Paul seems to make a big thing about not having been a burden to the Thessalonians. He is keen that they know that he was making his own living, not relying on them for income.

This is interesting. Historically and generally the Methodist Church pays its ministers a stipend. This is not a wage, but money paid to you so that you can meet living expenses without having to do other work, in essence so that you are free to fulfil your calling - a calling that the church has set you apart for. So as someone who has lived off a stipend in the past, I have a bit of an uncomfortable wriggle in my seat at this point. Though I hope I was no burden and fulfilled my calling! I was also very grateful that was the case and realise how fortunate I was to be freed in such a way.

Anyway, I digress from the point. This passage made me think about being a burden. Specifically, are there times in which I am a burden to my community? As someone with chronic illness, I can easily perceive myself as a burden. I need help and lots of it, I rely on other people to do things that I would much rather prefer to be able to do for myself, I can't offer all I long to. But I hope that is not truly being a burden and is incorporated as being part of a healthy community.

But are there other ways I can be a burden? Being unhelpful? Dragging others down by my attitude? Being bolshy (a particular specialism of mine!)? Not doing what I could? Not sharing what I have? Not letting others help me, when it would help them to do so? Being protective of my gifts? Letting others get on with things without helping? Thinking I'm a special case? I'm sure the list could go on. These are ways of being a burden that are choices. Decisions that make anyone a weight or a carrier of weight.

Am I a burden on my community? On my church fellowship? On the world? Am I weighing down when I should be lifting up? Expecting others to carry me, when I should be doing the carrying? Or can I stand before God and his people in the knowledge that I do all I can in the best way I can for the service of him and the world?

We are called to be burden bearers, not burden makers.

Forgive me Lord,
the times I have got in the way,
held things back,
dragged things down
and not pulled my weight.
Forgive me when I have been a burden
to you,
your work,
my community
and ultimately myself.
Lord,
I want to be a burden bearer.
Show me how I can carry the weights
of others,
the needs of my community,
the burdens of your world.
You are the great burden-bearer
who carries all our weights,
may I find my strength in you.

Original at <http://tinyurl.com/kyk45y7>

In Flanders Fields – Part 1

The sermon preached by Jim Mein on Remembrance Sunday, 9 November 2014

I guess because it is 100 years since 1914, a book group I belong to decided to read Sebastian Faulks novel *Birdsong*. And then I bought a new biography of Woodbine Willie, the Rev Studdart Kennedy who was a Chaplain in the First World War and always been a hero of mine since I was given a book of his poems the year I was first ordained – quite expensive then at 7/6p. I used two of his poems in the remembrance we started our service with because I want to meditate on two feelings. There are all the negative things about war – but there is also, with the red poppies that grew in the fields of Flanders, the hope, the belief, that it was not all waste. That out of the struggle, the sacrifice, something new can arise. That the leaves may fall but the tree survives and with the strength of the decaying leaves, grows again and flowers in the next spring.

Over the years I think I've normally preached on the loss, on the waste of the thousands of mainly young people killed in the two great wars and all the other struggles. Seeing it as a sad time; trying to comfort those who mourn. But today I want to take the risk of trying to think about the heroism.

This is a risk because you may think I am glorifying war – I am not – but sometimes war may be necessary, and it can be the focus of great heroism, and out of it can sometimes come new life.

We can be cynical creatures. I remember long ago reading a book *Eminent Victorians* by Lytton Strachey. It was a sort of exposé, a warts-and-all biography of four famous people. It seemed very challenging then but today every famous figure, past or present, is picked over for their flaws. It seems that the more unflattering the picture, the more shameful the secrets, the more perverse the

interpretations for their actions that can be found, the better. And it spills over so that whole groups in our society can be seen in particularly negative ways.

Young people are out of control, uninterested in school, on drugs, dangerous in the street. We know this is not true of the vast majority of young people we actually know. Or politicians only seek their own interest and can never be trusted – this is simply not the case with most of those that I know in any party. Social workers are inept, all Christians judgemental, police fascists, priests paedophiles. We know that none are perfect and some will be all that is reported, but my experience is that the better I know someone, the more likely it is that I will find they have many good points – and I might even begin to understand why they do the things I find so objectionable.

We remember war in order to celebrate peace. That's what people did at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 – they danced in the streets to celebrate peace, the end of those awful years when the young strength of the nation died in their tens of thousands in the mud of the Flanders trenches. I believe to be true the terrible descriptions I read in the *Birdsong* novel and in the poems of Owen and Sassoon and Woodbine Willie, but I know that from my sheltered life I am incapable of really imagining the horror. And so I do see the danger of trying to look beyond that horror to find something good – yet that is surely what we must do.

I admire pacifists and maybe in the end they hold the moral high ground, but I think in the end it is the reason we take the view we do that is most important. I can be a pacifist in a situation where I think I am not really involved. Situations on the far side of the world can be ignored – if I

don't see myself being affected then doing nothing is much easier than rolling up my sleeves. There is nothing moral in that. On the other hand I can get involved and fight when my interests are threatened or my pride challenged. There is nothing moral in that. The moral course usually costs, and will generally arise from a concern about others. And this is the heroism we are celebrating today.

I can't judge, none of us can, the motives of those who took up arms in the great wars or those who are engaged in the conflicts round the world today. But I do want to recognise that many of them were, are, heroes and heroines. I want to recognise that I live in a better world because others have fought for the values they believed in and died for. And so this morning I not only mourn the loss but I celebrate the sacrifice and heroism.

In the end we shall be judged, I believe, both by God and by our grandchildren, on how much we are willing to sacrifice for what we believe is good and true. I can't enter the minds of those who died but I want to be inspired by them. There are many struggles in our world today – the urgent need for a political vision not based solely on self-interest but rising up from the sacrifices of the past. There is always a war against evil, waged in many ways on many fronts, and certainly not always with swords, preferably never with swords but I don't have the courage or perhaps the faith to be totally pacifist.

The Bible calls us to try and live in peace with all but it also calls us to defend the weak, support the poor, and challenge evil. Perhaps for the first time in human history we can see the world as one, see the inter-dependence of every tribe in every corner and so see our responsibility for them all.

Indeed we see that inter-dependence, that responsibility, spreading out beyond people of different race or colour, beyond people to the whole creation. The concern we have for animals, for trees and plants and the whole environment is part of this expansion of concern. It can cost us, not we hope with premature death, but with our lives, day by day.

We remember those who died; those who went above and beyond, to the final limit. That is the way of God as we saw in Jesus on the cross. It is that journey of generosity, life-giving, that can help us rise above our material nature, and begin to feel the stirrings of our divinity – begin to feel the wonder that we are indeed created, not in the image of the first amoeba, but in the image of God. Life is not about where we have come from but rather, where we are going to.



In Flanders Fields – Part 2

On Remembrance Sunday we had the traditional readings (Job 19.21–27, 1 Corinthians 15.51–57, and John 6.37–40). We listened to the Last Post, kept silence, and then heard Reveille sounded. And then we listened to the sermon you can read on the previous pages.

Flanders poppies were more explicitly the theme of the Sunday@Six service on 23 November, devised and led by Sue Masson, which was based on a service outline and prayers produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. This time of reflection attracted a congregation of over 40 from churches throughout the area.

The St Margaret's choir sang John Goss's setting of "God so loved the world", Peter Aston's setting of "So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth" (a translation of Pericles' funeral oration), and John Bell's hymn "To be a soldier" (StF 133).

Our new hymnbook *Singing the Faith* has a number of other modern hymns suitable for remembrance, so the congregation joined in "By a monument of marble" (StF 131) and "Lord, in our lonely hours" (StF 616), as well as "What shall we pray?" which has become familiar from *Common Ground*.



Accompaniment for the hymns came from a wind quartet: Gill McNeill – flute, Adrian Masson – oboe, Glenn Driver – clarinet, Ivy Partridge – bassoon. The quartet played "Nimrod" as members of the congregation laid their poppies on the altar, and concluded the service by playing William Walton's "Elegy for Richard III".



Sue's research had uncovered names from a wide range of conflicts from the Indian Mutiny to Afghanistan, so each of the poppy cards that were brought forward bore the name, regiment and date and place of death of someone from Fife who had died in their country's service.

The first of two talks, by Sue Masson, related to John Macrae's poem "In Flanders Fields", and the contribution of Moina Belle Michael to the adoption of the poppy as a way of keeping faith with all who died.

But it was the second talk, by Adrian Masson, that really gripped the congregation. He spoke of men he had known personally, who were serving on HMS Sheffield in the Falklands, and had given their lives "in the finest traditions of the Service".

After the service, folk were reluctant to depart, and spent time looking at Martin Rogers' display of Commonwealth War Graves Commission certificates for some 60 Rosyth men who had perished during the First World War.

Contact points and meeting times

This list supplements the list of formal contacts given on the inside cover, and is for the activities and organisations run by the Methodist Church Council, St Margaret's Vestry, and by affiliated but independent organisations.

Church activities

Methodist Gift Aid enquiries to
Stuart Fowell 01383 823936
Stuart.Fowell@btinternet.com

Property matters and letting enquiries to
Martin Rogers 01383 415458
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

St Margaret's Choir
Sue Masson 01383 824887
susan.masson@btinternet.com

St Margaret's Gift Aid enquiries to
Marc Tempelhoff 01383 410151
marct@talktalk.net

Sunday School and Messy Church
Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779
gmkirby@hotmail.com

Toddlers' Group (Wed/Fri 0930–1100)
Elaine Lambert 01383 417071
elaine.lambert1@sky.com

Traidcraft
Myra Tarr 01383 723989
myra@mtarr.co.uk

Wednesday Fellowship (Wed 1415–1600)
Mary Kidd 01383 872332
cmarykidd@btinternet.com

Organisations meeting in our premises

Brambles Playgroup (Wed/Fri 0915–1145;
Wed/Thu/Fri 1245–1515, in term-time)
Lesley Hynd (senior play leader)
07758 877284
bramblesplaygroup@sky.com

Howard Kirby (chair) 01383 624779
brambles@rosythmethodist.org.uk

Parahandies Disabled Club (Mon 0930–1400)
Peter Merckel (sec) 01383 822940
peter.merckel@yahoo.co.uk

Scout Group

Group Scout Leader
see Martin Rogers 01383 415458
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

Beaver Scouts (Tue 1730–1830)
David Sinclair 01383 410255
davidgraeme31@yahoo.co.uk

Cub Scouts (Tue 1830–2015)
Martin Rogers 01383 415458
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

Scouts (Fri 1900–2115)
Alan Connery 01383 731391
alan.connery@virgin.net

Explorer Scouts (Fri 1900–2115)
Terry O'Neill 01383 842695
terryoneill2003@yahoo.co.uk

Guide Unit

Rainbows (Mon 1800–1900)
Susan Warren 01383 414355
susarren@aol.com

Brownies (Mon 1800–1930)
Nicola Byrne 07956 005996
NicolaByr44ne86@hotmail.com

Guides (Mon 1800–2030)
Melissa Peel 07850 249911
6throsythguides@gmail.com

Please let the Editor know of any changes or additions to this list, preferably by email to editor@rosythmethodist.org.uk

Fifty years of faithful service

As you'll see on page 21, a surprise item at the Group barbecue in September at Fordell Firs was a presentation to Martin Rogers to mark his 50th anniversary as a leader (and 60th anniversary as a member of the 13th Fife Scout Group). A number of former leaders were invited along for the occasion and some memories shared, along with a celebration cake. And the sun shone!



Martin Rogers at Fordell with his celebration cake (photo: Dunfermline Press)

Martin is also well-known in Rosyth for his historical researches, and was responsible for the pictorial remembrance of servicemen from Rosyth that was used at the back of the church for *In Flanders Fields*. This display, also used at the Garden City Exhibition in May, was of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission entries for some sixty men of Rosyth who gave their lives in the First World War.

Contact on-line

You'll find this edition, and many previous issues of Contact, on the archive pages of both the church websites, where you'll get the benefits of colour without the extra printing cost!

To our contributors

Grateful thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue, both in writing material and during the production phase. The next issue will be published on 25 January 2015, when we will be worshipping together in our Annual Covenant Service, so please let us have your contributions at the very latest by the end of play on **Thursday 15 January**, preferably by email to editor@rosythmethodist.org.uk.