

St. John's Parish Church, Kirkcaldy

"Echoes" August 2005

Dear Friends,

The long summer days are well upon us and I was surprised to see the thermometer rise to over 90 degrees, positively Mediterranean. In early summer, I had my first trip to a Mediterranean country with a week long visit to Malta, an island packed full of history with places of worship going as far back as 3,500 B.C.

I enjoyed visiting these pre-Christian temples, but was most struck with seeing an *agape* table in one of the catacombs in Rabat. Deep underground, beside the graves, I saw an area carved in the shape of the Greek letter alpha where people used to sit and share in a final farewell feast for a loved one who had died, It was a time for the breaking of bread. The *agape* table was also a place where Christians would gather for prayer and fellowship when suffering from religious persecution.

Αγαπε is the Greek word for love, not romantic love, but love lived out in community. It is the care and compassion of the good Samaritan, *Agape* love is love which is giving, and which brings people closer to one another and to God.

One of the ways that this can happen is through gathering around the table. Over the summer, many of us have enjoyed wonderful strawberry teas in the church grounds and in September we will be trying another new thing when we have a joint harvest service and supper at St. Andrew's Church on 15th September. (St. John's Sunday harvest thanksgiving service will take place on 18th September.)

This October, we will have our own *agape* feast when we celebrate World Communion. We will join together with Christians from all over the world who, like us, will gather in their local church to remember Christ's sacrificial love for humanity and his presence with us now. We will be reminded that the community of which we are a part is one that extends to the furthest ends of earth.

For now, let us give thanks for the community of love and friendship that we share at St. John's and for the many opportunities that God gives us to reach out to friend, neighbour and stranger in and beyond our doorsteps.

Grace and peace,

Nicola

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on love...

The world will not care what we know until they know we care.

Gene Barron

He loved us not because we were lovable, but because he is love.

C.S. Lewis

SMILING IS INFECTIOUS
YOU CATCH IT LIKE THE FLU
WHEN SOMEONE SMILED AT ME TODAY,
I STARTED SMILING TOO.

I PASSED AROUND THE CORNER AND SOMEONE SAW MY GRIN.
WHEN HE SMILED I REALIZED,
I'D PASSED IT ON TO HIM.



I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT SMILE,
THEN I REALIZED IT'S WORTH.
A SINGLE SMILE JUST LIKE MINE,
COULD TRAVEL ROUND THE EARTH?

SO, IF YOU FEEL A SMILE BEGIN,
DON'T LEAVE IT UNDETECTED.
LET'S START AN EPIDEMIC QUICK
AND GET THE WORLD INFECTED.

Men's Association Bowling Group — Jim Christie, Convener

The outdoor season is now well underway. There has been a drop in numbers turning up on a Monday evening but there are a few regulars who ensure a good game with a lot of banter and laughter as well as bowls.

We had our annual Challenge Game with Scoonie or Leven Parish Church, which St. John's won. New members male or female would be very welcome. It's not an "Old Man's" game.

Get Together

We have been asked on this occasion to state dates and times for the forthcoming session. As far as our organization is concerned it would be easier to say when we are not in. As we meet all year round except for special and untoward occasions such as two weeks over Christmas and New Year and the last week in May for our drive, we are here all the time, unless we happen to be snowed up in winter or work is being done on the premises which prevents us using the facilities.

So I say for the umpteenth time, if you are lonely or if you like company, or if you are happy playing cards, dominoes or scrabble, then come along on Thursdays at 2pm. We will not keep you later than 4pm and a welcome cup of tea is available round about 3pm. By the way, we always have chocolate biscuits!

You are invited to
a free fun afternoon
at St. John's Parish Church
for ages 3-12
Wednesday 17th August 2005
2.00-4.30 p.m.



Bouncy Castle



Face Painting



GAMES

Refreshments



Crafts

**Bring a friend!
Make new friends!**

Strawberry Teas

During the past few months, the Social and Fund Raising Team has been organising Afternoon Teas every fortnight. We have had some splendid afternoons out in the Church grounds in the sunshine. On offer were scones with strawberry jam, cream and strawberries, meringues, strawberry flan and even strawberry ice cream cones. Our menu varies depending on what the ladies decide to make. If you have been unable to attend, please give us a visit, and try our delights.

The dates for August are Friday 5th and **Saturday 20th**. To date we have raised a reasonable amount for the Church, and we thank everyone who has supported us. Let us make **SATURDAY 20th A BUMPER DAY**. Hope to see you all there between 2 and 4pm. There will also be a Cake and Candy Stall with strawberry jam for sale.

The Social and Fund Raising Team

It's good to be a Christian and know it, but it's better to be a Christian and show it.

PRAYER

“Why does God never listen to me?” “Why are my prayer never answered?” “What is the point of prayer?” Any Christian will no doubt find himself or herself asking these questions from time to time, and there will be times when “Why do I bother? becomes the next question.

Yet we do call God “Our Father”. This immediately raises the image of parenthood and family. Sometimes one feels with despair that the concept of ‘family’ is difficult to sustain in early 21st century Britain, but the fact is that whoever is in charge of the family (or indeed any group of people) must act responsibly and must take into consideration the interests of everyone in the family, and even some who are not.

So let it be with God. God knows what is in the best interests of everyone, in the same way that a parent should know what is in the best interests of the child. This is why a child cannot be allowed to stick his hand in the fire to see what will happen, it is why a child cannot get every computer game or ipod or late designer gear that it sees and wants, and it is why sometimes a loving parent must say “No” to a specific request.

But a wise parent will also know how to mitigate and soften the word “No”. Something else, for example, may be offered instead, or the refused request may be granted at a later date, in different circumstances. And this is why God sometimes *seems* to refuse requests. He may however, if we look closely enough, answer them *indirectly*.

God, for example, will certainly be with us when we pray in the midst of suffering. Perhaps He will not immediately get rid of the illness but He will certainly, if we allow him, help us to put up with it. He will give us *strength*, and then perhaps we will find that the illness disappears or diminishes. This is the way that the prayer will be answered not by the crude removal of the problem, but in the granting of strength so that WE can perhaps remove the problem. And here again we see a principle of wise parenting. We do

not, we cannot, we would not want to solve all our children's problems — but we do want to teach them to solve their own problems. So too does God — if we allow him.

David Potter

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Christmas Fayre Saturday, 19th November at 2pm

Further details nearer the time

The Christmas Fayre Team

Womens' Group

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Opening Meeting | September 6th Quiz Night/Silent Auction |
| Last meeting before Christmas | 13th December |
| First meeting in 2006 | January 10th Games Night/Chat |
| Annual General Meeting | May 2nd |
| Closing meeting | May 9th Walk/Closing Dinner |

The group meets in the new hall on Tuesdays, normally on the 1st and 3rd week of the month. New members welcome.

Contact Irene Wood (267995) or come along to the first meeting on 6th September.

Worship on Inchcolm Island

On a warm, sunny, Sunday evening in June, around 160 of us — men, women and children — sailed from Aberdour harbour to the island of Inchcolm. We were a group from Kirkcaldy Presbytery, the outing having been organised by the churches of Kinghorn and Torbain. Weather conditions were perfect and the short sail was delightful. We were a relaxed group, many of us renewing friendships in congregations other than our own.

Landing on the island, we made our way to the back of the ruined Abbey, where we made ourselves comfortable on the grassy bank. Here, the Rev. Jim Reid conducted a short, informal service of worship. He gave a brief history of the Abbey, of life on the island. The little hymn book from which we sang was ours to keep — a pleasing memento of a happy, uplifting occasion.

There was time to picnic, to explore the island, before our boat took us safely back to Aberdour. It had been a good evening. There is a thrill and a joy of worship in the open air, of worship in a place hallowed over the centuries.

I understand this is now an annual event. Look out for notice of next year's sailing!

Guild Holiday — Jenny Walker

A few ladies of St. John's Guild and friends had a holiday, open to any guild member in Fife, to the Lake District from 16th to 20th May organized by the Guild Presbyterial Council.

We had glorious weather and a first class hotel at Grange over Sands. The coach driver was excellent and we had lovely drives every day around all the Lakes. The gardens were ablaze with Rhododendrons and Azaleas in different colours.

We had a short morning service before breakfast every morning and on our last evening we were entertained by ladies of the group. Even the peacocks which roamed the grounds looked in the windows at the performers.

We have to thank Janet Ferguson and her committee, with a special thank you to Beryl Smith, for all their work in arranging this holiday. Roll on the next one.

When you're lonely, I wish you love.

When you're down, I wish you joy.

When you're troubled, I wish you peace.

When things are complicated, I wish you simple beauty.

When things look empty, I wish you hope.

From the Friendship Book

Boys' Brigade — John Methven (Captain)

We have just finished session 2004-2005 which has been a very successful year.

The Anchor Boys finished the session with a trip to the Deer Farm followed by a meal in a Cupar Restaurant and everybody voted it a great day out.

The Junior Section took 20 boys for a week-end holiday to Fordell Firs near Dunfermline. The Hostel was excellent and the adventure course and games were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. The meals were self-catering and were prepared by Mrs. Dianne Waddell who organized the whole camp and must be congratulated on her organization. Everybody came home exhausted but happy and wished to return at a future date.

The Company Section finished their session with a barbecue and games night at Silverburn Park, Leven. The following Thursday they had a night at Dundee Swimming Complex, which proved very successful.

I would like to thank all staff and helpers for their loyalty and hard work to help the boys in the organization. I would thank Mrs. Dianne Waddell for her excellent work with the Anchor and Junior Sections over many years as she has decided to retire, owing to pressure of work, and we wish her well for the future and hope that some day she will be able to return to the B.B.

CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS CELEBRATION 2005

To quote from a Church Without Walls Report:

“As the Church moves into a new shape in the coming years, we recommend that CELEBRATION be built into these movements as milestones...”

A National Celebration

In 2005 the whole Church will celebrate our journey of discipleship and explore what it means to be shaped by the four themes of Church Without Walls:

- The Gospel
- The Locality
- The Friendship
- The Gifts of the People

The celebration will have three distinct elements:

Local

Each congregation is encouraged to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, on the last Sunday of the Christian year, 20th November, this year.

Regional

Every Presbytery, or group of Presbyteries, is invited to find an imaginative way of celebrating Church Without Walls

National

A one-day event took place on Saturday, 28th May in Edinburgh at which representatives from every congregation came together for shared worship, storytelling, learning and inspiration and to be in the middle of something very big and exciting.

Whilst congregating for one session God spoke to us many people had met in the wrong room next door, the solution — remove the wall separating the two (Church Without Walls!). Peter Neilson spoke to us on the “Jigsaw of Gifts” — to encourage us to seek out the gifts of God for the people of God to enable the Church to change as people change — he offered many helpful hints which would help a Kirk Session focus and move forward in Faith

Extract from the report by Bill Stenhouse

This page was missed out in error so the sequence of pages will not be correct. Please accept my apologies.

Janet Ferguson

Church of Scotland Guild

The opening dates for the 2005/2006 session are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Afternoon Guild | 2pm - Monday 5th September 2005 and fortnightly to 12th December 2005 Monday 9th January 2006 and fortnightly to Monday 20th March 2006 |
| Evening Guild | 7pm — Monday 12th September 2005 and fortnightly to Monday 5th December 2005 Monday 16th January 2006 and fortnightly to Monday 27th March 2006 |

The Guild has a varied programme for the coming year and both men and women would be made most welcome. At the first meeting on Monday afternoon 5th September 2005, members are invited to bring along an object of sentimental value and tell the members why it is important to you.

For health and safety reasons, members must now use the ramp door to the hall at all times.

Isobel Grimshaw, Contact Person

Boys' Brigade

Enrolling Dates for new session in St. John's Church Hall.

Anchor Boys Age 5-8 years old

Friday, 2nd September 6.15 — 7.15pm

Junior Section

Thursday, 1st September 6.15 — 7.30pm

Company and Senior Section

Thursday, 25th August 7.30 — 9.30pm

A Note from the Treasurer

There are now 26 members contributing to the Church by monthly Standing Order. As Treasurer I am very grateful for this system as it greatly reduces the amount of cash to be counted and banked on a Sunday morning. If you amend your standing order, please inform myself or Audrey O'Malley.

The Gift Weekend this year will be on Saturday and Sunday 8th and 9th October. Details will be available nearer the time. On behalf of the Congregational Board, thank you all once again for your continued financial support.

Brian Booth

The Reading Group — Ann Wooton

At the beginning of this year, the Minister suggested to two of us that we might form a Reading Group as an extension of Bible Study meetings. She suggested a book called "Listening to God" from which we might choose some stories. This was thought to be a feasible idea.

The Group first met on 4th April 2005. Its declared intent was to read and discuss contemporary short stories which illustrate how God speaks to us today. Since then, eight or nine women have read, laughed at, or cried with characters in stories by Flannery O'Connor, Alice Walker and Patricia Hampl. We enjoy the views expressed by the authors and examine where the given situations are replicated in our own lives and times.

Now, we have embarked on reading a whole book: a memoir by Karen Armstrong entitled "The Spiral Staircase" which will be the topic at the meeting on 25th July.

The Group meets on Mondays at 7pm, at roughly monthly intervals, in 12 Barry Road. If you enjoy reading, discussion of a topic, meeting people, chat and a cup of tea or coffee, please come along. Everyone will be made most welcome: where are you men? Come, listen and express your views.

Church Without Walls

Perhaps you were in church in June when reports were given of the Church Without Walls Day of National Celebration, held in Edinburgh on May 28th. If not, you may wish to read of the day from the reports prepared by the representatives of St. John's present at the celebration, Bill Stenhouse, Audrey O'Malley, Mary Sherrard. Approach any of them for their comprehensive report.

Forth Group of Presbyteries Church Without Walls Celebration takes the form of a communion service in Dunfermline on 28th August. St. John's Church is to be represented at this event and a report will be given in a future edition of 'Echoes'.

Church Without Walls challenges us to move forward — shaped by the gospel, shaped by the local situation, shaped by friendship, shaped by the gifts of the people of God.

There are no labours too great for loving hearts

St. Augustine.

A Note from the Organist

We are very fortunate to now have 17 choir members, and we look forward with enthusiasm to Choir Practices commencing on Thursday 8th September at 7.15pm in the New Hall. A warm welcome awaits any new members.

Practices finished at Easter, or so we thought, but for several weeks in May we resumed so that we could continue to learn some new items of praise. These practices were very well attended, so in future we shall continue to meet for several weeks after Easter.

Last year, as a fund raising event, we established the Top Ten Hymns of St. John's. This year we intend to continue this theme and again raise some funds for the Church. On Sunday 4th December at 11am we will be singing St. John's Top Ten Christmas Carols. Sheets listing approximately 40 or 50 carols will be available from October, and as per last year you will be able to select your Top Ten Carols at £1 per time.

Thanks to the Choir for their excellent attendance at Church on a Sunday and for their much appreciated leading of our singing.

Brian Booth

St. John's Taekwondo Club

In June, the club held its first Kickathon and raised nearly £50 for Guide Dogs for the Blind, The Royal Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh and the Red Cross. Students were challenged to complete as many kicks as possible in 3 minutes. Students averaged

between 300 and 400 kicks in the allotted time with some students kicking at the rate of 2 kicks every second!

Our new season kicks off with a visiting instructor from the States, Mr. Stuart Cunningham who will be leading classes and workshops from 26th to 28th August. Mr. Cunningham was in Nicola's graduating class at San Francisco Theological Seminary and we look forward to hearing him preach at St. John's on 28th August.

Our summer schedule consists of one extended class from 7.30 – 9.00 p.m. and starting 26th August we resume our usual schedule with classes on Friday evenings at 7.30 and 8.30 p.m. The club also meets on Sunday evenings from 7.30-8.30 p.m. and this class is open to anyone who attends a Friday evening class on a regular basis. Both adults and children from age 7 are welcome. Classes cost £1 for the first family member and 50p for subsequent family members. For further information, Please contact Nicola at 263821.

St. John's Free Fun Afternoon- Wednesday 17th August 2.00-4.30 p.m.

As the summer holidays draw to a close St. John's is holding a fun afternoon for kids aged 3 to 12. There will be a range of activities throughout the afternoon including a bouncy castle, crafts, games, and face painting. The programme of activities will run from 2-4.30 p.m. and parents are encouraged to drop off children for a 2 p.m. start.

Children's Discovery Time

Following our fun afternoon, there will be a discovery time for children during the service on Sunday 21st and 28th August. Unaccompanied children should be dropped off at the large hall where a friendly face will be there to greet them. Sunday School resumes on 4th September.

To all my friends at St. John's I wish to thank you once again for all the Church flowers and beautiful cards assuring me of your continued thoughts and prayers over the past months.

Now for an update — my radiotherapy has finished for the moment and I have just received good news from the Western General — my brain tumor has shrunk from the size of an egg to that of a pea!! Miracles do happen and there is a 'God' after all.

Doubt sees the obstacles
Faith sees the way
Doubt sees the darkest night
Faith sees the day.

Doubt dreads to take a step
Faith soars on high
Doubt whispers “Who believes?”
Faith whispers “I”.

Carolyn Today

Make Poverty History — Angela Stewart

On Saturday, 2nd July, a group from St. John’s arranged to meet at Kirkcaldy Railway Station at approx. 9am. We were on our way to raise awareness and give our support to the Make Poverty History Rally and March in Edinburgh. On arrival at the platform in Kirkcaldy we could see quite a lot of people dressed in white like us so we knew where they were going! We were all wearing white so that when we made a human band round Edinburgh city centre, it would have a greater impact. As the train pulled in to Kirkcaldy we could see that it was already full of people dressed in white, but we decided that even to stand in the bicycle compartment would be OK. We were no sooner on the train than a loudspeaker announcement told us to get off as the train was overcrowded — but we didn’t have long to wait for the next train. We had our backpacks full of water, juice, fruit and sandwiches which would do us throughout the day. There was a happy atmosphere on the train and after exchanging mobile phone numbers in case we got separated we then enjoyed the beautiful sunny weather to Haymarket. We followed the crowd to the Meadows where the Rally was to start at 11am and already thousands of people had gathered. We listened to Jonathon Dimbleby, Cardinal O’Brien and other guests who spoke about Fair Trade, Poverty etc. and then we looked at Campaign and Fair Trade stalls. There were staggered starts to the March at 12 noon, 1pm and 2pm so we decided to have some of our refreshments and be ready to join the March due to start at 12 noon. We were “in position” at 11.30am amongst thousands of people, in a carnival like atmosphere, and we were entertained by a group taking part in the walk who played African music. It was wonderful to be part of this and our chance to make it clear to world leaders that we demand trade Justice, debt cancellation and better aid for the world’s poorest countries. We eventually started our march at 12.50pm which took us down the Mound, along Princes Street to Lothian Road arriving back at the Meadows about 2pm. The white band round the city centre had been formed and we then made our way back to Waverley Station for the journey home. The last group didn’t start marching until 4pm.

Being part of approx. 225,000 people was a great experience and also a day to be remembered.

Tabeetha School Jaffa — Mary Sherrard

It was in 1993 on a holiday in the Holy Land that I visited Tabeetha School in Jaffa, a school I had heard of through Sunday School days, and from my membership of the Woman’s Guild. I still remember attending morning assembly led by boys and girls from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. There was a real feeling of togetherness.

The school was founded in 1863 by Jane Walker-Arnott, daughter of a Glasgow professor, to give the girls of Jaffa a measure of dignity and independence. From the outset, Jewish, Muslim and Christian girls were admitted. By 1875, a purpose-built school was erected to meet the demand for places; much of the funding came from Thomas Cook, founder of the travel company. This is still the school building in use today. In 1912, the school passed into the care of the Church of Scotland and is now the only school owned by our Church. When the legendary Miss Rosie was Head, the role rose from 120 girls in 1948, to 350 boys and girls from 30 countries in 1963.

Today the school continues to serve boys and girls of all ages and nationalities and faiths. The core group come from around Jaffa, are mainly Israeli-Arabs, and about a quarter are 'international', coming from all over the world. At present about 60% are Christian, 30% Muslim, 5% Jewish, 5% others; 35 nationalities are represented. Tabeetha's commitment to inter-community tolerance is rare in today's Israel and is desperately needed.

It used to be that the Board of World Mission was able to fund five Christian teachers for Tabeetha; now that has been cut back to funding only two teachers, who are sent out from Scotland. Some Christian teachers are however recruited locally. A new Principal has taken up her duties at Tabeetha, She is Malti Josh, who comes from a 'liberal Indian Hindu background' and who became a Christian in her teens. She has experience of teaching in multi-faith, multi-cultural schools. The retiring Principal, Chris Mottershead, says in his final newsletter that it is good to see positive signs of progress both in Jerusalem and Jaffa. "There are more tourists around and things are much more 'normal'. As far as the school is concerned, this has showed itself in the increased number of outings to various parts of the country this past six months, It has also been encouraging to see an ever increasing number of parents from a variety of backgrounds wanting to send their children to Tabeetha." The Church of Scotland is regarded as impartial in the tensions of Israel/Palestine and that is vital to the families who send their children to Tabeetha.

Friends of Tabeetha School are presently raising awareness of the work of the school and aiming to increase funding for its ongoing work. Our recent retiring offering after our communion service here at St. John's realised over £200 and it has been forwarded to help Tabeetha School continue. Moira Cubie, a former head-teacher, has been invited to various meetings in Kirkcaldy, including giving a talk at St. John's Guild on 6 March, 2006. She has an interesting story to tell.

20th Kirkcaldy Guides — Lilian Haig

In spite of lower numbers all activities have continued, and we look forward to August when older Brownies will join the company.

The kitchen has been much used as cooking is popular. The Guides joined with the Brownies one interesting evening spent with a speaker from Reptile Rescue who came complete with live snakes and lizards.

The March weekend at Balmullo saw active craft work, the products being gifted to a charity. Work to modernise the Lodge was due to begin immediately, so Guides helped

with furniture removal. Great hilarity resulted when ten mattresses had to be carried down the narrow staircase and rushed next door in the rain.

Some Guides took part in the Forth Road Bridge Crossing for Christian Aid on 30th April.

Because one Guider had an accident, the disappointment of cancelling summer camp was avoided by arranging an extended weekend camp at Balmullo cottage. The Guides enjoyed erecting and sleeping in small tents and cooking on wood fires. The weather was glorious and a whole day was spent in St. Andrews, playing bowls, picnicking and enjoying the beach at the East Sands. In the evenings there were woodland walks and a whole afternoon was spent at the Anstruther outdoor centre. The most exciting event was the Saturday midnight evacuation of the gills to the cottage because a strong wind tugged out the tent pegs. It reminded us of the enjoyable June evening spent at Dunnikier School's splendid production of the musical "Evacuees" at the Adam Smith in which several of the Guides were involved.

In all, it was a very good session.