

February 2008

Dear Friends,

As I write this we are half way through the season of Lent and so it seems strange to begin by looking back to Christmas, which already seems a long way away. However it is appropriate to thank all those who were involved in the various services of worship and other events at that time including the choir, readers and those responsible for the decoration of our two churches. The Christmas lunch was greatly enjoyed and thanks are also due to those who provided refreshments and other events.

Early in the year I received an e-mail from acting Head Teacher at Tabeetha School in Jaffa. With changes in staff there was uncertainty about the nature of our financial support for the school. The annual class trip to the village of Neve Shalom was being planned and the school wondered if we would be able to assist with funding. I was able to confirm that we had agreed to support this residential event for three years and that a cheque for over £1500 (the offering from our three services on Christmas Eve) had already been sent to the World Mission Department in Edinburgh. The school is extremely appreciative of our support and can now plan confidently for the class trip.

At the year end and following the two successful and enjoyable fund raising events (the cookery demonstration and the Christmas Fayre) we closed the Special Fund for the roof at Melrose and the Al Shurooq Residential School in Bethlehem for blind and visually impaired children. During late 2006 and 2007 this fund was supported extremely generously allowing us to make a donation of £31,750 to the school as they prepare to move to new premises. They propose to use the money to equip their kitchens to a higher standard and giving a longer life span. Their correspondence makes clear that they have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our congregation and greatly encouraged at the interest being taken in the work they do. Further news will be available as they move to the new school.

Work on the church roof at Melrose was virtually complete just before Christmas with only some paintwork to finish and the contract has now been concluded. We were extremely fortunate in the grants we received from a number of bodies and the congregation are again to be thanked for their generosity in funding this work. Prior to the union with Bowden, the Melrose congregation had committed to using £50,000 from the Fabric and Reserve Funds, raising the balance (approx £70,000) after receipt of grants. This was in addition to the £30,000 to be raised for the school. In fact the amount raised in addition to the income tax recovered through Gift Aid has resulted in only around £22,000 of reserves being used. In addition there was no need, even on a short term basis, to borrow from the Consolidated Fabric Fund held by the General Trustees and belonging to the former Bowden congregation. I would wish to thank our Fabric Committee but in particular the convenor, Alastair Matthew, for the huge amount of time and effort he has put into this work. I believe his offer of guided tours of the roof still applies! A special service to mark the completion of the work and the handing over of funds to the school is planned for 27th April. Representatives of the grant aiding bodies, the architects and the main contractors will be invited and the service will be followed by a buffet lunch. It is hoped as many as possible will attend.

Before then we will have our services of worship for Holy Week and Easter as listed in the Calendar of Events and I hope these will be supported as they have been in the past. Finally as our parish population continues to grow I hope you will take the opportunity to extend an invitation to new neighbours to join in our services of worship and to ensure that they are warmly welcomed.

Yours sincerely,

**An Invitation to Holy Communion
Easter Sunday, Last Sunday in May
9.30a.m.
Bowden Kirk**

Worship for Holy Week

As in recent years there will be a short service of worship each morning in the chapel followed by a time of organ music and then tea and coffee in the upper room. Members of Holy Trinity and High Cross have been invited and in turn have invited us to the Maundy Thursday communion in Holy Trinity and the Good Friday service at High Cross. The times of these services will be confirmed in the weekly notices.

Shallowford Presbyterian Church, Atlanta

Many of you will remember the visit of the Youth Choir from the above church in 2004. They are visiting Scotland again this year and as Melrose was the highlight of their last tour they are to be with us again from the evening of Tuesday 10th June until after breakfast on Thursday 12th, with their performance on Wednesday evening. I know from visiting them in Atlanta later in 2004 that in fact the time spent in Melrose was the time they most enjoyed and they greatly appreciated not only the Border countryside but the hospitality they were shown. This year the choir consists of 67 young people with 8 adults accompanying them and so offers of accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis for the two nights will be much appreciated! There will be further information in the weekly church notices.

Mid-Week Lunch

Future dates:

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| Wednesday, March 26 th | Margaret's team |
| Wednesday, April 23 rd | Pat's team |
| Wednesday 28 th May | Kath's team |

12.15 – 1.30pm – Price £2.50

There will be a short ecumenical service of worship at 11.45am in the Chapel prior to lunch for any who may like to attend.

It is not too late I hope to say a big thank you to all who made the Christmas Lunch such a success. Special thanks must go to Molly Pringle who entertained us at the piano with carols and also got our brains working with a quirky quiz. Margaret, who has been keeping the talents well hidden, joined Molly at the piano for some seasonal duets; that in addition to masterminding the lunch itself.

Well done, everyone.

Pat Mackenzie

EASTER IS GOSPEL- Monday 17th March – Friday 21st March-10.30am

We will again hold these short services in the Chapel, followed by an organ or piano recital in church, then have a cup of coffee. Please reserve these dates in your diary, and encourage your friends to do likewise, so that we can make these Holy Week times of contemplation a helpful addition to our other well-established Easter Practices.

GUILD NEWS

I am now half way through my final year as President and I am enjoying the friendship and fellowship of the Members and also the full support of the Committee. We have, so far, had an array of very enjoyable Speakers, with more to come until the end of April. Our year finishes with our Summer Outing in May, which this year is a drive through the Yarrow Valley stopping at Peebles for shopping or a walk down the High Street and culminating with High Tea at the Glentress Hotel, near Peebles. The Guild, is not only an opportunity to enjoy some interesting Speakers, it is also a welcome social occasion enjoyed by all. As with all organisations it is difficult to attract people who are willing to make a commitment and serve on the committee. Most of our existing Members have done so in the past, but we need an influx of new members who would be prepared to take on this roll in the future. At our A.G.M. in April we will be looking to fill the posts of President, Treasurer and several on the committee. If you feel you would like to come along and be part of the Guild and help it to continue and flourish, you would be made most welcome.

Eileen Redhead
President

CHRISTIAN AID CAMPAIGN 2008

Christian Aid week this year is 11th – 17th May and as always is a very important week in the life of the church. If you would like to become involved in Christian Aid and help during the week or organise a specific fundraising event then please contact the Church office – 823339 or speak to Mr Bennett. As ever we do need more organisers and volunteers, particularly with the House-to-House collections so do please try and help.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 25th February- 9th March

The theme this year is CHANGE TODAY CHOOSE FAIRTRADE

Many farmers and workers in developing countries struggle to provide for their families. Poor market access and unfair trade rules often mean that the price they get for their crop does not cover the cost of production.

Fairtrade is a rapidly growing international movement, which seeks to guarantee a better deal for farmers and workers in the developing world.

A product that is Fairtrade certified carries a label, the FAIRTRADE mark licensed by the Fairtrade Foundation, part of an international network of Fairtrade labelling Organisations International (FLO).

Try it!

With thousands of products now available from single origin coffees to delicious chocolate and fashionable cotton T-shirts, change your everyday products to Fairtrade today.

Ask for it!

Ask for Fairtrade products in your local store

Promote it!

Introduce your friends to a Fairtrade product. Say thank you with a bunch of Fairtrade flowers, bring a bottle of Fairtrade wine to a dinner party or make them a refreshing cup of Fairtrade tea.

Fairtrade products are available after morning service at Melrose Parish Church on the first Sunday of the month.

For further information: Jenni Young 01896 822439

SUMMER WEDNESDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

As in previous years it is intended to hold Wednesday coffee in the church hall from 10 – 12noon, hoping that it will be a meeting point for all who wish to keep contact during the summer months and welcome visitors to Melrose.

A list of helpers will be in the Gattonside porch during May, when it is hoped some new people will join with previous helpers to make these mornings welcoming and worthwhile. Any enquiries to the church office 823339.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL "BOOKSHOP"

Spring-cleaning your bookshelves? Books on any topic, in saleable condition are always welcome for the annual Bookshop Event.

Books can be given to or collected by Val Miller (822758) or Dorothy Cameron (822787).

MELROSE in BLOOM

The group are making plans for the coming season and are always glad of more volunteers to join in the fun – preparing, planting, watering with Rosie and socialising! Phone Owen Rowlands (822420) or Duncan Bradon (820095).

ANYONE FOR COFFEE?

Saturday 8th March Age Concern Coffee Morning in the Corn Exchange

Saturday 22nd March Arthritis Research Campaign Coffee Morning in the Corn Exchange

SHEWING A FINE SEAM

Wednesday 14th May To support Christian Aid **Melrose Stitchers** are holding another Exhibition of their splendid work in the Church Hall from 10am to 4pm.

'FALLACY, SOMEWHERE !'

(or six months hard with Melrose Opera)

By this time the last words of 'Ruddigore' will have died away, with their hint of the invalid (but humorous [?]) reasoning that underlines most of the G & S plots, and the congregational members of the cast, along with their fellow-Thespians, are free to enjoy another six months out of jail.

It all starts in September with a team talk from the producer. He has a model stage and points out the entrances and exits and the steps to be negotiated. Everyone eventually gets a number and a paper plan of the stage on which to mark their own moves. Women, being multi-taskers, do it naturally; getting men to walk and sing at the same time is a little more difficult. We're jumping ahead of the action. Music practices start on Monday nights in the upstairs lounge of the Ormiston (that's what the foundation stone on the outside of the building beside the big black clock says – no fallacy there). Before that there has been the actual choosing of

the show and, if a big cast is required, the drumming up of the men or women required. [If you don't want G & S you've the whole of the rest of the Borders to choose from]. After auditions – and the 'sizing-up' of possible Principals (if possible, no Stan Laurels paired with Oliver Hardys) – that elite eventually do their practising on Sunday evenings. Everybody is measured for their costumes; they are chosen by the producer. Come November the hoi polloi are turning up on Mondays and Thursdays, again in the confines of the lounge. This time they each have a list of all practice dates and the pieces of the opera that are to be practised on these dates. If you miss a date you've to let the High Command know. After the turn of the year we actually get on stage on the Thursday nights, with the extension added. Photos are taken for the programme. Every evening of the week before the show is taken up with practices, except Wednesday which is costume night, when each member of the cast has to parade in full fig to see if the costume needs a tuck here and there, or more drastic surgery. The Sunday afternoon before the show is dress rehearsal with makeup on for the first time and singing with the orchestra for the first time (they have had a previous 'band call'). The producer's team talk is now about consistency, focus, reactions – and enjoyment.

VERDI'S REQUIEM

Saturday 10th May 2008 @ 7.30pm - Springwood Hall – Kelso

For the first time in the Borders, there will be a unique opportunity to take part in, or listen to Verdi's Requiem. This powerful and beautiful work is being promoted by the Roxburgh Singers, who will be joined by Eildon Singers, Berwick Arts Choir, Abbey Consort, youngsters from Longridge Towers, and other interested singers.

The soloists for the occasion are Soprano – Margret Einarsdottir, Mezzo-Soprano – Thora Ker, Tenor – Jung SooYun, Bass Ivor Klayman.

The Yetholm Sinfonia, founded by Geoffrey Emerson, will be expanded to the Yetholm Symphony Orchestra, and the offstage Trumpet fanfare for the exciting "Dies Irae" will be provided by the Jedforest Instrumental Band. The whole work will be conducted by Rev Marion Dodd.

An occasion not to be missed. Tickets for the performance cost £8.50

For further information, contact Pat Sutherland at rasutherland@tiscali.co.uk

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