



Chalmers Memorial Church Newsletter Summer 2013



Dear All,

**‘The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.’**

Numbers 6: 22-27 was the sermon text for Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after the General Assembly week. It is called the Aaronitic Blessing and it is used in churches throughout the world on Sunday when we send people out into the world. When we go from our place of worship, our Christian home, into this world which we sometimes find more and more scary and strange to us and God’s will.

Several people asked me to publish this sermon, so that those who were not able to be in church on Sunday could read it. It was preached on Trinity Sunday and the Trinity of our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit was apparent throughout the service and the prayers. However in the Trinity Sunday’s morning service I had to preach about a Pentecost miracle, because Pentecost happened again during this week and Ian Bulloch will not have been able to tell you this story on the Sunday of Pentecost because it only happened during the following week. – But it is so important and concerns all of us all and that is why I have to share this with you.

Pentecost is all about the coming of the Holy Spirit into this world. I am always a bit uneasy about the Holy Spirit. Well, no, I am not uneasy about the Holy Spirit himself but about what we might mistake for the work of the Holy Spirit, about the task of discerning the Holy Spirit.

In the early years of the reformation there was a lot of violent upheaval and terrible atrocities happened in the name of religion, not dissimilar from what we see in the world today. In the town called Münster radicals founded a kind of Taliban type Christian state and the crimes committed there in the name of God were just horrendous. The people there relied completely on the guidance of what they thought was the voice of the Holy Spirit and the leaders said the Spirit had told them to do these things. The situation became so bad that the emperor’s and Protestant forces joined to make an end with this terrible dictatorship. Since then we Protestants in that part of the world are very wary about any kind of sectarianism and very careful about what *we think* is the Holy Spirit speaking to us.

The bible is the ultimate standard to discern the Spirit or other voices we might hear. We know how Jesus was tempted by the devil and combated him with the bible. But then he was Jesus – he *knew* it was the devil speaking to him. But we find it difficult to identify whose voice it is we hear and how to read our holy texts, how to discern God’s will which he left us in his Holy Word in the bible, a complex book, written by so many people to whom God revealed his will at different times and in so many different ways.

So when last year’s Moderator, the Very Rev Albert Bogle, told us members of the General Assembly on Saturday that when we had to vote on difficult matters we should listen to the little voice in our heads, I became very uneasy. And this uneasiness grew during Sunday night. I became a victim of nightmares and doubts. I had studied the bible, read the reports and prayed about it. I was pretty sure that my opinion was right and God’s will. But what if I was wrong?! We have certainty of salvation but not certainty of faith! We don’t have the certainty that our faith and our views and opinions are right. And with the bible there is always another text which might challenge your understanding.

When I walked up the Royal Mile on Monday morning I was so nervous, I had to put my iPod on. On this jiggle setting because I wasn’t able to choose the music I needed for this day, the Cure started singing: “I don’t care if Monday’s black...” But I did care! I did care so much. And I think we all did. It was yes or no to a decision which would hurt so many people on either side. No solution in sight. A situation nobody really wanted but nothing anybody could do about it.

And then it happened: Pentecost! Albert Bogle stood up and moved a countermotion to the two proposals still on the table, which he had just stitched up quickly over lunch. In his speech he said when he came in the morning he had no idea that he would move this. For he really didn’t want gay ministers in the church. He thought this was not God’s will for the church. But he also said that he might be wrong. And in all this doubt he was sure about one thing: that God’s will for the Church was unity and he, Albert, felt it was more important that the church would have unity than to stand by his position. And he moved that the church might maintain her traditional position on this issue but also allow those congregations who disagree to call a minister who is in a civil partnership. A miracle was happening! Somebody in the church said: I am sure about my position – but still, I might be wrong! And he moved – and what a big move this was for Albert!

And then we heard the Seconder to this motion, moved, almost in tears, saying that he never thought he would ever support such a thing but now he was seconding it and begging, literally begging the General Assembly to agree to this. He had not thought that there could still be a place for him the Church of Scotland. But now he saw it. And he begged us to make it possible for him to stay. And later Albert said: “I want to get there with you but I need a bit more time!”

And the General Assembly decided to do exactly this. To follow this proposal. To stick to her traditional position but to allow congregations to opt out of this. The Gordian knot had been cut. **Nobody left the church!** There was the way forward in unity. This Monday the Kirk made a decision which preserves its unity. We were on the verge of a split; it had been ever so close. The evil spirits had already worked for the last four years and we on our own account wouldn't have been able to find a way out. We needed the Holy Spirit and his guidance and he came.

And you know, the miracle that happened this Monday was not only that the church's unity was preserved but also that somebody found a way to see something though he himself was opposed to it. Because we were all quite sure that if the more radical liberal proposal had gone through it would very likely have fallen on Presbytery level. But this proposal will almost certainly go through.¹ And Albert knew that! And so did his Secunder.

This was a great moment for the church. Our enemies had only been waiting for us to dissolve ourselves or to make bad press again. But that night I didn't get that. I didn't sense that something new had happened, something huge and of historic importance. I was just tired. There was no sense of history or having achieved a great thing. But I slept so well that night and woke up with a great feeling of peace and blessing. And when I saw my fellow commissioners there it was again this deep feeling of blessing. Of unity, I have good friends on both sides of the argument; however, we always avoided even mentioning the issue, too afraid that it might divide us. But when I met my friends and colleagues, my fellow commissioners the following day we smiled at each other and said it so many times: We did it. We did it. We had a real feeling of having been blessed and guarded. That God had watched over us and had shown his grace upon us. He had lifted up his countenance upon us and given us his peace.

We had done it. And what we meant was: We preserved the unity of the Church of Scotland and we can all live with the decision made. We all won. The devil had not succeeded. We are still here and we are standing together against the evils of this world. And that he tried so hard to divide the church shows us which threat he sees in us. What happened on Monday was something like a rebirth of the Church of Scotland – overcoming arguments and splits and division for the greater good and to fulfill her calling.

The Tuesday started with the World Mission Council report. The delegate from the national Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Dr. Mary Mikhael, gave an account of the situation in Syria and the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries and the horrifying atrocities that are happening in Syria at the moment. This is just too horrifying for words. We heard how Christians who used to live in peace in Syria were now targeted by radical foreign fighters. These troops were brought in to fight President Assad's troops. They are often radical Muslims or just criminals and they are financed with foreign money. They commit the most horrible crimes. We heard of mass murder, gang rape and crucifixions. I think that each delegate felt like me terribly ashamed of having spent a whole day discussing same sex civil partnerships and the ministry when this is the reality for so many people. But the delegates from that region were so gracious and really engaged with us on our difficult way. And they kept repeating the words the Moderator, the Right Rev E Lorna Hood, quoted in one of her addresses: "Hope is hearing the music of the future and faith is dancing to it."

But it was the Moderator's words on Thursday when she preached on Jeremiah that helped us commissioners to embrace this tension we were experiencing. The tension between our internal problem – which seemed so little in comparison with the problems in the world but which was so huge for us and which needed solving if we wanted to fulfill our calling – and indeed the problems of the world. The Moderator told us the story about Jeremiah who was in prison and whom God told to buy a vineyard. That was a rather mad thing to do because the city was under siege from the Babylonian troops and was about to fall any minute. There was a long exile ahead and Jeremiah was told to buy this vineyard. None of us would buy land outside Damascus at the moment I would presume. But buying this land meant an investment in the future. A sign of the clear and certain hope that there would be a future. And the Moderator told a wee story about somebody who phoned up somebody else in New York on a rather trivial matter just after 9/11. The caller apologized for this but the other person said that getting on with normal business was the best sign of hope he could imagine.

And we did get on with the work that needed doing. Refreshed and inspired by what had happened on Monday. I think it is easier to see the Spirit at work retrospectively. But see his work you could this week. For the Church of Scotland this was a week of grace and blessing and unity and love, of tradition and renewal. It was the week of Pentecost. Amen.

**And the peace of God,
which surpasses all human understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

God bless,
Rev Kristina Herbold Ross

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*(Please respect Monday as the
Minister's day off)*

¹ All significant changes to the Kirk's practice which require the passing of an Act by the General Assembly fall under the Barrier Act, which means that it requires the agreement of the majority of Presbyteries. The Assembly passes an Overture first, this goes then to all Presbyteries and if the majority agrees the following year's General Assembly will pass an Act. In the case of this year's decision the Overture will have to be presented to next year's Assembly as there was not sufficient time to prepare such a complex type of legislation, it will then go to the Presbyteries and in case they agree an Act can be passed in the 2015 Assembly.

PRAYERS - "We must never let our religious ideas, customs, rituals and conventions become more real to us than the Risen Christ." Thomas Merton

Loving God, creator of all, we give you thanks and praise for the freedom of our lives. We give you thanks and praise for the life of Jesus Christ, who showed your love as he broke down barriers. We give you thanks and praise for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who has led people to stand up for freedom in a world that sought to keep them captive. We give you thanks and praise for we are your people, liberated to serve you in the world. Fill us now with your loving Spirit so that your life may be released among us.

Pray for:

Those in our congregation who are in hospital
Those in our own country who find it difficult to make ends meet
Those who are working hard to establish the East Lothian Foodbank

Pray for:

People living under oppressive political regimes and who cannot enjoy freedom
People held captive by war or poverty especially the victims of violence in Syria

Funerals

On 5th April 2013

William (Bill) Stewart,

Prestonpans, 85 yrs old

On 30th May 2013

Dolina (Donalda) Pollock,

Port Seton, 80 yrs old

The next Candle Coffee Club meeting

is on **Thursday 20th June**

Meeting at 10a.m in

'Longniddry Inn'.

The Speaker will be Joyce Gowdy

'Healthlink'

All welcome



Our Church – an explanation of the Interior Decoration and Symbolism

Looking upwards in the Church you will see eight shields. This month we will look at the **West Side**. Starting at the end nearest to the gallery there are four shields representing the four Gospels. Traditionally these are represented as:

1. The figure of the **man** symbolises the plainness and simplicity of Mark's Gospel.
2. The **lion** represents Matthew's Gospel because Matthew saw Jesus as the **Lion of Judah**.
3. The **Ox** because Luke saw Jesus in terms of his service and sacrifice for all mankind.
4. And John is represented by the **Eagle** because it is the only living creature that can look straight into the sun and not be dazzled by it. John penetrates into the dazzling and eternal truths that Jesus brings. Those emblems are sometimes distributed differently among the Gospel writers but this is a common allocation. The symbols are derived from the Book of Revelation Ch4 v7.

Thanks

Tonia Stewart and family would like to say how very much appreciated your prayers and cards were after Bill's passing. It was indeed a great comfort to have our friends around us at the service. Thanks to everyone who donated to the retiring collection. The sum of £170 was raised and appreciated by the charities Chest, Heart & Stroke and Diabetes UK.

Thank you to everyone who sent flowers, cards, prayers and gifts, and for all the phone calls during my recent stay in hospital. Also special thanks to Rev John Knox for his visits. *Margaret Stewart*.

Mary Smellie would like to thank the Church for the flowers she received to celebrate her 93rd birthday.

Jim and Dereen Hardie would like to thank the Church for the flowers they received.

Ian Farquhar would like to thank everyone for all the cards, best wishes and gifts he received on his 80th birthday.

Thanks are expressed to all who donated to our Day of Commitment. We raised **£4,350**. Well Done.

Forth Bridge Cross – A total of £625 was raised from the recent Forth Bridge walk for Christian Aid. Thanks also to those who took part and to all those who sponsored us.

Christian Aid Week-House to House Collection – As you all know Christian Aid week has recently finished and we are unable to confirm the amount we have raised at this time. This will be intimated in the Church intimations.

"The Staff" from the Wednesday Lunches, would like to thank all who support this in any way. The total amount raised for the Fabric Fund in 2012 was £2,312.00. Why not come along and enjoy the warm welcome.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Church Newsletter.

The next issue will be available on

Sunday 1st September 2013

Articles for this edition should be with me by

Sunday 18th August

If you would like to E-Mail news you can contact me on: chalmerschurch@btopenworld.com

Or by phone on 819471

Sheila Bulloch



Services and Meetings

Sunday

- 10:15 a.m. All-age Family Worship (in Hall)
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship (with Crèche)
6:15 p.m. Evening Worship (as advertised)

Monday

- 7:15 p.m. The Guild (Oct - March)

Tuesday

- 10.00 a.m. Chalmers Ramblers Walking Group
7.15 p.m. Prayer Time
7.45 p.m. Imagining the Bible (as advertised)

Welcome Wednesday

- 10 - 11a.m. Prayer Time (2nd of month)
1.30 - 3pm Get Together (2nd of month)
12-2p.m. Lunches (3rd of month)
10a.m - 12noon Coffee Time (last of month)

Wednesday – Evening Activities

- 5 – 6 p.m. 1st Port Seton Rainbows (Sept. - June)
6:30 p.m. Boys Brigade –
- 7:45p.m. { Anchor boys and Junior Section
{ Company Section (Sept. - June)
8.00p.m. Badminton Group

Thursday

- 5:15 – 6:15p.m. 1st Cockenzie Rainbows }
6:30 – 8 p.m. 2nd Port Seton Brownies }
(Sept. - June)

Saturday

- 8.00 – 9.15a.m. Prayer Breakfast (last of month)



OUR WORSHIP

Rev Kristina Herbold Ross will conduct worship unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 9th June

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship
– Rev Kristina Herbold ROSS
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship – Ian BULLOCH

Sunday 16th June

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Amanda JOHNSTON
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 23rd June (Please note NO 10.15am SERVICE)

- 11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship
with Sunday School Prizegiving

Sunday 30th June

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Nicola BRUCE
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship with Sacrament of
HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday 7th July

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Joyce BUCHANAN
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 14th July

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Rev John KNOX
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 21st July

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Ian BULLOCH
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 28th July

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Anne SUTHERLAND
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 4th August

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Rev Tom GORDON
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 11th August

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Amanda JOHNSTON
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 18th August

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Nicola BRUCE
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday 25th August

- 10.15 a.m. All-Age Worship – Rev John KNOX
11.00 a.m. Traditional Worship

MINISTER

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TREASURER

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FLOWER CONVENER

Mrs Aileen Parker
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ACCESS to the HALL contact

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Mrs Pamela Zenati
Tel: 813641

HALL LETS

Mr Ian Bulloch
Tel: 852717

BEADLE

Mr Duncan Morgan
Tel: 812071

PRAYER SECRETARY

Mrs Patricia Knox
Tel: 815423



Please recycle this newsletter and care for the earth as God intended

SC004630 Cockenzie and Port Seton: Chalmers Memorial Parish Church 'Scottish Charity'. www.chalmerschurch.co.uk



Chalmers Memorial Church Newsletter

Summer Supplement 2013



Elder Bill Stewart

We were all sorry to learn of the death of Elder Bill Stewart after a period of illness on 22 March 2013. Although Bill was not able to attend Church or to take part in any of the activities for some years, nevertheless, he was a well-respected Elder of this congregation for some 25 years, joining the Kirk Session on 17 October 1988 having originally been Ordained as an Elder while a member at Prestonpans.

Bill took an active part in all aspects of worship playing a leading role in the choir as music played a large part in his life. He took that interest into the Sunday School where he taught and played the guitar to the children and on occasions to the congregation always urging those at the back to sing louder. He was often accompanied by David Cooper who shared Bill's interest working with the Sunday School.

He was a faithful District Elder and looked after everyone in his District and the wider Congregation in general. He was a quiet but approachable person and with his knowledge of the building industry Bill often carried out small maintenance projects around the premises mostly without anyone knowing who had carried out a particular task.

Bill became ill some years ago and as a result he and his wife Tonia were unable to attend worship but continued to take an interest on what was going on through visits from members of the congregation. Bill was mentioned by an apology at every Kirk Session meeting, so although he was not present he was always in our minds. Before he became ill he was a regularly attended all Kirk Session and Deacons Court Meetings and supported whatever events were taking place.

Although a quiet man, Bill could, when the situation demanded make a forceful point at either Deacons Court or Kirk Session meetings where he felt strongly about a particular issue and more often than not his thoughts led to a change in direction.

We shall all miss Bill for his support, friendship and especially for the contribution he made to this congregation over the past 25 years. As a Kirk Session we hereby extend our sympathy to his wife, Toni, and all other members of the wider family at this sad time in their lives. We are all the better for knowing Bill.

John Murdoch, Session Clerk, 30th April 2013

Bell Ringing

Following two unpleasant, upsetting and potentially dangerous incidents with an aggressive caller at the manse door (which required police intervention); the Kirk Session has reviewed the duration of the ringing of the church bells. There have also been other complaints. The bells will continue to be rung, but not of a duration which may cause annoyance to some. The safety of our minister is also of vital consideration. Causing annoyance or irritation is counterproductive to the Church's aim of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. We also took into consideration comments from people who attended the 10.15am service and found it upsetting when the bells started ringing whilst the early service was still on. They found it was diminishing the meaning of that service when we started ringing the bells as a call to worship for the 11am service whilst we were still celebrating worship in the hall. Taking all this into account we have decided to join into what is common practice in most Church of Scotland congregations and ring the bells for a couple of minutes before the main service.

Holiday Club

After the success of our 2day holiday club last year, this summer we are running another

Scripture Union Summer Holiday Club

We'll have fun and games, songs, crafts, challenges and for the first time.....drama!

The Theme is Seaside Rock

Monday 8th to Friday 12th July 10am – 12.30pm

Chalmers Church Hall

There will be a small fee of £3per session or £12 for all 5 mornings!

For more information and registration please contact

Nicola Bruce: overhills@hotmail.com, 07711223100

Chalmers Memorial Church Youth and Children's Committee

Easter Holiday Club: A very successful one day joint churches Easter Holiday Club was held with **21 children** taking part. There was a good team of volunteer helpers from various churches in Cockenzie and Port Seton as well as from Tranent and Prestonpans. Janice Bulloch, Sheila Bulloch, Jean Johnston and John Knox from Chalmers were involved. The day was led by Nicola Bruce who was her usual self with energy and enthusiasm that inspires. Plans are underway for a 5 day joint churches Summer Holiday Club from 8-12 July, led by Lindsay Stewart from Scripture Union with Nicola as the assistant team leader. Once again we shall be looking for a team of people willing to volunteer for one, two, three, four or even five days. Names should be given to the minister or to John Knox.

It is very encouraging to report that Sheila Bulloch and Amanda Johnston have donated £700 from the Karen Penman Memorial Fund. They have donated this money to enable the purchase of equipment such as gazebos, craft materials and other resources for Holiday Club use.

Kid's Kirk: The small working group to plan Kid's Kirk, comprising our minister Kristina, Nicola Bruce, Sheila Bulloch, Amanda Johnston and Pamela Zenati will have its first planning meeting in early June with a view to having the first Kid's Kirk day in September. Be sure to pray for the work of this small group as they meet to plan this very significant work.

Sunday Morning: The Youth and Children's Committee is meeting in mid-June with the only item on its agenda being Sunday morning. The committee will be considering how we best work on Sunday mornings with the children we have, how we encourage others and what might be the best way to integrate the children into the life and worship of the congregation.



Big Clear Out!

We are planning to have a massive clear out in various areas of the church hall. Our main area of focus will be the boiler room and chapel area both located downstairs, below the stage, some of you may not even know that we have rooms down there! We are organising a skip, to get rid of everything, so if you want something, please claim or it will end up in the skip. We will intimate through the church notices, as to when this will be. Any questions please speak to Amanda Johnston.