



BIGGAR KIRK *Newsletter*

NEWS & VIEWS



Pastoral Letter ...

February 2012

On the few occasions I travel on the Underground in Glasgow, the minutes of waiting on draughty platforms are whiled away looking at the adverts on the station walls. Some catch the eye more than others, especially those for Jack Daniel's Whisky. A new one appears every few weeks, and each depicts the world of Lynchburg, Tennessee where Jack Daniel's first made whisky in 1886 - a small town where life moves at a slow pace, where traditional values are cherished, and where one way or another the lives of its solid citizens are bound together by the product for which it has become world famous.

A particularly memorable poster depicts the head distiller, Jimmy Bedford, seated at his fireside in an old armchair with a glass of whisky in his hand. I scribbled down what it said underneath. *"Whose whisky are we making here in Lynchburg, Tennessee, Jack Daniel's or Jimmy Bedford's? As head distiller, Jimmy Bedford is the man responsible for every precious drop of our Tennessee whisky today. But we are still making it using the method described by Jack Daniel back in 1886, mellowing it through hardened charcoal drop by drop. Jimmy will always be the first to tell you that the whisky he makes is, and always will be, Jack Daniel's. That's good news, we believe, to a lot of whisky drinkers."*

Not being a whisky drinker, I can't comment, but it did strike me that what is true of Jack Daniel's Whisky, distilled

today by Jimmy Bedford, but nevertheless the same whisky which was distilled by Jack Daniel in 1886, should also be true of the message which as a church we are commissioned to preach and teach. The gospel we preach is not our gospel; it is the gospel of Christ. It is not ours to add to or subtract from. Nor is it for us to change the emphasis so that we highlight those aspects of the message with which we feel comfortable and play down those elements which we find hard to accept. Far less do we use our pulpits to proclaim our own opinions. No! We proclaim the gospel as it has been handed down to us in the Scriptures.

This is how the apostle Paul put it: "God has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.'" (2 Corinthians 5.19 and 20). An ambassador speaks not in his own name but on behalf of the government he represents. He is not at liberty to modify the dispatch given to him but must deliver it exactly as he received it. So we too are to declare the message of the gospel just as it has been given to us.

But to get back to Jack Daniel's Whisky. The whisky may be made in exactly the same way today as it was more than a hundred years ago, but the way it is bottled and marketed has changed over the years, as indeed the brand's highly sophisticated advertising campaign demonstrates. In the

same way, though the gospel has not changed, the way we present the gospel may change. In the words we use, the methods we adopt, the congregational structures we develop, and the uses we make of our buildings, we have to be innovative and adaptable - all for the sake of communicating the gospel.

A small card pinned to the notice board in a church hall said, "Constant change is here to stay!" This points to an important truth about the church; it should always be on the move. There is no such thing as the status quo in God's order of things. Where he is at work, whether it be in our lives as individuals or in our life together as a congregation, there we will see the processes of change at work. Not change for the sake of change as though the new were always better than the old; nor that change which slavishly follows the latest trends in ever more desperate attempts to make the church 'with-it'; rather those changes which the Spirit of God brings about among us as we prayerfully reflect on that he is saying to us in his Word, and then in obedience seek to carry out his will. In that sense, change in the church is here to stay. We shall always be on the move as we share in the activity of the God who makes all things new.

Who would have expected to find in a whisky advert in the Glasgow Underground a parable for the church?

David Easton
Locum and Interim Moderator

HOLY WEEK 2012



Services will be held in Biggar Kirk each evening, Monday to Friday, at 7.00 p.m. during Holy Week. The Lord's Supper will

be celebrated on the Thursday evening. Further details about these services will be given nearer the time.



VACANCY UPDATE

The Presbytery of Lanark has appointed a new committee to pick up the pieces of the Presbytery Plan which was rejected by the Presbytery in June of last year. It has been given the task of looking again at how best the Presbytery can meet the requirement of the Ministries Council that we reduce by three the number of ministers serving in the Presbytery. The plan that was turned down proposed, among other things, that Biggar Kirk be linked to Black Mount. That proposal had been favourably received by both Kirk Sessions. Meantime, we patiently wait to see what recommendations the new committee will bring to Presbytery.

Dear Member of Biggar Kirk,

I write on behalf of the Kirk Session to inform you that the General Assembly which oversees all aspects of the work of the Church of Scotland has asked the members of every congregation to take a fresh look at their commitment to Christ and the church as expressed in their worship, witness, and the stewardship of their resources in the service of others.

The form this will take in our own congregation will centre on a series of services at which we shall look afresh at the the profession of faith we made and the vows we took when we became members of the church. These services will culminate in a service of dedication at which we shall all have opportunity to renew our commitment to Christ and the worship, service, and witness of his church. Details of these services are enclosed in the pack which has been delivered to you.

These are difficult days for the Church of Scotland . Nationally, membership is in sharp decline and the church no longer has the place in society which it once held. Locally, we have had to cope with a protracted vacancy as we wait for the Presbytery of Lanark to agree on a plan which takes account of the fact that as a Presbytery we must reduce the number of serving ministers from eighteen to fifteen. But all is not gloom. The core of the congregation has held together and there are encouraging signs of new spiritual life among us. Nevertheless, we are concerned that many of us, for what ever reasons, play little or no part in the life of the congregation. We are aware of the difficulty many may find in picking up the threads of a commitment once made but now lapsed, but hope and pray that the invitation to explore together what it means to profess faith in Christ and belong to the church will provide a way back. As for those of us who form the loyal core without whom the doors of the church would not remain open, the challenge is to an ever deeper, more thoughtful and mature commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

An important aspect of Christian commitment is the stewardship of the resources God has entrusted to us, not least our money. Also enclosed is a brochure on giving which includes a letter from the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt. Rev. David Arnott, and some thoughts on why and how we should give. We ask you to read it carefully and then to review and, if possible, increase your offering to God and the work of the Church. For further information on what steps to take, please see page 3 of this issue of News and Views

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We look forward to sharing with you over the coming Sundays the challenge of following Christ in our day. There is need for us all, in the words of Biggar Kirk's motto, to 'Let the deed shaw'.

With all good wishes,

On behalf of the Kirk Session.

Yours sincerely,

David Easton

Locum and Interim Moderator

The Education Team Adults

It's three years ago that the education team split in two - one group to consider the needs of children and young people, the other to plan and offer opportunities to adults in the congregation and beyond. The team for adults gets together once a quarter for a breakfast meeting in St Mary's Hall.

So far we have set up a small lending library in St Mary's Hall. It began with donations of books from members of the congregation, but from time to time a new book is bought and advertised at Sunday service. Each quarter David Easton has made available daily reading notes for purchase. Again these are advertised on a Sunday.

Two Acorn Christian Listening

events have taken place at St Mary's Hall, a taster and a Learn to Listen course. Several people from the congregation attended the latter and learned how much real listening is appreciated, by members of our families, friends and acquaintances. They also learned more about the value of listening to themselves and to God. Listening practice sessions are offered on a monthly basis, alternating between Biggar and Kilncadzow.

Two Bible study groups continue to meet. Busy Mums meet on a Wednesday morning and there is a Monday morning group. New members are always welcome at both of these. There is great friendship and learning to be had in both. The Education Group would be glad to hear from anyone interested in starting another group.

This term A Christianity Explored

Group has been running. It's a course designed for anyone wishing to find out who Jesus is and why it matters. It planned that one of these courses be offered each term. 'Old', 'new' and 'not yet' Christians can all find something to discuss and consider.

Faith need never stop seeking understanding. Reading our Bibles, commentaries and other Christian books at home is a great way to get closer to God. Seeking together has much to offer too.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions any of the group's members would be glad to talk to you: Rev David Easton, Elaine Fyfe, Bill Gourlay, Stewart Houston, Trish Reith, Kathleen Roger, Cameron Sutherland, Elly Sutherland, Rev John Turnbull.

Finance

Firstly, can I, on behalf of the Church, thank everyone who donates in any way to the work of the Church and hope that you will continue your support. At present we are, like everyone else, trying to cut costs and balance the books. As a result have been looking at the various ways money is donated to the church and trying to simplify as much as possible.

1. Open plate - Do you put loose money in the collection on a Sunday? Do you pay tax? By using some method of Gift Aid, the tax man could increase your giving by 20% at no cost to you.

2. Free will Envelopes - These cost us about £300 per year. At the moment at least a third of these are not being used - some are unallocated, but most of the others are in circulation.

If you are one of this number, we would be delighted to see you back with us, but if you cannot, for whatever reason, continue to give, PLEASE cancel your envelopes and help reduce costs

3. An appeal now to those who use their envelopes regularly. Could you change to a standing order at the bank and pay monthly? This would further reduce the number of envelopes needed and save you having to find the right amount of cash on a Sunday morning. 3 lines on a form are all it takes.

4. We reorder the Envelopes in the summer, so if you could let us know by then. You can change to a standing order any time between now and December, as long as you let us know your intention to change before we reorder.

5. If you are happy to with your present arrangements,

please continue, but I ask you to consider the above options. Thanks for reading this and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

6. Lastly, as from April 2012, the tax we can claim back on Gift Aid will reduce from 25% to 20% - this will create a shortfall of over £2,000 per annum. Despite our best efforts, there are some areas (such as heating and insurance) where we have little control over costs. So we need your help - if you are able to increase your giving, even just a little, we would be enormously grateful

Please contact either Janette Rae (envelopes) 01899 221241 or myself (Form for standing order) 01899 220068

Anna Boyd

Gift Aid Treasurer

View from the Chancel

Having grown up with church music, I have always enjoyed singing hymns and anthems, but over the last few months, I have become aware of some of the less obvious privileges of choir membership.

Firstly, there are the seats. Unlike the pews, choir members enjoy individual padded chairs.

Secondly, not only do we have comfortable seats, but they are reserved seats too, even when the church is crowded!

But best of all, we can see the children. Some come occasionally, at Christmas, or as part of a baptismal party. Others more regularly, to the Sunday Club. Either way, it is a joy to see them, sitting at the front, lively, but attentive, and very much an integral part of the whole worship experience. And to watch them

growing, week by week, in their familiarity with the church, and their confidence in feeling at home here. Worship should be joyful, and it makes me feel joyful to see them being part of it all.

Amidst the worries and frustrations over the future of our church, with the protracted vacancy for a permanent minister, I believe that the increase in young families attending regularly is a ray of sunshine, and a tremendous sign of hope for us.

Some may find them a distraction, but to me, the presence of the children illustrates much of what our faith is all about - "Let the children come unto me, and do not stop them because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14); "I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew



18:3).

So let's make sure that they, and their parents, know how welcome they are. It's their church too, and they are the future of the church in our community.

.... and if you can manage a bit of singing, why not think about joining the choir - there are a few spare seats, and the perks are great!

Oh, and by the way, there's no lower age limit!!

MC

BIGGAR KIRK REGISTER

DEATHS:

December 2011

Mrs Sarah Walker, Beechgrove Care Home, Lanark
Mrs Isabella Clark, Nethervale Care Home, Auchlochan, Lesmahagow
Mrs Nan Davidson, 2 Sillerknowe, Biggar
Mr Francis Watson, Greenhills Care Home, Broughton Road, Biggar
Mrs Moira Turnbull, 1 Langvout Court, ML12 6BF

January 2012

Mrs Gladys Ferguson, Greenhills Care Home, Broughton Road, Biggar

BAPTISMS:

November 2011

Jack Barr, son of Kenneth and Kirsty Barr
Mac Gilchrist, son of Brian and Elizabeth Gilchrist
Brodie Lamond, son of David and Denise Lamond

January 2012

Charlotte Godfrey, daughter of Wayne and Anne Godfrey
James Milner, son of Niall and Jenny Milner

KIRK SESSION:

On Sunday, 4th December 2011, David Campbell, Alastair Fyfe, Nanette Stott, Cameron Sutherland and Joan Urquhart were Ordained, and Pat Saulnier admitted, to serve as Elders in Biggar Kirk Session.

At the meeting of the Kirk Session on Monday, 30th January, letters of resignation were received from Elders Lesley Craise and Fiona Burnett.



Door and Offering Duties

February 2012, Group A
Tom Matthews
Joyce Kelly
Jean Shearer
Anna Boyd

March 2012, Group B
Margaret Moffat
Alec Clarkson
Lorna MacDougall
Peter Lyon
Moira Galbraith

April 2012, Group C
Nannette Stott
Bill Gourlay
Elizabeth McDonald
Lynn Beaton
Margaret Weir

Recipe Tiramisu Elizabeth McDonald

Ingredients:

2 tsp. Instant coffee granules
1 cup boiling water
3 tbsp brandy
2 eggs
3 oz (85g) - 4oz (113g) icing sugar
8oz (250g) mascarpone cheese
1 packet trifle sponges

Method:

Separate eggs; Beat sugar, yolks and 1 tbsp brandy until thick and creamy.

Fold in cheese. Whisk egg whites till stiff and fold into cheese mixture.

Dissolve coffee in boiling water and add rest of brandy (2 tbsp) to coffee mixture.

Cut the trifle sponges horizontally in half.

Dip sponges (DO NOT soak) into coffee mixture.

Layer in the bottom of a dish, add half mixture then another layer of sponges.

Top with remaining cheese and then top with a dusting of cocoa.

Chill for at least 4-hours before serving.

ENJOY!

Easter Crossword

The crossword puzzle grid is shown with numbered squares. To the left of the grid is an illustration of a hot air balloon. To the right is an illustration of a thorn. Below the grid is a word list box. To the right of the grid is an illustration of a cross.

Word List:
bread cross
sacrifice love
stone hosanna
empty risen
slept thorns

Across

1. Taking this during the last supper symbolized Jesus' body.
4. Jesus was forced to wear a crown made of these instead of a crown meant for a real king.
7. The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, Jesus isn't here; He has ____!"
8. Instead of praying the disciples did this when Jesus went off to pray by himself.
9. The main reason that God gave His only son, Jesus to die for each of us.

Down

2. On Sunday the two Mary's didn't find Jesus but a tomb that was ____.
3. The word people shouted to Jesus that means blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
5. Jesus became the ____ for us, so we could be forgiven for our sins.
6. Jesus was meant to die on this.
8. This was put in front of the tomb so nobody could steal Jesus' body.

BIGGAR KIRK OFFICE BEARERS

Interim Moderator/ Locum	Rev David Easton	308459	
Deacon	Miss Ann Lyall	229443	ann.lyall@btinternet.com
Session Clerk	Mr Michael Chad	220446	
Presbytery Elder	Mrs Moira Galbraith	220517	
Roll Keeper	VACANT		
Child Protection Co-ordinator	Mrs Caroline Deerin	220224	
Christian Aid	Mrs Alison Campbell	220655	
Organist and Choir Mistress	Mrs Margaret Filshie	220119	
Treasurer	Mrs Ruth Dunn	220558	
Gift Aid	Mrs Anna Boyd	220068	
Weekly Freewill Offering	Mrs Janette Rae	221241	
Coin Boxes	Mrs Anna Boyd	220068	
Property Convenor	Mr Graeme Kerr	220749	
Management of St. Mary's Hall	VACANT		
Church Officer/ Beadle	Mr Peter Brotherstone	220097	
Church Administrator	Mrs Elaine Fyfe	07532-266505	st.maryskirk09@hotmail.co.uk
'News and Views' Editor	VACANT		
Crèche/ Sunday Club and Biggar Youth Fellowship	Mrs Anne Smart	830445	
Scripture Union (Biggar Primary)	Mr Alex Kelly		alex@2cytrust.com
	Miss Ann Lyall	229443	ann.lyall@btinternet.com
Biggar Kirk Guild (President)	Mrs Ruth Bryden	221005	
(Secretary)	Mrs Margaret Lawson	220342	
Pastoral Group	Mrs Jean Shearer	221505	
Flower Guild	Mrs Jean Paul	221036	

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