

Rosyth  
Methodist Church

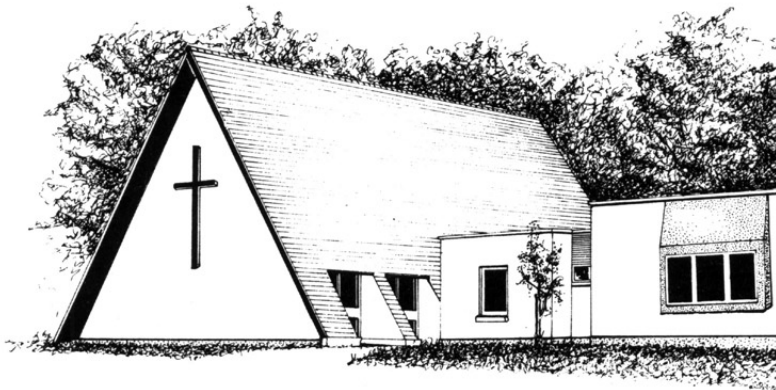
St Margaret's Scottish  
Episcopal Church



# Contact

the newsletter of the partnership between

Rosyth Methodist Church and  
St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church



Issue 61

February 2012/March 2012

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

### Ministers:

Deacon Sarah McDowall  
01383 611000

Rev Andrew Letby 0131 663 1545

### Senior Steward:

Mary Kidd 01383 872332

### Pastoral Secretary:

Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779

### Treasurer:

Howard Kirby 01383 624779

### Rector:

Rev Tim Bennison 01383 720532  
07411 616163

### Curate:

Rev Valerie Walker 07720 327766

### 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:** for the Young Church

9.00am Breakfast and “Sunday Funday”

11.00am All-age service

### **4th Sundays:** Worship together

11.00am Joint Communion Service

6.00pm “Sunday@Six”

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.

# Letter from the Editor.

In St Johns' Gospel we read the story of Jesus feeding five thousand people. This was made possible by the generosity of a young boy who gave up his packed lunch. 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish. A small offering for so many people. Was this gesture the base for a spectacular Miracle? Jesus, in blessing this food caused it to multiply and provide enough for everyone? Jesus could well have done that. One other interpretation of this account is that others, seeing the generosity of the boy opened their food packets and added to the sharing. That in itself would be miraculous, so either way, a meagre offering brought to Jesus brought about a spectacular result.

This is the first edition of Contact to be published by the Methodist part of the Rosyth Ecumenical Partnership. St Margaret's team have served us well with a consistently excellent product and they deserve our sincere thanks. Trying to find someone to take over something so grand has been impossible. Many conversations drew a picture of folk lacking in enough confidence to take on the task. So, here I am, your new editor, willing to offer very limited IT skills and even more limited time

to keep the link between the activities of our Churches and those of you who are our readers. May-be there will be others who will offer better skills in due course. I shall not be offended!

My hope is that Contact will remain a vehicle through which the work of God can be made known, and provide an invitation for all to take time, through reflection and attending some of our activities, to consider how the love that God has for each of us, can be shared in our communities.

May the God of Love and Joy and Peace, be known among us.

With good wishes to you all,

JyM.

## One minute, please

What did Jesus say?

"Everything is possible for him who believes."

*Mark 9:23*

## What's in this issue ...

This issue of Contact contains a wide range of items, including –

An original poem           Page 14  
Clerical regalia           Pages 6-8  
Lay training insights       Page 4  
The new year service       Page 14

Forthcoming events       Pages 9-12  
Fellowship news       Page 8  
Working together       Page 13  
Sermon                   Pages 15-17  
*'Christians in the World'*  
Invitations and requests   Page 20

## Update from the Episcopal Lay Reader Trainee.

I am now well into the first year of my training. It is very spiritually fulfilling and immensely informative, if at times a little exhausting! The companionship on the journey is wonderful and the support we can give to one another is extremely valuable.

I have eight assignments to do during this first 'academic' year and I am at the moment tackling the third. They are proving to be a totally different 'ball game' from the academic writings I have done in the recent past, but the challenge is undoubtedly helpful. My first assignment was on the Pentateuch, the second, which I found harder, on an ethical issue, and the current one is looking, from a spiritual point of view, at a vision for my church in its community.

As well as assignments, which involve considerable reading, there are weekly seminars in Edinburgh and monthly Ministry Reflection seminars in Perth. Apart from the learning, there is the benefit of discussion and general conversation with other students on the course, both ordinands and Lay Reader trainees – not to mention the sharing of food beforehand, which takes the form of a veritable feast in Perth!

During the year there are five residential weekends, which take place at St. Mary's Monastery, Kinnoul, Perth. The programme for each weekend is very full – seminars, eight worship services, projects in groups and Bible study. However, the hospitality at the monastery is top class. We are well looked after, with excellent meals, and we also have time for socialising, particularly at the end of the day, and an opportunity for walking in the beautiful grounds or the nearby hillside if the weather is clement. Unfortunately the bedrooms and some of the other rooms are very cold in the winter, as anyone who has stayed there will testify

to, and in December I was also full of the cold myself and rarely took off my scarf!! Following the example of some fellow students I have bought fingerless gloves in preparation for our January weekend.

Each year we have to undertake a placement, either in another church, or in a chaplaincy. My placement, which I started at Epiphany, is at Old St. Paul's in central Edinburgh. I am absolutely delighted to have this opportunity, as it is an Anglo-Catholic church, drawing its congregation from a very wide area – even as far as Argyll! Certainly it is fairly unique in Scotland and totally outwith my previous experiences of worship, this being a reason for my placement there. The Rector, Father Ian Paton, is delightful and an authority on liturgy (in fact, he is the Liturgy tutor on our course) and the congregation have proved very welcoming (my first Sunday there were about 200 people in the congregation – considerably more than I have been used to in the various churches in which I have worshipped over the years!). Each Sunday the main morning service is High Mass and there is Choral Evensong in the evening. During my time there, which continues till the Sunday after Easter, I will have a number of different opportunities, including serving, bearing the chalice (acting as a Sub-Deacon), presiding over non-Eucharistic services and undertaking pastoral visits.

Once I have completed my placement I will write another update. Please remember me in your prayers as I face the various challenges. I look forward to more time with you in the near future.

Blessings,

Margaret Dineley.

# Why dress up to go to Church?

by Martin Tarr

Ever since St Margaret's were given some new clergy vestments last year, Sandra and I have planned to write about what we wear to church, and in particular what our clergy put on. Whilst our vestments are not as sumptuous as the "Lord God's ball-gown" that appeared (in the apocryphal story) on the laundry bill for an Indian bishop, those who take our services can certainly be distinguished from those in the body of the kirk just by the way they look!

On the following pages, Eric Potts and Sandra Young have written about Methodist and Episcopalian practices, and our illustrations show some well-kent faces, even if we are afraid that we haven't been able to get a picture of Andrew Letby in his "coat of many colours".

But why have vestments at all? Why do we "dress up for church", though in the outside world people mostly "dress down", especially at weekends.

As a Baptist, I grew up in a fellowship where the only difference between the minister and the deacons was his clerical collar. So it wasn't until my last years in school that I had my first taste of a robed choir, and the positive impression it made was reinforced by my college experience. Here even non-singing members wore gowns, with a surplice added at weekends, and were glad of the extra warmth!

We enjoy a heated church, and no longer need choir robes for the warmth they afford, so why do the choirs at St Margaret's and Holy Trinity still wear distinctive 'uniform'?

In one way, 'uniform' is just what the robes are, a way of reinforcing the fact that we're all in it together, and have the privilege of contributing to worship as a team, without anyone being able to parade their peacock plumage. In fact, our choir robes have been known to hide a multitude of sartorial sins!

The very act of putting on a choir robe helps the choir members prepare for worship, and robing does the same for the clergy. As you'll read overleaf, some of the items worn have a symbolic role, and all offer links to past generations of believers. In some cathedrals, on special occasions, the robes themselves can be historic artefacts.

As well as being an external symbol of Christian service and preparation for worship, many robes are things of beauty, reminding us that God should have the best that we can give. And, at the very least, they differentiate those who wear them from the crowd, a reminder of the responsibility and privilege of leading worship.



Rev Lily Twist in clerical collar with pectoral cross

But what of "the person in the pew"? What should he/she wear? Thankfully, the days of "Sunday best" are almost gone, and newcomers will feel at home, whether they are dressed formally or casually. After all, we are a community in the world, as well as one that is "not of this world", to adapt the thoughts of John 15:19 and 17:14.

And we are bringing all of what we are to Christ, including our dress sense or lack of it, knowing that "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

# Clergy wear for Methodists

by Eric Potts

In the Methodist church there are no specific rules about clergy wear, whether for worship or on other occasions, but there are continually developing – and varying – traditions. In the 19th century Methodism divided into a number of factions, which finally reunited in the 1930s. For our purpose we can simplify into two main traditions, that of the Wesleyan Methodists and that of the Primitive Methodists.

The Primitive Methodists (the “Prims”) were very lay-centred and had a comparatively low view of ordination. Ministers tended to wear a suit, perhaps but not always with a clerical shirt (black) and collar. Many keep to this style today, and some rejoice in informal or casual dress, even while presiding at communion.

The Wesleyans, in contrast, held a high view of ordination, whilst remaining decidedly Protestant. Dress varied but typically you might expect a black cassock worn with white preaching bands or tabs. Some would add a black gown, either academic or of the Geneva pattern. Again quite a number of Methodist ministers still follow this tradition.

In recent years however there has been a movement away from the perceived drabness of all black. This is more from a modern emphasis on the joy of the Gospel rather than liturgical change, although ecumenical contact made the use of colour more acceptable. So ministers started to wear shirts and even cassocks of all colours, essentially to suit their own taste. This led to the publication some years ago of a pamphlet about clergy dress memorably entitled “Blackbirds and Budgerigars!”

Increasingly, though, the development of ecumenical understanding has encouraged quite a number of ministers to adopt the ancient liturgical colours for the seasons

and festivals, so that today the Methodist Worship Book designates (but without compulsion) the appropriate colour for each Sunday. Local churches do not own sets of vestments and are probably not likely to. But some ministers have introduced the use of an alb, or a cassock alb (a hybrid garment), in white of course, together with a stole in the colour of the season. This may be worn on all occasions in worship or, more commonly, at the Communion. So far the addition of other vestments is not normal, although it is not altogether unknown.

Linked with all this is a much greater emphasis in Methodism on the sacraments. There was a time when communion was seen by some almost as an optional extra. Given that we began as a preaching revival movement this is not surprising, though John Wesley would not have approved of any downgrading of the sacraments as commanded by our Lord. Today we are seeking to value the sacraments and to celebrate the Gospel, while retaining the informality and close bond with the congregation that is part of the essence of Methodist spirituality.



Mary Kidd and Eric Potts at the presentation in August 2010 showing alb and stole

# Clergy wear for Episcopalians

by Sandra Young

At St Margaret's, as in many Episcopal Churches, liturgical vestments (Latin *vestimentum* 'clothing or garment') are worn by the clergy at the Eucharist to denote the sacred nature of that service. According to the particular Season of the church year, or celebration observed, different coloured vestments are used. In 2011 (see Issue 56) a new set of green (the most frequently used) vestments were donated in memory of loved ones associated with St Margaret's.

Most will be familiar with the alb (Latin *albus* 'white'), which is a full length white robe, often with a hood, worn by the clergy and in some churches also the servers.

The chasuble is a long outer vestment worn by the celebrant on top of the other garments. Without fitted sleeves, it has a simple hole for the head and is worn over the alb and stole. It originates from the tunic worn in Roman times and can be said to represent the charity of Christ which 'covers all things' (Colossians 3.14).



Tim Bennison in chasuble (over alb and stole), with the maniple over his left arm

The stole is a coloured strip of material (not evident in the photo as it is under the chasuble) that the priest wears. The centre of the stole is worn around the back of the neck and the two ends hang down parallel to each other in front. The stole is usually decorated in some way, often with a cross or some other significant religious design. A deacon wears it over the left shoulder across the chest tied at the waist – as Valerie did before she was priested last June.



The stole represents Christ's authority and is kissed when being put on and off, symbolising that the wearer is not slave, but free, serving Christ with loyal and willing obedience. Again it is often based on the colour of the Season.

The maniple is an ornamental vestment in the form of a band, which is placed on the left arm in such a way that it falls in equal length on both sides of the arm. Originally the maniple was used to wipe the hands. It has been described as a symbol of being a servant to the servants of God.

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For the record: In the photograph, you'll see two green altar items: the Veil (Latin *vela* 'a curtain or sail') is a cloth square and covers the chalice and paten when not actually in use on the altar, to prevent dust from coming in contact with the bread and wine.

On top of the veil is placed the Burse (Greek *byrsa* 'a bag'), a folding case made from two squares of rigid material covered in cloth.

# Fellowship News

## **Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Appeal.**

Thank you to all who helped to provide about 35 boxes, including one or two from ladies from Rosyth Parish Church. 2382 boxes were donated in Rosyth and it is worth mentioning that the local organizer, Gillian Hall covered 600 boxes herself. This result was 7% up on 2010, which was very good as the national figure was, unfortunately, 7% down. The Baptist Church in Viewfield Terrace have a group of ladies who meet each Thursday between 10.am-12noon in the Viewfield Coffee Shop where they knot scarves, hats and gloves for putting in the Shoe boxes. If anyone is interested they can join this happy band of knitters who can provide needles patterns and wool if required, also there will be a box ( covered in blue paper) in the Crush Hall in which you can put in some of the required articles during the year. Each month will have a notice attached to the box saying what articles are to be collected that month – for example January is hats, gloves and scarves.

Any queries about any of these items please speak to Mary Dempster or telephone 721252.

## **On the Mend**

Audrey Headden is making very good progress at home following a hip operation on 4 January. We remember Audrey and Jock in our thoughts and prayers.

## **Pastures New**

Congratulations to David Campbell, former Priest-in-Charge of St Margaret's, who has been appointed Senior Chaplain to Marlborough College, Wiltshire. David, who moved from here to Fettes College in 2007, takes up his appointment in September 2012. At the same time, his wife Melanie will become Head of Religious Studies at the College. We offer David and Melanie our best wishes for this next exciting phase of their life.

## **New Lay Representative**

Margaret Dineley has been appointed lay representative of St Margaret's. We are delighted that Margaret has agreed to take on this important role for the next 12 months.

## **Dinner at Taurasi's Restaurant**

Many thanks to Dennis Cook and David Slater for arranging this evening, which is becoming an annual event. Sixteen people thoroughly enjoyed the meal and also the company, judging by the hilarity, not forgetting Dennis's jokes - perhaps we should have written them down as some of us could remember some of them but not always the punch line! Thanks again Dennis and David and hopefully we shall meet again next year.

We are always pleased to receive letters and articles on topics of interest to our readership, especially items of fellowship news, though regrettably we may have to modify or adapt them to fit the space available.







# Diary for March/April 2012

## Sunday 18 March

Lent 4                      9.30am   Sung Eucharist                      Rev Tim Bennison  
(Mothering Sunday)

11.00am   Morning Worship

Monday 19 Mar            7.30pm   Ecumenical Lent Study Group, St Columba's

Wednesday 21 Mar      2.00pm   Wednesday Fellowship: Daffodil Tea  
Fundraising event – open to all

Thursday 22 Mar        6.30pm   St Margaret's Vestry Meeting Church Lounge

Friday 23 Mar            7.00pm   Choir practice

## Sunday 25 March

Lent 5                      11.00am   Joint Communion Service            Rev Tim Bennison  
Traidcraft goods on sale after the service

6.00pm   Sunday@Six Service

Monday 26 Mar            7.30pm   Ecumenical Lent Study Group, St Columba's

Wednesday 28 Mar      2.00pm   Wednesday Fellowship: Games afternoon

Friday 30 Mar            7.00pm   Choir practice

## Holy Week

### Sunday 1 April

Palm Sunday              **9.15am**   Sung Eucharist and Blessing of Palms  
Rev Tim Bennison

11.00am   Morning Worship and Blessing of Palms

2.30pm   Palm Sunday procession through Rosyth  
from the Methodist Church (time to be confirmed)

Monday 2 April            7.30pm   Ecumenical Lent Study Group, St Columba's

7.00pm   Eucharist with reflection at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

Tuesday 3 April           7.00pm   Eucharist with reflection at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

Wednesday 4 Apr        2.15pm   Wednesday Fellowship – Holy Week Communion  
An opportunity to meet the Fellowship and enjoy  
mid-week communion. All welcome.

7.00pm   Eucharist with reflection at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

Maundy Thursday        7.00pm   Liturgy of the Last Supper            Rev Tim Bennison  
Joint service (at our church) for St Margaret's,  
Rosyth Methodist and Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

# Diary for April 2012

Good Friday	10.00am	“Walk with Christ” around Rosyth from St Columba’s to the Methodist Church
	2.00pm	Veneration of the Cross at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline Good Friday Meditation at Rosyth Methodist Church (details to be confirmed)
	7.30pm	Stainer’s <i>Crucifixion</i> at Rosyth Methodist Church St Margaret’s augmented choir
Holy Saturday	8.30pm	Easter Vigil at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline

## Sunday 8 April

Easter Sunday	9.15am	Sung Eucharist	Rev Tim Bennison
	11.00am	All-age worship	

Note that there will be no Sunday Funday during the school holidays

## Free your spirit/stoke your inner fire

– an ecumenical gathering for spiritual growth

Looking for a different way to spend part of your Saturday? Looking for something spiritually fulfilling taking place within a warm and friendly environment? Then look no further – free your questing spirit and join us on **Saturday 25 February** (postponed from 12 November 2011 due to Valerie’s indisposition) at Rosyth Methodist Church. We’ll meet for tea/coffee at **10.30am** ready to start at **11.00am**.

The introductory session invites you to start stoking your inner fire by taking part in a form of imaginative prayer from Scripture. Following this you can choose between two workshops, one on *Lectio Divina* and the other on *Centring Prayer*.

The lunch break gives you an opportunity to relax in company and feed the physical body, having just fed the soul. We will provide tea, coffee and soup (do bring sandwiches etc if you want).

After lunch, you will have a choice again between two workshops, this time one on *Christian Meditation* and the other on *Praying with pictures*. The afternoon will

conclude with an informal Wild Goose Eucharist, finishing around 3pm.

Puzzled by unfamiliar terminology? Well, don’t stay out in the cold! Come into the warmth of the Rosyth Methodist Church in company with members of other churches in the Rosyth and Dunfermline area and all will be revealed. Could I suggest that you ask people to get in touch with a named person to indicate if you are interested in coming to the event please let Sandra Young (sandrayoung39@btinternet.com tel: 415021) or Margaret Dineley (margaret.dineley@googlemail.com) know.

The Spirituality Group  
Holy Trinity Church

# Working together

## Ecumenical Gathering

'Stories from the Heart' is the title of the Fourth Local Ecumenical Partnership Gathering to be held on Saturday 10th March from 11am until 3pm at Murrayfield Parish Church, Ormidale Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 6EQ. The programme will cover worship, 'Stories from the Heart' keynote presentation led by Lt Col Alan Burns, Salvation Army, and 'Heart to Heart' conversations sharing experiences on a variety of topics to do with 'Partners'. Details of the programme are on the notice boards in the Crush Hall. Lunch will be provided.

Members from both churches have attended the three previous gatherings and it would be good if we can participate again. If you are interested in attending please talk to Sandra Young (who has the booking forms) before Sunday 19th February as the closing date for bookings is Friday 24th February.

## Fundraising concert for Edinburgh Samaritans and YMCA Edinburgh

Edinburgh Samaritans and YMCA Edinburgh are holding a fundraising concert on 25th Feb. at 7-30pm @ The City of Edinburgh Methodist Church in Nicolson SQUARE. The concert will feature the Forth Valley Chorus (ladies' Barber shop choir) and Sam MacAdam on the clarsach.

The Chorus recently performed at the Usher Hall and are Gold Medal Winners.

Tickets are £10 (£8) family £25 (including refreshments)

For tickets contact Ann Curtis - [annmcurtis@yahoo.com](mailto:annmcurtis@yahoo.com) or any of Friends of Samaritans or YMCA Edinburgh board members.

## From our organisations

### Messy Church

by Jean Hall

Our 'Messy Church' seems to be growing monthly, the last 3 bringing in over 20 Children! (and their parents.) If anyone feels that they could help, even one Sunday in a year, we would love to have your support.

One of our Mums, from Dalgety Bay, was so impressed by what we did that she went back to her own church and did a similar group in December. She included lots of games. The day was so successful that they were in danger of running out of space! She has asked for our help with

ideas to share with other children. What a great way to spread the message and share skills.

Our thanks to Gwyneth who does so much for our young members and their parents. Thanks also go to Sheila who collates all our thoughts and ideas together in such a simple and meaningful way. Often we don't know how our message reaches out to others and how effectively we spread the love of God. Thank you again to ALL our helpers and please keep us in your prayers.

## New Years Day 2012

New Years Day 2012 saw a group of people meeting together in the Methodist Church.

It was felt to be a good way to start a New Year. There were people who are regular Worshippers in Rosyth, from both congregations, and also family and friends from distant places. We were all joining together in the House of God to joyfully celebrate the opportunities that a New Year can hold.

We enjoyed sharing in conversations with each other as we looked forward to exploring ideas about what may lie ahead, and seeking to discern the voice of God in our exchanges.

The members of staff of the Edinburgh and Forth Methodist Church facilitated this time. They had produced a DVD which gave us useful thoughts to guide us in our time together.

Included in the DVD was an activity which was suitable for people of all ages and allowed young and old to work together in fellowship and co-operation,



The product from the activity was a candle. Each person was able to decorate a jar. Each jar had a strip of paper near the

bottom of the jar. The paper had on it a biblical promise. The words were visible inside the jar and when lit by a tea light, were to serve to remind us of an important truth. They also made a nice decoration for our homes.



For some it would have triggered memories of the Holman Hunt picture of Jesus, 'The Light of the World'. It was used in a one time Christmas broadcast by King George V1. Then it was accompanied by the poem which includes the words,- '..... put your hand into the hand of God, That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way'.

## We Love Him Because He First Loved Us

On a day called 'Good Friday' our Lord was slain

He loved so much and had nothing to gain

Nothing to gain? Oh He wanted our love

And suffered so much this to prove

The glory is He rose from death

"Father Forgive" was His last breath

Now we who cannot 'take it in'

Are saved from every mortal sin.

We too may live, - His sacrifice

Says "I love you, I paid the price"

# Christians in the world

## Rules and Regulations

Alan Whitson's sermon on Sunday 16 October 2011

There is a lot to be said for the rules and regulations that we live by in this world. These are usually employed to keep things stable for the majority the majority of the time. Having said that we need to be careful that we stay acquainted with what is appropriate to our lives.

There are always changes being made to what is expected not least of all from what we call the state – the government. We need to fill in our tax returns, if we are asked, and we need especially to take care with that return or we can end up needing to pay for our mistakes. I am sure that we all try to keep on the right side of the authorities. Sometimes it isn't so easy of course, when those in authority want to do things that we are not too keen on happening. In these times of austerity, people are having to accept changes to pensions and times of retiring – not a great prospect if you see yourself working on until you are 70 years old. However, the times are hard and we need to consider what is best for the country; especially when it is something which we aren't happy about. I can see why some unions are unhappy, although I am sure that we, as a country, are in a bad way and strikes are not the most appropriate way to express discontent but it is difficult.

There is also the current change occurring in what has become the Arab spring in countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Oman and many less well publicised disruptions in other nations some of which were termed minor – 22 nation states in total from which three leaders have been deposed (including Mubarak in Syria and Gaddafi in Libya. Many of the leaders and their militia have

fought against the people and many non-military personnel have died. Equally, throughout the world many have been looking on taking heart from the drive to overthrow tyrannical leaders who have been unwelcome for many, many years. I am sure that most of us are unsure about the violence engendered by these disruptions, but can understand why the people rise up under such totalitarian rule. Now in Syria it appears that the Christians, Coptic in particular are facing an immediate uneasy future: William Dalrymple of *The Guardian* put it this way

“Sidhom, editor of *Watani*, Egypt's leading Coptic newspaper, believe[s] that dialogue between the two faiths [is] a pressing necessity and that the Copts [will] have to learn to live with the Islamists and reach an accommodation with a political grouping they have long feared.”

All these are situations we are thankful not to have to face here in the UK...although if it leads to greater freedom for the people in these nation states, perhaps we will see the deaths as having achieved something really worthwhile.

Rules and regulations are easily put in place but are much more difficult to deviate from. Indeed much disruption and many deaths have been caused in trying to maintain the current rules or trying to overthrow them

When we look at the time of Jesus, we find the things that happened then were not too greatly different from today. Jesus was creating unrest among the church leaders of the day and I am sure that the Romans were not too taken with the whole thing either. Jesus had come after all, to be unsettling, because God had decided that it was time to send his son to be a divine but human

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All these are situations we are thankful not to have to face here in the UK...although if it leads to greater freedom for the people in these nation states, perhaps we will see the deaths as having achieved something really worthwhile.

Rules and regulations are easily put in place but are much more difficult to deviate from. Indeed much disruption and many deaths have been caused in trying to maintain the current rules or trying to overthrow them

When we look at the time of Jesus, we find the things that happened then were not too greatly different from today. Jesus was creating unrest among the church leaders of the day and I am sure that the Romans were not too taken with the whole thing either. Jesus had come after all, to be unsettling, because God had decided that it was time to send his son to be a divine but human agent for change. The Jewish nation, God's chosen people, was not making headway in finding a way to be attentive to the word of God. There was too great a deviation from the plan that had been set in motion by God and therefore, there needed to be change.

This change was not trivial either; God sent Jesus appreciating that it would not be popular, especially within the Jewish church, knowing that they were blind to the need



for the change. There was a great surprise coming as God was winding up the covenant struck with the Jews or at least opening it up for everyone. God was disappointed that there was little recognition that all was not well within the covenant.

The rules and regulations of the Jewish nation had long become something quite apart from the nature of God. There was a self-deceiving context to the Jewish laws. The observance of the Law had become a need in its own right. The complexities had grown over time and keeping the law was no longer straight-forward. Initially the law was set up surely, to support their faith, a set of guidelines for the nation, needed in the context of their covenant with God. Now these rules, laws had become much more important than their faith! The emptiness of their hearts was due to the Law becoming an end in itself.

The religious leaders did not recognise the nature of Christ as being that of the long expected Messiah. They saw the arrival of this Nazarene, the latest prophet in a long line of would-be-messiahs, as an inconvenient threat to the comfortable relationship exchanged with the Roman conquerors. Instead of participating in the public debate being encouraged by God through the life and service of Jesus, they could only see it all as interference by this upstart. They did not hear and therefore understand why Jesus had come to be with them. And the parables, the allegorical descriptions given by Jesus – particularly the story of the vineyard owner whose servants and then the son were killed by the tenant worker in the father's vineyard described graphically what the Church was intent on doing with Jesus. They could now see what Jesus was accusing them of, but still they could not understand and were deceived by their own arrogance into believing that it was Jesus that was wrong and not themselves – Luke 11.52 – “Woe to you experts in the law, because you have

taken away the key to knowledge.”

Just in case you are in doubt about the nature of the problem Jesus had with the Law; perhaps thinking that Jesus wanted to do away with the control and stability that laws of the land provide; even being against the law in principle - let me try to explain. We have a legal system in our country which helps maintain a community atmosphere that encourages us to live together in peace and contentment – which is part of the reason why they exist. For us Christians the legal system is there to be obeyed, but it isn't responsible for our faith or beliefs; although our beliefs and faith influences how we approach the laws. Jesus was not only talking about the content and complexity of the rules. No Jesus was trying to help the church / the Jewish community to understand that the life that their laws now established had nothing to do with God. The laws in fact were creating a way of living that was separating them from God's grace. Their Laws were misleading; in so far as to be a good Jew you had to abide by the laws, but only because abiding by them was to gain God's approval.

Our reading from Matthew's gospel this morning, demonstrates how the leaders were after Jesus. They asked the question about paying taxes to Caesar; a question posed in order to trip up Jesus. However, Jesus amazed them by the answer – Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and Give to God what is God's. I am sure that this answer amazed them because they thought it was such a brilliant question – of course it was such a contrive question it was clearly a trick. So in forestalling the question Jesus made them look stupid when in fact they wanted to make Jesus look stupid, to compromise Jesus in front of his followers. Perhaps what we learn is not to confuse the laws of the land with God's laws.

As Christians we are citizens of the country to which we belong, but also are beholding to God. In relation to the country we must

be honest and pay our taxes and the many dues for which we must pay. We receive education, health services and share public services such as roads, lighting, refuse collection and much more besides. These are for everyone and we must pay our portion. However, as William Barclay tells us the unique wisdom of Jesus was such that it valued principle above rules. In understand the principle of sharing we understand why we abide by the civil laws. However, rules and punishments change from generation to generation while the principles remain constant.

Jesus teaches the principles and that is why Jesus' sayings and life live on throughout all the generations. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians tells us [vs. 3-5] that our love of God shines through because the principles that are described there will make it so: -

- Work produced by faith
- Labour prompted by love and,
- Endurance inspired by hope

## Sunday@Six

### "From Hurt to Hope"

Friends

Just felt moved to say how beautiful and moving was

last evening's service and to thank you all for arranging

and conducting it.

I certainly feel inspired to strongly recommend to my

own church that we do something similar next year.

68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,

because he has come to his people and

As Christians we are of a mind to work hard because we dedicate our whole life to the grace of God and even while earning our living we add the energy of faith to respond by employing our God-given gifts – these same gifts shape our leisure time in which we apply ourselves to improve the lot for everyone by applying our skills and resources to improve our community. Our motto for life in general is to endure the hard times along with the good times because of the hope we have through our faith in the presence and love of God.

Conclusion - Psalm 96 v.10 & 13: -

10 Say to all the nations, The Lord is king!  
The earth is set firmly in place and cannot be moved...13 He will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness."

AMEN

### Pause for thought

...one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

Luke 12 v15.

redeemed them.

69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David

70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), (Luke 1)

May the miracle of Christmas fill your hearts with hope, peace,

joy and love this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

Frank Moyes

*Worship Team Leader, St Margaret's Church of Scotland*

*Dunfermline Presbytery Prayer Coordinator*

# Contact points

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

Rosyth Methodist Toddler Group  
Elaine Lambert 01383 417071  
elaine.lambert1@sky.com

St Margaret's Choir  
Myra Tarr 01383 723989  
myra@mtarr.co.uk

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

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

Wednesday Fellowship  
Mary Kidd 01383 872332  
cmarykidd@btinternet.com

## Organisations meeting in our premises

Brambles Playgroup  
Lesley Hynd (play leader)  
07758 877284

Lauren Harris (chair) 01383 412592  
laurenst3@aol.com

Alan Harris (treasurer) 01383 412592  
alanharris34@aol.com

Parahandies Disabled Club  
Peter Merckel (secretary)  
01383 822940  
peter.merckel@yahoo.co.uk

## Scout Group

Group Scout Leader *via*  
Stuart Fowell 01383 823936  
stuart.fowell@btinternet.com

Beaver Scouts  
David Sinclair 01383 410255  
davidgraeme31@yahoo.co.uk

Cub Scouts  
Martin Rogers 01383 415458  
martin.rogers13@talktalk.net

Scouts  
Alan Connery 01383 731391  
alan.connery@virgin.net

Explorer Scouts  
Terry O'Neill 01383 842695  
terryoneill2003@yahoo.co.uk

## Guide Unit

Rainbows  
Susan Warren 01383 414355  
Assistant, Lyn Lennie

Brownies  
Suzy Knight 01383 416087  
Assistant, Vicky Cooper

Guides  
Melissa Peel  
Assistant, Nicola Byrne

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

# Invitations and requests

## Christian Aid

The Rosyth Committee has decided to give the annual Daffodil Tea a miss this year and have a Valentine's Day Afternoon Tea on Thursday 9th February instead.

It will be nicely set out with china cups and cake stands – not quite the Ritz or Gleneagles standard and certainly not their

prices, so look out for the sale of tickets towards the end of January.

This is a 'not to be missed event' so do come along and remember the money raised goes towards helping poor souls who don't have the facility to provide them with a drink of fresh water, or a nice house to live in, a change of clothing or money to feed themselves or their children.

## Lent Study Groups

This year Eric and Gillian Potts will be leading a series of five Lent Study groups. Starting on Thursday February 23rd at 2.30pm. They will be held at their home, 15 Wemyss Avenue, Blairhall and they look forward to welcoming people to their home. Space is quite limited however, so they would be grateful if you would book a place beforehand. (Phone 851373 or email [ericandgillian@earthenware.me.uk](mailto:ericandgillian@earthenware.me.uk)).

The course is entitled 'Handing on the Torch' – sacred words for a secular world. It includes a starter CD with conversations including Archbishop John Sentamu (Archbishop of York) and Rachel Lampard (Public issues Team Leader for

the Methodist Church).

The Prime Minister recently described our country as still a Christian country.

Do you agree?

What is the place of faith in 21st century Britain?

Does our faith still matter?

These are the kinds of questions we will be trying to find some answers to.

Note: Deacon Sarah will be leading another group, using the same course material.

These will be on different dates, so look out for details if you are not able to be with the group at Blairhall.

## Rosyth on the web

You can view or download this issue, with photos in colour, at <http://tinyurl.com/7ehodr6>.

## To our contributors

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue.

The help given by Martin Tarr and Stuart Pearson has been invaluable in the production of this edition of Contact. To both, very grateful thanks.