

Rosyth  
Methodist Church

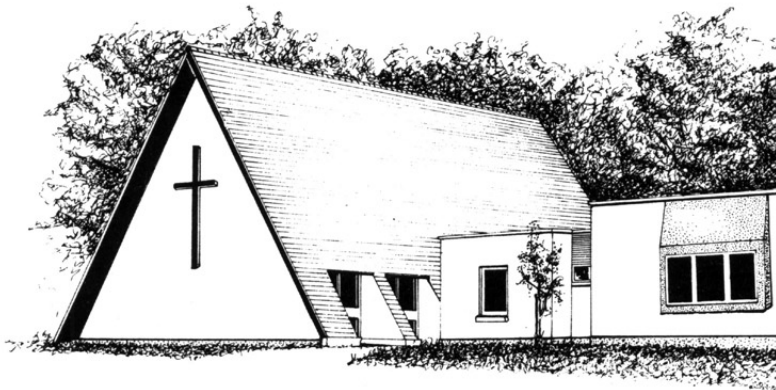
St Margaret's Scottish  
Episcopal Church



# Contact

the newsletter of the partnership between

Rosyth Methodist Church and  
St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church



Issue 71

December 2013/January 2014

Rosyth  
Methodist Church

Scottish Charity SC028559

St Margaret's Scottish  
Episcopal Church

Scottish Charity SC028426

## **in partnership**

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

**Minister:**

Deacon Sarah McDowall  
01383 611000

**Co-ordinating Steward:**

David Salthouse 01383 889212

**Pastoral Secretary:**

Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779

**Church Council Secretary:**

Sandra Wilson 01383 415885

**Interim Treasurer:**

Howard Kirby 01383 624779

**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 Episcopalian 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 “Sunday Funday”

### **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.

## From our Interim Rector ...

Dear Friends in our two linked communities,

Preparing to preach at my 51st Christmas in a dog collar I find I am more amazed than ever at our claim. I simply sit in wonder at how men and women had the imagination to formulate it.

Put simply and crudely, as human beings we have searched through our religions for meaning and understanding. I can see how some have tried to imagine a perfect human being, and I can see how some have tried to imagine the gods behaving on earth, but far more difficult surely is the idea of the fullness of God being found in a human person, living with all our limitations.

A few temptations to embroider the story may have proved irresistible – for instance the choirs of angels and wise men bringing gifts are I think later additions – but the idea of a baby, the son of Mary and Joseph, with brothers and sisters, living a carpenter’s life and then a prophet’s life with its suffering and dying: this is surely utterly remarkable as a picture of the creator God.

The incarnation – the belief that Jesus was both fully human and Divine – has always been virtually impossible to believe. From early times, when the school of Antioch stressed the human and the school of Alexandria stressed the Divine, we all slip one way or the other. But beyond that, what I find so amazing, is how the concept that we should hold try to hold these two images together ever came to be.

The Divine and human nature of Jesus in Christian faith is not a problem to be solved, or a choice to be made, but a polarity to be lived. It is the holding of two things in tension, not finding a mid-point, but celebrating both ends. It is seeing God as being both utterly other and totally at one with us – amazing.

But enough theology. At Christmas many of you will celebrate with family and friends at parties, with presents, food and drink. It is the birthday party we all share and it is right and good to celebrate it. But it is for ALL – and so I hope we can also remember the many who will be lonely, homeless, sick and so on.

The image of God sharing our world can inspire each of us to share in the worlds of those who don’t have all that we have. As Jesus symbolises the breaking down of the greatest divide of all (Creator and creation) can we be inspired to pray for and work for the breaking down of all that divides us in this world? God’s Spirit within us does make us brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of God. Can it make us wise enough, courageous enough, to seek justice, exercise mercy, and live humbly with God?

May God be with, and in,  
each one of us, so bringing  
Peace on earth and goodwill  
to all people.

Jim Mein

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### What’s in this issue ...

You’ll find Advent/Christmas material on pp3–7, and scattered elsewhere, as well as the usual items:

- Diary for November–February (pp16–19)
- Fellowship News (pp8–9)
- From the Superintendent (p20)
- Invitations and requests (pp6, 10, 27)
- News about our young people (pp11–15)
- Reports on activities (pp19, 24–27, 30)

Plus some stimulus to thought and action on pp21–23 and pp28–29.

# Getting ready for Christmas

## Advent Study Group

The St Columba Group will meet for the four Monday evenings leading up to Christmas, starting on **25 November**. The material used will be the BBC DVD *The Nativity*, which comes in four parts, supplemented by material from Joyce Huggett's book *Joy to the World*. Each meeting will start at 7.30pm. Further details may be had from Alan Taylor or Jack Fowell. All are welcome to join in.

## Rosyth Community Nativity

7.00pm on **Tuesday 3 December** sees the start of our Christmas celebrations:



See the back page for details, and how to get tickets.

## Advent carols in Edinburgh

If you are in Edinburgh on **Sunday 1 December**, why not join in the annual Advent Carol Service around the nativity scene in St Andrew Square Garden at 5.00pm. This year the service is in conjunction with St Andrew's & St George's West and Edinburgh Churches Together.

Don't forget the Nativity Scene will be there until early January for you to stand and think about the meaning of Christmas. The life-size sculpture depicts a family taking shelter in a ramshackle shed, with the Mary figure clutching her newborn child close, a look of forlorn contemplation on her face.

## Carols coming early!

You are invited to join us on **15 December** at 6.00pm for our annual Christmas carol service. Note the earlier date – this is *not* the Sunday before Christmas!

The offering at the service will be in aid of CHAS (CHAS Gift Aid envelopes area available from Marc Tempelhoff).

## Music for Christmas

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

**Thursday 5 December** at 7.30pm

Kingdom Singers Winter Concert including Christmas music in Dunfermline Carnegie Hall Annexe.

**Saturday 7 December** at 3.00pm & 7.30pm

Dunfermline Choral Union Christmas Carol Concerts at The Vine, Dunfermline.

**Saturday 7 December** at 7.30pm

Scottish Chamber Choir sing Advent music from both Orthodox and Western traditions at Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh.

On **Monday 9 December and Tuesday 10 December** you will have a chance to sing

Christmas carols in Dunfermline Abbey in a recording that will be used in BBC Scotland's Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve. More detail on our back cover, and see page 27 to find out how to take part in this exciting event.

On **Saturday 21 December**, over the lunch-time period 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.

# 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 and want to worship God quietly and reflectively as we bring to Him all our concerns. We might be fearful of threatened redundancy and unemployment and all that that will mean.

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 eagerly await.

All are welcome to join us on **Thursday 19 December** at 7.30pm.

## Readers needed!

For our Carol Service on **15 December** we will be using readings from a modern dramatised version of the Bible, so we need lots of readers of all ages. Volunteers please speak to Deacon Sarah McDowall as soon as possible.

## Witness at Christmas and the New Year

Do join us ...

### ... on Christmas Eve

3.00pm Christingle Service at Holy Trinity

4.00pm All-age Nativity service at our church, led by Deacon Sarah McDowall (see page 11)

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 Deacon Sarah McDowall

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

### ... on 29 December at our church

9.30am Sung Eucharist led by Rev Ross Kennedy

11.00am Morning Worship led by Rev Mitchell Bunting

### ... on 26 January at our church

11.00am Joint Covenant Service led by an Episcopal Minister and Deacon Sarah McDowall

6.00pm Sunday@Six Taizé Service

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## One minute, please

What did Jesus say?

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.”

John 8:31 (NIV)

# Invitations and requests

## Sunday@Six

Our Sunday@Six worship continues with input from church members and outside speakers. Currently the choir is working on several services, the first being an Advent Carol Service planned for **24 November**. This is a collection of songs, anthems and reflections designed to turn our thoughts towards Christmas.

**15 December** will be Carols by Candlelight, this year led by Deacon Sarah McDowell and using the dramatised version of the Christmas Bible readings.

**24 January** will find us in reflective mood using chants, songs and readings from Taizé.

Watch out for **24 February** – an extravaganza of classical music including lieder by Marc, anthems from the choir, and music from a wind quintet – all based on a theme of Love.

We work hard to create different types of experiences for the Sunday@Six programme, seeing it as an important part of our outreach, so do come and join us!

Sue Masson

## Annual Church Christmas dinner

The Church Christmas dinner will be held on **9 January 2014** at Ciao Italia restaurant at 6.15 for 6.30pm. We look forward to seeing everybody there.

As before the bill will be totalled and divided by the number attending.

The restaurant is located between the viaduct and Dell Farquharson Centre. Parking is behind the restaurant.

Please add your name to the list on the notice board.

David Slater and Dennis Cook

## 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 **Tuesday 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 14–22 December.

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## Memorial Book

The next update of the Memorial Book will take place early in the New Year. Please provide any details to David Slater or Dennis Cook.

**J**ohn and  
Rosemary Cowell  
wish all their friends a  
Happy Christmas and  
a healthy & prosperous  
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  
offers to everybody in  
the church his best wishes  
for Christmas and a good  
New Year!

**R**on and Mary  
Dempster  
send Christmas  
Blessings to both Church  
Families and love, joy  
and peace in 2014.

**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 members and friends  
and readers of Contact in the  
Methodist community. May the  
Peace of the Lord be with you.

**J**anet Murray  
sends love and the prayer  
that everyone will know the  
love that God has for us as  
we celebrate Jesus' birthday.  
Happy Christmas to everyone.

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

# Fellowship News

## A thank you from Olive McNee

I would like to thank all my friends at St Margaret's for all the love and good wishes given to me on moving from Rosyth to Winchburgh. Believe you me you have not seen the last of me, I will return – like the proverbial bad penny – maybe not so often during the winter months, but when the weather, etc. is in my favour I shall be back. You are all my friends and I treasure this very much.

I am slowly getting the flat looking like home. I still have decorating to do, but this will wait now until the spring, and a rather large garden at the back and two smaller ones at the front will need a lot of attention when the weather allows. I could be looking for volunteers! I would also like to thank you for the voucher for Dobbie's Garden Centre which I will use next year.

Once again, I thank you all so much for your good wishes. Please all keep in touch. I do hear from Sue and Adrian, Erica and Myra, and I will see you all very soon.

All my Love and God Bless you all, Olive

## As others see us

Sandra Young recently showed the Rector and five members of the Vestry of St Mary's Episcopal Church, Dunblane, round the church en route to a visit to Kirkcaldy. They were attracted to us by the photo of the mural on the website and were curious to see it. In a letter to Sandra after the visit their Vestry Secretary wrote "We came away with our minds full of ideas of what could be done to create a light, bright interior of a church. You are lucky to have that stunning mural as a backdrop. It is really special". They were also impressed with the displayed art work created by the children during Sunday Funday (see page 11).

## Family News

**Ruby Melrose** one of our Church Family sadly passed away on Saturday 12 October. Although she had not been in good health for the last year it was such a shock to her partner Ken and her family.

Deacon Sarah McDowall conducted a very moving service at the crematorium, which many friends of Ruby's attended. Please keep Ken in your prayers during the coming weeks.

Jean Hall visited **Audrie Pollard** on 27 October at The Beeches. Audrie managed to say a few sentences, mainly about the Church, and asked to be reminded to everyone. Ron and Mary visited her the following day but her speech was very poor and she only managed a word here and there, although she did recognize them.

Ron and Mary visited **Margaret Forsythe** at Villa Atina in Kinghorn recently and found her quite cheerful and plenty to talk about, even although she has great difficulty hearing.

## New grandparents

Congratulations to Deacon Sarah and Archie on the birth of their granddaughter Gracie Lisa.





## Frieda Trew



Frieda will also be remembered for other talents she was blessed with and shared among us. Some of the notices around the premises remind us of the contribution she made by serving on the Church Council and Property Committee. Her artwork was always in evidence when there was a special event to be advertised at church, and she was known to supply most of the visual aids used in worship led by Malcolm. She relished a Flower Festival, loved flower-arranging, house plants and her garden.

“Craftsman’s art and music’s measure  
for Thy pleasure all combine”

If ever there was a verse in our hymnody which sums up our love and respect for our beloved Frieda Trew, who died very peacefully on Saturday 16 November – this is it!

Frieda, with her husband, our minister, Malcolm, came to Rosyth in 1989, and so began their time of ministry among us. Frieda became our organist, and her ministry among us continued long after Malcolm retired. In 2007 she was awarded a 60-year Long Service Award from the Methodist Church Music Society. She was self-taught, and here we express our gratitude for all that she accomplished in her time with us, contributing to the worship and music of our church.



She had an admirable knowledge of all these things. In her later years she encouraged me to ‘do the flowers’, and used to love coming along to help and share with me some of secrets of her success!

I’m sure we’ll all cherish our own memories of this very special lady, who contributed so much to the life of our church in many ways.

“In Thy house, great God, we offer  
of thine own to thee;  
and for thine acceptance proffer  
all unworthily  
hearts and minds and hands and voices  
in our choicest  
psalmody.”

Mary Kidd



# Can you help?

## Support and ideas needed!

Can you help? Formed in 1990 as Scotland's national ecumenical instrument, Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) brings together nine denominations in Scotland who share a desire for greater oneness between churches. In its work, ACTS seeks to enable the Scottish churches in their common life, and this includes a "sponsoring body" through which Local Ecumenical Partnerships support each other.

There is an annual LEP "Gathering", and those that Sandra Young and others have been to in previous years have included some really excellent presentations. But on **Saturday 22 March 2014** it is the turn of *our* LEP to host the annual LEP Gathering! The organising committee will be visiting shortly to look at the church and to discuss the programme.

The Gathering will include a presentation on our LEP, and we will need *everybody's* support and ideas in preparing this. Please give Sandra Young your offers of help and ideas for the presentation.

## A hard act to follow!

The last meeting of the local Christian Aid Committee was held on 19 November in the Parish Church Hall. The Committee needs new members, as it is mainly made up of Parish Church representatives, with just one from the Catholic Church and only Mary Dempster from the Methodist Church and St Margaret's.

Having been our representative since 1991 (22 years!) and acted as the Secretary on a few occasions during that time, Mary feels that now is the time to retire. If serving Christian Aid in this way is something you are willing to do, please speak to her.

## Paschal Candle 2014

It has become tradition that the new Paschal Candle is donated by a member of the congregation in memory of a loved one or perhaps to commemorate a special anniversary. For the first time in 2013, the candle was given by a member of the Methodist congregation.

Would you like to donate the Paschal Candle for 2014? It will be ordered early in 2014 so that it is ready to be blessed on Easter Day. If you would like to do this, please speak to Alan Taylor.

## Action for Children

Many thanks to everyone who helped raise £63 net after prizes for this good cause.

I hope to do the next Quiz on Christmas hymns and songs in December.

If anyone would like a home collection box, please contact me.

Thank you Jean Hall

## Birth

Something new  
beyond what already is  
surprising our minds  
stretching our hearts  
we can no longer be the same - -

And Jesus' birth  
a new creation  
heaven and earth  
a sign of love we could not dream  
calling to the far side of possibility - -

In 2013 may the Spirit birth  
visions greater than present realities  
compassion deeper than fair justice  
harmony in all the chords of creation  
a humanity deserving our  
evolutionary place - -

Jim Mein

# Our young people

Gwyneth Kirby writes ...

## Sunday Funday

Christmas is fast approaching, and on 8 December we will be learning more about the meaning of Christmas through crafts, story and song, during Sunday Funday. If you know of any children who would enjoy this please invite them along or, better still, bring them yourself. We start at 9.00am with breakfast, courtesy of David and David in the kitchen, and then the children can try five or six different crafts which fit in with the theme of the day. We finish with a story and a song, and the children are ready to leave at about 10.30am. Some children stay for the service at 11.00am, but there is no pressure to do so since the children have already taken part in worship.



Other themes we have looked at since September have been the beauty and wonder of God's world in Autumn, Joseph the dreamer, and Elijah the prophet. In January we will continue with Elijah's story. Some months we try to create something which can be displayed in Church or in the corridor, so that we can share what we have been doing with everyone.

Sunday Funday is a great way for young children, with their parents, grandparents or carers, to learn more about what the Bible teaches us, and how it relates to our

## Sunday School

During the next few weeks we in Sunday School will have our eyes firmly fixed on Christmas Eve. During the Service at 4.00pm we will be performing a Nativity play called Michael Mouse. It is some years since we have shared in a Nativity play, so we are going to be very busy preparing. All our "regulars" will be involved, as well as any children who come to the Christmas Eve Service. There are parts for some of our grown-ups as well, and lots of lovely carols, so this isn't just for children and young families. What a great way to get ready for the day itself.

We are going to need help with simple costumes, scenery and music, so please share your talents! And please come along with family and friends to share in this experience.

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everyday lives. We would love to share this with as many children as possible (from tots up to the age of 11) so please help us to make it more widely known.

No children to bring along? You are still welcome to come along and see what goes on. Bacon sandwiches are always available!

# Brambles Playgroup – an update!

by Howard R Kirby (Chair)

Recruitment of a new Playleader was a significant pre-occupation for the small committee during the summer break, and we were delighted at the quality and quantity of the response to our advertisement. Following her appointment in mid-August to this role, **Pamela MacDonald** has been working closely with Lead Practitioner **Lesley Hynd** to consolidate good practice and develop new initiatives.

We were grateful to the charity 'Children with Special Needs in Pre-school' (CSNIPs) for a new grant to enable one-to-one support to be given to a child with additional support needs, and after due advertisement **Jemma Black** was (re-) appointed Playfriend, in which role she has established an excellent reputation.

Invaluable support in the playgroup is now also being provided by two volunteers, with **Denise Morris** supporting another child on a one-to-one basis and **Sue Masson** bringing delight in music and singing to the children, along with her ukulele.

The number of children on the register has increased steadily following the usual low start at the beginning of the school year, and has now reached 22. Thanks to the Relief Bank arrangement with Pitreavie Playgroup and Little VIPs, **Johann Bald** has been joining us as Relief Play Leader to ensure that the required 1:5 adult:child ratio is maintained for each session.

On the financial front, we are most grateful to the Church Council for offering to provide a loan to ease the cash flow problem that usually arises at the end of the month when wages are due. Fund-raising via the Teddy Toddler in June raised over £500, and we look forward to the Christmas Fair which **Marion Hutchison** has kindly organised for us on Saturday 23 November.

Sadly though, Fife Council has decided not to renew the Partnership Contract with us for the provision of pre-school education (that is for 3–5 year olds). Formally the reason was that the number of funded children had fallen below the preferred minimum of five eligible children in all three terms of the last Academic Year.

The decision means that, so far as fees are concerned for children aged 3–5, there will, from January 2014, no longer be a level playing field as between a school nursery (which is free of charge) and education at the Playgroup (where the normal charge of £7.50/session will now apply).

This creates a dilemma for parents, and a dilemma for Brambles. Those parents who had wished their children to stay on at Brambles on reaching the age of 3 by 31 December are now frustrated and angry because a free pre-school place may now be denied them, not just at Brambles but because enquiries have shown that alternative nursery places in the area are now full for January starts. (Those who wish their child to go to a nursery school on reaching 3 have to book a place a year in advance.) Faced with the financial burden of paying fees at Brambles, or sending their child to a more remote nursery school, the sense of "unfairness" is strong.

For Brambles, the questions being addressed are whether the blow can be softened for existing parents; and how Brambles should respond to the loss of funding.

Discussions with parents, the newly appointed SPPA Development Officer and staff of the Education Service have confirmed there is no leeway on the position from January, but reassurance has been given that we can re-apply for Partner Provider status later.

The key to doing so securely is basically the same as the key to sustainability for Brambles as a whole: increasing the numbers of children coming to Brambles. Better promotion, via a website (soon to be launched), Facebook, and car stickers, is under way. Increasing the numbers of children registered for the age range of 2½ to 3 is now a more urgent objective. Better links with the Toddlers' Group at the Church should help. And serious consideration is now being given to offering more attractive choices for parents, not less, by becoming open for three full days a week (that is, six 2½-hour sessions, not five) from January.

## How you can help

As a registered Scottish charity (SC00916), Brambles needs to widen the circle of those who support it beyond the immediate group of the parents/carers of the currently registered children. This could provide not only much needed financial support but also skills that the committee members at any one time may not have.

There are two general areas where you, as a reader of Contact, could help us increase the number of children going to Brambles.

**Helping with marketing and publicity.** This could be:

- at a strategic level of thinking through what and how we might do things differently, and having oversight of it all, *or*
- at the detailed level of design of leaflets etc, *or*
- at the enabling level of knowing the people to see/talk to, *or*
- at the "feet on the ground" level of distributing leaflets in some streets.

**Helping generate money** to provide the funds for the printing and publicity costs that would be incurred. This could be by:

**direct giving**, for example

- making **donations**; Gift-Aided donations would be especially welcome as then every £1 given becomes £1.25, *and/or*
- joining in **fund-raising** events

**indirect giving**, for example

- putting **unwanted clothing** in the "Rag-bag" collection box in the back entrance room of the church (the money generated is divided equally between Brambles and the Church)
- putting **used printer cartridges/toner** in the recycling box near to the Rag-bag (again, Brambles shares the income with the Church)
- **when shopping online** at such retailers as Tesco, Asda, Next, Debenhams and New Look and hundreds of others, going via <http://tinyurl.com/n9qtvug>. Brambles receives a percentage of the purchase price as a donation, and purchasers get access to lots of offers, discounts and voucher codes.

If you want to give directly, Gift Aid Declaration forms for Brambles Playgroup are available on Wednesdays Thursdays and Fridays in the reception area at the back entrance to Rosyth Methodist Church, or ask Denise Morris ([brambles-treasurer@rosythmethodist.org.uk](mailto:brambles-treasurer@rosythmethodist.org.uk)) or Howard Kirby ([brambles-chair@rosythmethodist.org.uk](mailto:brambles-chair@rosythmethodist.org.uk)).

Both Howard and Denise would also be pleased to receive any other offers of help!

# The Scout Group

A report from Martin Rogers, Assistant Group Scout Leader

Our Scout Group Open Night and AGM was held recently. It was heartening to see a good attendance of youth members as well as parents and supporters. In my report for the AGM I described the Scout Group as being in good heart, with all our sections having membership of 20 or more. We have a good number of leaders and young leaders working in the Group. We also have a Group Executive Committee which supports the Group in areas such as fundraising and running Group events. A number of long serving members stood down at the AGM last year and, although replacements were found, attendances at our committee meetings have been poor. At this year's AGM we recruited some parents to the committee, one of whom was willing to take on the role of secretary which had been vacant during the past year. We are hopeful that the committee will be able to operate more effectively during the coming year. There were two fund-raising events held during the year – a car wash and bring and buy sale in June and our annual barbecue at Aberdour in September. They were both successful raising £430 and £337 respectively for our Group funds.

Our sections have continued to offer a variety of activities suitable to the ages of the youngsters. To the Beavers (6 to 8 years old) a hike to Limekilns and a sleepover in the Church was a great adventure. The Cubs had the opportunity to go hiking and camping and the Scouts and Explorers took part in camps, expeditions and foreign trips. This is in addition to the regular week by week programme of activities leading to the award of Challenge Badges and Chief Scouts Awards.



Three special presentations were made during our Open Night. The first was to one of our Cubs (now a Scout) **Noah Duncan**. Many of you will know Noah's story. When he was 6, he developed a cancerous tumour behind his eye. This was treated with chemotherapy which seemed to be successful. Sadly in February last year during a routine check up it was discovered that the cancer had returned. The only option was to surgically remove the tumour which meant that he also had to lose his eye. Again he had some chemotherapy to try to shrink the tumour before the operation. The operation was carried out in May of last year and I am pleased to say that Noah has made a good recovery.

The Scout Association has a number of meritorious awards which recognise courage and endurance. Last month we received the very good news that Noah had been awarded the Cornwell Scout Badge, the highest award of its kind. This is a great honour and one which is richly deserved. The award is not given solely on the basis of the seriousness of the illness. What is also important is the way in which the recipient has faced up to the illness and treatment.

In that respect, Noah has adopted a very positive attitude from the outset and has continued with his scouting activities as far as he was able during the time of his treatment. He has also done a great deal to promote the work of various cancer charities.

This award is rarely given and there have only been three recipients in Scotland in the last 50-odd years. Noah was presented with the award by the Regional Commissioner Alex Duncan, and he then cut a celebration cake.



The second presentation was to one of our leaders, **Terry O'Neill**. Terry was a Beaver, Cub, Scout and Venture Scout in our Group in his younger days and later rejoined the Group as a Troop helper then assistant leader. He formed an Explorer Scout section in 2002 and has continued as its leader ever since as well as performing the duties of the District Explorer Scout Commissioner for three years. The range of activities which Terry has organised for the Explorer Scouts is immense including walking, gorge walking, scuba diving, kayaking, rifle shooting, powerboat ing, go karting, cycling, mountain biking, curling, global awareness, organising Gang Shows, Edinburgh Extravaganza (visiting tourist attractions in Edinburgh) and visits to Deep Sea World.

The Unit has also been involved in International expeditions to numerous countries in Europe – Belgium, Norway, Holland together with a European Tour through five countries in 2011. They also participated in Eurojam (2005), Kanderjam (2007), the Wings International Jamboree (2009) and the Blair Atholl Jamborette in 2012. Terry was presented with the Award for Merit by Alex Duncan.

The third presentation was a joint one to **Tony and Ann Caudrey**. Their connections to the Group go back 30 years to when their elder son joined the Group. Tony became a leader in the Scout Troop in 1984 developing a very active programme and, in so doing, built up the Troop numbers. He undertook training to obtain a BCU qualification to enable him to take the scouts canoeing. He resigned as Scout Leader in 1992 but continued to serve on the Group Executive Committee taking over as Chairman in 2000. Tony stood down as Chairman at the Group AGM last November but remained on the Group Executive until earlier this year. Ann joined the Group Executive Committee in 1985 and when Tony was a scout leader she used to attend and assist at Scout summer camps. She took on the role of treasurer in 1993, a position she held until 2002 when she became the secretary. She relinquished that role at the AGM last year but has continued to administer the Gift Aid scheme within the Group which brings in welcome revenue each year from HM Revenue and Customs. Tony and Anne are both interested in sailing and, on behalf of the Group, I presented them with a brass ship's bell with a bell rope bearing the scout emblem.

Further details of the Group activities are contained in our Group magazine *Focus* and I would be happy to supply a copy to anyone who is interested in reading it.







# Diary for December 2013/January 2014

- Christmas Eve**      3.00pm Christingle Service at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline  
Rev Ross Kennedy
- 4.00pm All-age Nativity Service      Deacon Sarah McDowall  
(see page 11)
- 11.30pm Midnight Mass at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline  
Very Rev Jim Mein

- Christmas Day**      8.00am Holy Communion (1662 Prayer Book)  
at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline      Rev Ross Kennedy
- 10.00am Family Service      Deacon Sarah McDowall
- 10.00am Holy Communion for Christmas Day  
at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline      Very Rev Jim Mein

## Sunday 29 December

- Christmas 1      9.30am Sung Eucharist      Rev Ross Kennedy
- 11.00am Morning Worship      Rev Mitchell Bunting

## Sunday 5 January

- Epiphany      9.30am Sung Eucharist      Very Rev Jim Mein
- 11.00am Morning Worship      Rev Geoffrey Baines  
David Salthouse (Worship Leader)

Monday 6 Jan      7.30pm Ecumenical Study Group at St Columba's Church,  
Torridon Lane

Thursday 9 Jan      6.30pm Church Christmas Dinner at Ciao Italian Restaurant

## Sunday 12 January

- The Baptism  
of our Lord      9.00am 'Sunday Funday' and Breakfast
- 9.30am Sung Eucharist      Very Rev Jim Mein
- 11.00am Morning Worship      Mr Laurent Vernet  
Deacon Sarah McDowall
- 3.00pm Service at Orchardhead House, Rosyth

Tuesday 14 Jan      6.30pm St Margaret's Vestry meeting in Myra Tarr's home

## Sunday 19 January

- Epiphany 2      9.30am Sung Eucharist      Very Rev Jim Mein
- 11.00am Morning Worship      Rev Christopher Shreeve  
Evelyn Kenny (Worship Leader)

# Diary for January/February 2014

## Sunday 26 January

Epiphany 3      11.00am    Joint Covenant Service      Episcopal led  
Deacon Sarah McDowall

6.00pm    Sunday@Six: Taizé worship

Thursday 30 Jan      7.30pm    St Andrews West Area Council meeting at St Peter's,  
Kirkcaldy. Subject: "Images of faith in photography" by  
Rev Thomas Brauer

## Sunday 2 February

Candlemas      9.30am    Sung Eucharist

11.00am    Morning Worship      Mr Iain Hampson  
David Salthouse (Worship Leader)

Monday 3 Feb      7.30pm    Ecumenical Study Group at St Columba's Church,  
Torridon Lane

Wednesday 5 Feb      2.15pm    Wednesday Fellowship Opening Meeting

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## Dunfermline Foodbank in Rosyth

The Foodbank in Rosyth opened on 16 September. The volunteers donned their green tabards with enthusiasm and waited. We had just one enquiry that first day!

Foodbanks in Fife are operated under the aegis of the Trussell Trust, set up in Salisbury some 20 years ago and currently opening approximately 30 foodbanks a week throughout the UK.

Clients are referred from a variety of agencies – Social Services, Health professionals, Dept of Work and Pensions and Church ministers – who will also advise them of the times of opening of their nearest foodbank in their time of crisis.

Rosyth operates from the Parish Church and is open from 4.00pm to 6.00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. During those times donations of food in tins or well forward dated packets are welcome.

A committee of volunteers from the churches in Rosyth were instrumental in setting up our Foodbank, among them Ron

and Mary Dempster, and without their hard work and commitment, with much help from Dunfermline Foodbank, it would not be up and running here.

Volunteers meet and greet clients, others take their details and needs, while others pack bags and weigh the supplies needed or make tea or coffee for those who come in. We also weigh donations and date them for use or storing for future needs.

The generous donation from our Harvest Festivals of over 25kg of food was greatly appreciated and put to good use, and the donations made in the Crush Hall help maintain our stocks. Two major supermarkets in the area allow us to collect donations of food, toiletries and household cleaning materials from their customers from time to time and match the weight of those goods, so maintaining supplies. The ongoing support from our congregations here is heartwarming and sustaining.

Erica Lock

# From the Superintendent's desk

Andrew Letby writes ...

Dear friends

As I write this I am preparing to participate in a meeting at which decisions will be made about awarding grants to members of our partner churches all around the globe. This is something I undertake as a small service to the Connexion and it serves as a reminder to me that I am part of something much bigger than any of our local churches or even the Edinburgh and Forth Circuit!

In many ways I feel very inadequately equipped to make decisions which could have life changing implications for individuals and communities from China, to Rwanda, Brazil and many other places which for most of us are just places on a map or the backdrop for disturbing news stories. At the same time many of the applications remind me of the common concerns we share as people who seek to live faithfully by gospel values and in harmony with the one who created us.

One application this year stood out to me, it was for help in providing 'safeguarding' training with one of our African partner churches. I hear so much negativity about the need for such learning in our own church communities which saddens me, but experience and my absolute belief that our faith requires us to cherish and protect vulnerable people of all ages keeps the subject top of my agenda. To see the concern shared in a very different culture is heartening and a reminder of our responsibility to care for one another wherever and whoever we are.

Remembering that we are part of something much bigger than our local expressions of church is important in the way we set priorities for our exploring God's mission in our own contexts. Over the last few years we have undertaken a number of reviews and consultations about the life of the Edinburgh and Forth circuit and of Methodism in Scotland as a whole. Recently

the circuit stewards met and, with the help of an outside facilitator, began looking at where all this has led us and where God is calling next.

Over the next few months the circuit will need to take a long, hard look at how we set our priorities. There are significant decisions to be made about the stationing of ordained ministers and we need to think carefully how we raise and use money. Alongside all this the way we use our buildings and serious questioning about maintenance of property must be given due consideration. The Circuit Leadership Team is planning a series of consultation events across the circuit to hear what each geographical area thinks is important and to gather information about vision and strategy in each place. Previous events have been well attended and have resulted in fruitful discussion. I hope these next consultations will do the same. A pilot is being held in Edinburgh on the afternoon of 1 December and the consultation will come to a venue near you! Look out for the details.

One thing is for sure in all this - we must set clear priorities and stick by them. Resources cannot be used to prop up what is not sustainable and we must support those people, churches and communities where there is a willingness to listen to the prompting of the Spirit and where there is courage to take risks, break with the past and work with God in the task of transforming lives.

As I assess grants to be used around the world I have a strict set of guidelines to use which remind me that our material resources are limited but, applied correctly and backed by prayer and hard work can achieve great things.

May God's blessing be on you all.

# All is far from lost!

Our Primus responds ...

A press release on data from the 2011 Census for Scotland showed that the country has become more religiously diverse and numbers have declined. Of the population of Scotland:

- 54% gave their religion as Christian (2001 – 65%)
- 37% stated that they had no religion (2001 – 28%)
- 32% stated they belonged to the Church of Scotland (2001 – 42%)
- 16% stated they were Roman Catholic (2001 – 16%)
- 1.4% reported that they were Muslim (2001 – 0.8%)
- Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs together accounted for 0.7% of the population (all increases)

Bishop David, our Primus, responded to the Census analysis with regard to religious observance:

“The figures for religious affiliation in Scotland are a significant challenge for churches. Nominal membership of traditional churches is swiftly changing into ‘no religion’.

“The reasons are clear. Traditional patterns of church life have difficulty attracting people in a mobile, fast-changing and increasingly sophisticated society. Congregations are communities of affection which gather in time-hallowed buildings and they find change challenging.

“But all is far from lost. A majority of people in this society still identify themselves as Christian. Their faith, their hopes and their interest are a mission opportunity for open and attractive faith communities which are creatively led. Rising levels of interest in spirituality – evidenced by growing interest in pilgrimage, prayer and other faith-related activity – show that many people are searching for depth and meaning in their lives. Many are open to exploring discipleship even if they are unlikely to become church members in the traditional sense.

“Churches need to change and I welcome that. We need to become more creative and flexible. We need to think less about surviving and more about thriving. We need to help people to develop their experience of the spiritual. And we need to learn to work together in mission to this new kind of society.”

## Challenges for our readers ...

... from the editors

No-one ever said that the Christian path would be easy, and this issue of Contact raises a number of issues that challenge us, both as a partnership of two churches and as individuals, as we move into 2014.

As well as the requests to get involved with our work at Rosyth that you'll find on pp10–13, there are more general and fundamental questions to be faced:

Sharing our world	p3
Caring for our world	pp22–23, 26–27
Caring for others	p19
Setting our priorities	p20
Needing to change	pp21, 28–29

We challenge you to read these pages, pray about the questions, and seek guidance as to how to respond to the challenges!

# Looking afresh at our world

A sermon preached on 13 October (Pentecost 21) by the Very Rev Jim Mein

How odd it is that there has never been a season of Creation-tide in Church lectionaries. Surely, God the Creator, is at the heart of our religion. Perhaps it is because when the main world religions developed in the axial age round about 2,600 years ago, the creation was so overwhelming – it was just there, the background to everything, beyond our under-standing, beyond any actions of puny humanity to affect it.

Then we could praise the wonders of God's creation, and we could fear its power; but it was simply the canvas on which our lives were lived. I know that in the first creation story God is reported saying "Fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the face of the earth". Humanity was seen as the crown of creation – the point to which all was directed, the species that gave meaning to it all. From that perspective it was easy to devalue creation, see it merely as a means to an end, something to be used for our benefit.

The alternative story in Genesis 2 is similar: there man is created first, then the garden is provided for food, then the animals for company, and finally a woman to be his mate. But again, all the rest of creation is there for man's benefit.

What has become increasingly clear in recent times is that humanity has developed such powers, and spread so widely, that we are now a real threat to the rest of creation. Our species has become so dominant that we are multiplying virtually unchecked, using up many of the world's finite resources, destroying many of the delicate checks and balances that keep creation's equilibrium.

This can't go on. We may argue about how much our actions contribute to global warming; we may disagree as to when the oil and gas will run out; we may discuss whether the earth can support 6 billion or 10 or 15 billion people. The truth is that our species has become too dominant, and we have been and are, too greedy - and our children will have to pay a heavy price. At last our Churches are just starting to take this seriously, and, as I say, many congregations set aside October to fill out harvest festival with thinking about our relationship with the rest of God's creation.

In this we need to be cautious and very humble. Our record is not great: there are many outside the religious faith communities who are well ahead of us in this thinking. Indeed some would argue that the Churches have held back the taking of our responsibilities seriously. They might point to the Roman Catholic Church with its opposition to sensible, responsible birth control methods; or to the rich Tea Party Christians in America who seem to promote unchecked economic growth. But none of us have clean hands – and there are unconscious temptations for us:

- For instance, if we believe this world is merely a staging post for humans on the way to heaven we may be tempted not to care too much about it.
- Or if we believe God micro-manages all that happens we may be tempted to think he will take care of it and we don't need to worry.
- Or if we believe the creation is simply here for our benefit we may think we can treat it as we like.

I hope we reject all those thoughts – and also reject the more human temptation to close our minds and enjoy our very comfortable present lives – simply hoping that someone else will find the answers.

I have no answers to give you this morning but I do want to point towards one attitude I believe is important. We need to think of God creating rather than having created. If God is the creator then evolution is God in action. Evolution has not only brought us to where we are but is taking us to where we will be. Beyond God resting on the seventh day comes the work of the following week.

This is why, although I have friends amongst them, I despair at biblical fundamentalists and those who think our doctrines never change. Of course the Bible has important insights and yes, the creeds we repeat every week are important markers on the journey of our Christian understanding, but to think that they contain all that is true or useful for all ages just bewilders me. Why are we given creative, inquisitive minds if all we are meant to do is accept without question the ideas of 1,500, 2,000 or 3,000 years ago? Does all that science has taught us and all we have experienced in the last few hundred years have no influence on the ways we understand and describe God?

This is important because frankly the Bible does not have much detail about how to deal with the issues our world faces today – not much about fossil fuels or nuclear power or global warming; it was a very different world when the Bible was written. But the Old Testament is clear about saving good seed for next year, and about rotating the crops to keep the soil fertile.

Jesus himself did not provide answers, either in his teaching or in a book, but there is no doubt he felt humanity was close to the natural world, as is clear in so many of his parables.

And he promised the Spirit, who would live and work within us. In other words, our religious faith, just like all other branches of human knowledge, builds on the past, grows and develops to meet new situations – sometimes taking a wrong direction but being brought back to struggle on again.

The Churches, with their fundamental commitment to there being value and purpose in the world; to the idea that love and community and responsibility can point us towards a just and creative future; that in Jesus have an example of one who gave himself for others and thereby gave us all hope; Yes, the Churches do have a contribution to make – but with humility, and in partnership with others.

And just finally, as we sometimes look back and wonder at the barbaric practices of early civilisations; look back and wonder at the practices that they thought were morally acceptable – slavery, our treatment of women and so on – I sometimes wonder what generations that follow us will look back and wonder at how we behave now.

And one area I suspect will be our treatment of animals and the natural world. The Church today needs a season when we look at our world and pray that God's spirit might lead us to find ways to mitigate all that threatens our world in the 21st century of Our Lord.

**Ed:** for Christians concerned about environmental issues, a wealth of internet material is available. Why not start with:

[www.ccow.org.uk/](http://www.ccow.org.uk/)

[www.earthingfaith.org/](http://www.earthingfaith.org/)

[www.ecocongregationscotland.org/](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/)

[www.operationnoah.org/](http://www.operationnoah.org/)

# Reports

## Casting The Net Away Day

Margaret Dineley and I were among 24 people representing a diversity of roles within the Diocese who were invited to attend a Casting the Net (CTN) Diocesan Review Away day in September. This was to think through and discuss the strategic development of CTN, especially in the area of communication.



There was broad discussion of many pertinent themes. We identified CTN successes and discussed aspirations for the future of CTN, with ideas being captured on flipcharts. Bishop David gave his future vision for CTN and identified some challenges. His reflections were positive and optimistic for the future, both for the Diocese and for the Scottish Episcopal Church as a whole.

With the emphasis on growing communities of faith, group discussions each took a different focus, looking at Area Councils, Clergy and Volunteers. Interesting thoughts emerged and were recorded for further consideration. Area Councils came under particular scrutiny, and in future are likely to have a name and image change and be open to all. Also it was felt that, as a Diocese, we fail to communicate well – improvements to the website and a single communications focus for the Diocese were among improvements suggested.

This was a worthwhile and reflective day and we look forward to future developments.

Sandra Young

## St Andrews West Area Council

The Council met at St Finnian's Lochgelly on 14 November, when we heard the Rev David MacKenzie Mills, Rector of St Paul's Church, Kinross, talk about Mission and Liturgy. This was an interesting and thought-provoking presentation and covered wide ranging topics.

At the meeting, Margaret Dineley relinquished her role as Convenor, a post which she has fulfilled admirably over the last three years and was presented with a small gift by Shirley Mann with our appreciation and thanks. Shirley, the lay representative of St Peter's Kirkcaldy, was unanimously elected to take over from Margaret as Convenor.

The next meeting will be held in St Peter's Kirkcaldy on **Thursday 30 January** at 7.30pm, when the Rev Thomas Brauer will give a presentation "Images of Faith through Photography". Thomas has been invited to give his presentation to each of the four Area Councils and we look forward to hearing him. This meeting is open to all, so please come along if you can.

Although speakers and topics need to be sorted out, we also agreed our meeting dates for our other three meetings in 2014 – all **Thursdays** at 7.30pm; **20 February** at St Serf's, Burntisland; **22 May** (venue to be confirmed); **20 November** at St Peter's, Inverkeithing. Our summer social will be on **Friday 27 June** at Warroch House, Dalqueish, near Kinross, and the annual service will be held in St Peter's, Kirkcaldy at 4.00pm on **Sunday 7 September**. More information later, but do try to join us on any of the dates – you will be most welcome.



# Reports

## St Margaret's AGM

At the Congregational Annual General Meeting on 17 November Valerie Leslie was elected Lay Representative for the coming year in place of Dr Margaret Dineley who had stepped down due to her church commitments as a lay reader elsewhere. Val had been our alternate lay rep last year, and we were pleased to appoint Erica Lock to this role for the next year.

Marc Tempelhoff stood down from the Vestry after ten years and was thanked for his contribution over that period. He will continue as Gift Aid secretary and our Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator. We welcomed back Sue Masson to serve on the Vestry after some years absence.

Members of the Vestry for the next year are: Sue Forman, Mary Kidd, Valerie Leslie (ex officio), Erica Lock, Sue Masson, Myra Tarr, Alan Taylor, Lesley Yellowlees and Sandra Young. Vestry will appoint the Secretary and Treasurer at their next meeting on 14 January 2014.

## The interregnum

Most people will have heard that there were no applications received for the post of Rector by the closing date. The Bishop has assured us that this was not unusual in the Episcopal Church at present and encouraged us to advertise again as others had done successfully.

At their joint meeting on 18 November, the Vestries of Holy Trinity and St Margaret's agreed to advertise during December, but not close applications till 24 January, giving plenty of time after Christmas for people to respond. They set a date for interviews as "early February" so as not to disbar those who may not be free on a specific date.

### Softly the night is sleeping

Softly the night is sleeping on Bethlehem's peaceful hill,  
Silent the shepherds watching their gentle flocks are still.  
But hark the wondrous music falls from the opening sky,  
Valley and cliff re-echo glory to God on high.  
Glory to God it rings again,  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Come with the gladsome shepherds quick hastening from the fold,  
Come with the wise men bringing incense and myrrh and gold,  
Come with our hearts of sunshine and sing the angel's song  
Glory to God tell out again,  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Wave ye the wreath unfading, the fir tree and the pine,  
Green from the snows of winter to deck the holy shrine;  
Bring ye the happy children for this is Christmas morn,  
Jesus the sinless infant, Jesus the Lord is born.  
Glory to God, to God again,  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Anonymous (20th-century Sussex traditional)

# World Day of Prayer 2014

Mary Kidd writes ...

We're now looking forward to Christmas and all the preparations involved in this celebration. Hopefully it's not too early to think about the World Day of Prayer on **7 March**. Our local district service will be held at North Queensferry.

When you read this I will have just returned from a retreat for the Scottish Committee at Schoenstatt during which we will have prepared the service for 2015 which comes from the Bahamas! In the meantime, next year's service comes from Egypt. At all services throughout the world the theme 'Streams in the desert' will be thought about, and considered and prayed about, until the sun goes up in Alaska 36 hours after the first service in Tuvalu.

"Water, water everywhere  
and all the boards did shrink.  
Water, water everywhere,  
nor any drop to drink."

Familiar words? Possibly. They are from 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and describe water as a languid listless element by which the stranded mariner was surrounded and from which there was no escape. Something to be cursed; something with no life in it.

Here's another poetic description of water:

"I come from haunts of coot and hern  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley."

You've probably heard these words too – maybe had to learn them at school. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was the author of 'The Brook', and it, too, of course, is describing water. But what a different approach! Instead of the stillness and sheer negativity of the stranded mariner, The Brook is full of life and vitality, and you can almost smell the freshness and energy from the way that the words are portrayed.

How the skill of these two poets is brought out in the way that they are able to describe the most vital of all substance. Nothing grows without water and humanity itself would not exist without it.

God has not only created life-giving water; he has also used it throughout time itself as He revealed Himself to His people. The rescue of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt and delivery into the Promised Land is marked at each end by water – crossing the Red Sea at the start, and crossing the River Jordan at the end.

Jesus was baptised by John with water, in the same Jordan River, and coming up out of the water received the blessing from God and the Holy Spirit descending on Him like a dove. Water appears in countless narratives throughout scripture. The cleansing and cure of Naaman, the Syrian commander, at the hands of Elisha (OT) shows the healing power of water; whereas much later in the New Testament the shipwreck of St Paul off the coast of Malta shows water at its more sinister.

Indeed, from the dark and rather terrifying description of the uncontrollable waters of the deep at the beginning of Genesis, through all its many moods, water emerges later in the Revelation to John as the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

Water in many forms – terrifying, yet life-giving. Water in almost all our food and in just about everything we touch. And yet how simple it is, the coming together of the two elements of hydrogen and oxygen. Simple, and absolutely vital! And how challenging it can be. Challenging in terms of its distribution, for how it challenges us who, in many cases feel that we see too much of it – and the responsibility which

/cont'd ...

## Wednesday Fellowship

... cont'd/

we have towards our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world where it seldom rains, where wells are dry, and where the only hope of survival depends on the ability of those who have too much, to share. This has been brought home to us as we watch and pray for the survival of people of The Philippines. We are reminded of the thought that the only hands in the world which God has, are our hands. And for the future? Perhaps some of the droughts in the south of the UK are a sign of things to come, and how are ability to create the means of sharing will become even more vital. As we give thanks for a vital source of energy and life, we also have a challenger. There is plenty to satisfy everyone if it were evenly distributed. We have plenty – others do not. The need is clear.

Thanks be to God for this, perhaps the most glorious and most necessary of all His gifts to us, and that He has given us the hands, feet and wills and brains that the need may be met, that all may be fed and receive water.

Our Wednesday Fellowship continues to grow, with three new members this session. Each meeting starts with a time of devotion. All look forward to having a chat with friends, whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee along with a biscuit, cake or scone.

We have had some very interesting talks about various topics this session so far. Deacon Sarah McDowall opened the session, then we had a talk about Bethany Trust, various talks about Harvest, Guide Dog Training (with puppies) a trip from Bangkok to Mumbai, update on Haiti Help Charity, a talk about living in Israel, our Bring'n'Buy Sale and a quiz afternoon. We also fitted in a Games afternoon which can get rather noisy with the excitement of winning. Our Sale raised £125 which will go towards a donation to Church Funds.

We look forward to other interesting afternoons before we end our session on 18 December, with a lunch in the Elgin Hotel. We resume again on **5 February 2014** at 2.15pm. What a pleasant way to pass every Wednesday afternoon! All are most welcome to join us.

Mary Dempster

## Carols at the Abbey – the arrangements!

For everybody, there is a rehearsal on Monday 9 December (1930–2200) followed by the recording on Tuesday 10 December (1930–2230). The organisers realise that they are asking for a great deal of commitment to attend on both nights. However, you can be sure that you will have an inspirational time, as both rehearsal and recording will be conducted by Paul Leddington Wright, organist, composer and arranger of church music and conductor/arranger of Songs of Praise for the BBC.

There is an opportunity for everyone to sign up to take part in this service. If you haven't already booked through another church or organisation, and wish to participate, either sign the sheet in the Crush Hall, or send an email to martin@mtarr.co.uk by the end of play on **Sunday 1 December**. If you sing regularly in a choir or other music group, please indicate S, A, T or B. Tickets will be distributed on Sunday 8 December.

## Wrestling Jacob

A sermon preached on 20 October (Pentecost 22) by the Very Rev Jim Mein  
Our readings were Genesis 32.22-31, 2 Timothy 3.14-4.5 and Luke 18.1-8

All three readings this morning were about struggling on against the odds – the widow pestering the Judge; Timothy being told to be persistent in his ministry whether the time was favourable or unfavourable; and Jacob. I thought I'd talk about Jacob – we are told a lot more about him than we know of the Widow, or indeed of Timothy.

Of course I would never say such a provocative thing myself but I remember Richard Holloway in a sermon describing Jacob as the Thatcherite icon of Biblical figures. Jacob was a pragmatist who looked after himself and went out and made his fortune. I guess I'd say myself that the story of Jacob has as many immoral tales in it as a Geoffrey Archer novel.

I'm not going to waste time re-telling the stories of his stealing Esau's birthright; of his two wives and concubines; of his cheating his uncle Laban; or his favourite wife Rachel stealing and using her menstrual period to get away with it; or his sons insisting their neighbours be circumcised and then while they were still in pain killing them all and taking their wives and children. And there is more: Reading these middle chapters of Genesis is not for the squeamish.

In the passage we read this morning Jacob is returning home and has reached the border of Esau's land. Jacob sends gifts across the river – three separate loads of gifts, followed by his two wives, two concubines, eleven children (Benjamin is still to be born) and all his servants. He alone does not cross, remaining alone, wrestling through the night.

These biblical stories, like all stories that stand the test of time, do so because they reflect universal human situations. Great stories help us explore our own situation.

Our religious experience has to be expressed in stories, myths and parables, because it is trying to speak of things where logic, laws and creeds may point, but can never reach. Jesus clearly knew this in his use of stories.

Faith is beyond religion as justice is beyond the law. The law reflects our human struggle for justice: religion reflects our human struggle for faith. The law can never reflect all the particularities, never take note of motives, know the pressures, recognise genuine repentance; it can't know the whole truth. In the same way religions in their institutional, legalistic form are unable to reach the depths to which God calls us. And yet, the good news is that through history religion has so often been the seedbed out of which great spiritual leaders have grown – even if they have been regarded as heretics before they are canonised!

I want to suggest that this struggling, this wrestling, is an image of our need to go beyond the safe, religious, known way of being, and seek to experience God personally, face to face. Jacob had done all that was humanly or politically possible – he had sent all his peace offerings to Esau. He had planned his entry back to the promised land as carefully as a man could do. But I suspect he knew that more was needed, something that would only come in a night spent alone, wrestling with himself, with his feelings, with his attitude.

The story is full of little hints: I think the limping was a sign of what was needed – to approach Esau in weakness, humbly, without pride. Just as in Jesus' story, the prodigal needs to say: "I am not worthy to be called your son".

And then Jacob saying “I will not let you go unless you bless me”. He knew that the blessing he has stolen from Isaac was not really enough – it had to be confirmed.

And then that bit where Jacob asks “Tell me your name” and the odd reply “Why is it that you ask my name?” Because the truth was Jacob knew the name of the one he had been struggling with – and he owned this knowledge as he called the place Peniel saying “I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved”.

Humility, a desire for blessing, and that leap of faith.

Most of us don’t wrestle with God enough. I don’t just mean wrestling with temptation – I guess we all do that; struggling where we know something is wrong but we still want to do it. That is struggling with ourselves. But I mean the times when we struggle to know what is right; what is it that God wishes us to do? How should we behave? What should we think?

These struggles can arise out of what I spoke of earlier – the institution not being the end point of where God calls us. The institution is made up of human beings, so we know it can’t be the perfect place we seek. I increasingly see the Church as a base camp: necessary if we want to climb but the starting place. And over time base camp is established higher and higher on the mountain. Examples of this in Church history might be it becoming less authoritarian, or when it turned against slavery, and against apartheid, against many practices tolerated in the OT and some in the New; when it rejected the methods of the inquisition, accepting the equality of women, recognised that divorce is sometimes the best caring option. Not all attempts at creating a new base camp are proved right. Each move will require discussion, a sharing of views, prayer – but overall we seem to have been climbing.

There are many struggles of this kind today. I guess the gay debate is the most publicised at the moment. I’ve moved over the past 20 years on this, and am very clear that we must treat people created homosexual just as we do those who are heterosexual. But I recognise some people are still genuinely struggling with this. I’m struggling at present with all the debates round the beginning and ending of life – IVF issues, assisted dying and euthanasia. I struggle with social justice issues: how far down the road towards having the man with two coats give one away can we travel as a society without encouraging ourselves, we who are only weak human beings, to take advantage and to receive without giving.

The truth is that the Church always lives with this tension: we have a vision of what should be but we know we never achieve it. This is the point of the story of the fall: not some historical event (our knowledge of the earth’s beginning and its evolution clearly rule that out) but it is a story that reflects our experience. We fall below where we would like to be, where we feel we should be. We are always struggling to change, to grow, to behave better: and sometimes we make progress but we never arrive. This is the real test for a living Church: not “Are you everything you should be?” but rather, “Do you recognise that you can become better?”

Jacob wrestled as he returned home; Timothy wrestled with the dangers of belonging to a persecuted Church; the widow wrestled with the unjust judge; even Jesus wrestled as he faced the temptations and again later in the garden. We also, every congregation, every Christian, must be wrestling.

**Ed:** The sermon’s title is editorial, in homage to Wesley’s great hymn (*Singing the Faith* 461)

## Enjoying food and fellowship ...

... is one of the things that Christians like doing. There's no requirement for us to maintain a serious face all the time, and good authority for Christ himself enjoying the company of others!

Dorissia's cooking is becoming a legend, and the hall was full one wet and windy October Friday, when she and other members of Holy Trinity Mothers' Union branch served 54 excited souls a feast of curry dishes from around the globe.

The evening was full of laughter, poetry and fellowship: friends from Holy Trinity and St Margaret's, Rosyth were joined by new

church members and friends from Kinross. One first-timer commented on leaving: "M.U. has gone gourmet! I'm full!"

There were the usual amazing raffle prizes – like the mango chutney, well suited to the evening's theme! – and the evening raised the magnificent sum of £400 which will be distributed to M.U. Overseas charities. Thank you to everyone for their support in making the evening a success. And thank you especially to Dorissia and her friends!

**Ed:** Thanks also to Elaine Cromwell for the Holy Trinity magazine article we shamelessly pillaged!



**Before the meal**



**Before dessert**

Eat  
Munch  
Crunch  
Gobble  
Swallow  
Fill your mouth  
Pile it in  
Taste the flavour  
Feed the hunger  
Fill your belly  
Add some weight  
Worry not  
The good effects  
Might outweigh the sins  
Food must be eaten  
For mouths were made to bite and savour  
One day I may become thin  
Till then I'll feast and eat like a king

I'm absolutely full tonight.  
I couldn't eat another bite.  
I couldn't eat a half a bean,  
or even taste a tangerine.  
I couldn't lick a lettuce leaf  
or bite the slightest bit of beef.  
I couldn't polish off a pea  
or sip a single drop of tea  
or nibble on a nanogram  
of pickled ham or candied yam  
or lamb or clam or jam or Spam.  
Yes, that's how full I truly am.  
To even think of eating more  
would leave me lying on the floor  
and surely make my stomach hurt  
unless, of course, you've got dessert.

Two "Added relishes"  
written and read by Nadine Forsyth

# 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 and St Margaret's Vestry, and by affiliated but independent organisations.

## Church activities

- Methodist Gift Aid enquiries to  
Ron Dempster 01383 721252  
ronmary.dempster@tiscali.co.uk
- 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 Sunday Funday  
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)  
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

## The church in the community



On **Tuesday 3 December** the Christmas celebrations begin in Rosyth in the Parish Church Hall at 7.00pm, with a concert of traditional Christmas carols and songs by choirs from the four Rosyth Primary Schools and Rosyth Silver Band.

The Christmas lights will be switched on after the concert, followed by mince pies, juice, tea and coffee in the Hall.

This is a ticket-only event, with tickets available free from the schools and Rosyth churches. Numbers are limited, so please see Alan Taylor if you would like to attend. Donations in lieu of an admission charge will be for the Children's Hospice Association Scotland at Rachel House, Kinross.

## The church on television!

Do you remember the Songs of Praise programmes from Dunfermline Abbey in 2011? Well, the producers felt that the quality of the sound of the hymn singing was one of the best that they had ever achieved, so there's another opportunity for everyone to take part in the Watchnight programme to be broadcast this Christmas Eve. TernTV are looking for a large congregation, supplemented by parts singers from choirs from the surrounding area, to achieve another amazing programme for BBC Scotland.

We will be singing five hymns – Christmas favourites of course – See in yonder manger low; O come, all ye faithful; Hark! the herald angels sing; Once in Royal David's city; O little town of Bethlehem – mostly in arrangements by Paul Leddington Wright as published in *Carols for Choirs 5*.

Both choristers and congregation are needed. To take part, you need to be available on the evenings of Monday/Tuesday 9/10 December and to book **at the latest on 1 December**. Details on page 27 and on the sheet in the Crush Hall.



## Rosyth on the web

You can view or download this issue, with photos in colour, at <http://tinyurl.com/ph6dqj>. The archive pages of the church websites also link to previous issues of Contact. For example, that for October 2011, which contains (starting on page 28) extended notes on a conversation with Malcolm Trew, including material on his wife Frieda, whose death we report on page 9.

## To our contributors

Grateful thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue, both in writing material and during the production phase.