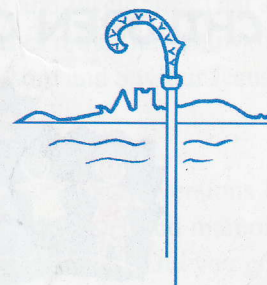


St. FILLAN'S CROSIER



St. Fillan's Church News

Autumn 2010 Edition



134 plus 3 dogs made the annual pilgrimage to Inchcolm.

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CHILDREN OF CHERNOBYL



Once again this year Alex and I were invited to meet the little group of twelve Chernobyl Children visiting West Fife this summer. They delightfully entertained us with their songs and poems in their native tongue. Just like any group of children there were the confident ones, the shy ones, the funny ones - and each one touches your heart.

As I sat there enjoying the children's entertainment, and the delicious coffee and home baking provided, I looked around the hall at all the local folk who support the West Fife group of this national charity. Each year they take up the challenge of raising money to bring another group to enjoy a holiday among us.

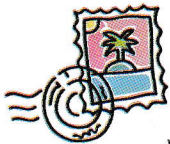


And, of course, it is more than just a holiday; it is a chance to significantly improve each child's health. First and foremost every year, money for fares must be raised - the cost of bringing each child from Ukraine to Scotland is over £500 - then there are host families to be found, paperwork to be completed, trips to be arranged, appointments to be made with opticians, dentists and lots more. Throughout the year folk are buying and making clothes for the children to take back at the end of their holiday. All in all it is a huge task which requires continuous dedication and hard work.

Our village contribution may seem small in the light of what others are doing. Supporting this wonderful work is a privilege and we should be pleased that the amount we send each year has gradually increased. On behalf of the children and the West Fife Group, I say a sincere thank you to all those who take the trouble to save their small change and to pass it on to me. Your faithfulness in this task is encouraging. So far this year we have sent £400 to the West Fife Group and I can say with confidence that every penny is spent wisely.

Eileen Harper
(860151, sophieharp@googlemail.com)

Anyone wishing to contribute to future editions of the Crosier please contact Shiona Doig on 01383 860791 or send and 3mail to allan@hame.org.uk



Stamps for the World Mission Stamp Appeal can no longer be handed into 121, George Street. They have to be posted to Wishaw. The 2010 World Mission Appeal is supporting the Girls' Hostel at St Columba's in Sialkot in Pakistan. You can help our partner church in Pakistan to provide safe accommodation for girls while they study by simply collecting your used stamps which are then sold on to raise money. St Fillan's has a long history of supporting the World Mission Appeal by collecting stamps.

You can send your stamps directly to World Mission Stamp Appeal, PO Box 9191, Wishaw, Lanarkshire. ML2 0YB or hand them in to me, Susan Morton, 4 Manse Street, Aberdour or place them in the plastic box under the table behind those welcoming you into Church and I will ensure they reach the World Mission Appeal.

You can find out more from the Church of Scotland web-site about the World Mission stamp appeals and about the Girls' Hostel in Sialkot.

Anyone wishing to contribute to future editions of the Crosier please contact Shiona Doig on 01383860791 or send e-mail to allan@hame.org.uk

Letter from the Manse.

Let's begin with a bit of sad news. The Reverend Chris Park has taken early retirement as Minister of Inverkeithing linked with North Queensferry on health grounds. I will miss Chris as a friend and a colleague, who brought a calm head, deep personal devotion and a dry sense of humour to our Parish Grouping Ministry meetings. I wish Chris and his wife Moira health and happiness for many years to come.

Chris' plight highlights the rather unrealistic demands of Parish Ministry at times; one woman or man cannot do everything that's required in a large Parish, and carry out their tasks in Presbytery and beyond as well. The Church of Scotland will have to find more imaginative ways of bringing the Articles of Religion to the people of Scotland through the present Parish system.

Spare a thought (and a prayer!) for our friends in Saline & Blairingone. They've been given permission to call a new Minister, but on a 50% basis. They're guinea-pigs in a new venture, and are naturally apprehensive about the future. Their Kirk Session is a small group of very competent and hard-working women and men, and although the task can be rather time-consuming at times, it is a privilege to serve as their Interim Moderator.

I was pleased to have an opportunity to greet Pope Benedict XVI in Edinburgh (in a large crowd). My prayer is that the Pope's visit in this 450th year since the Reformation in Scotland will contribute to ecumenism among the various Christian Denominations in our country. Working together locally and nationally to share the Good News of Christmas and Easter and of God's never-failing love can have a real impact on our society.

-o0o-

Some time ago now I had a conversation with a colleague. He told me (again) that my Ministry was rather poor, as my Sermons were too short; as I did not tell people who lived together without being married they were sinners, and refuse to marry them; and also that I should not baptise too many babies either, as 'you never see them in Church again'.

Every Christian Denomination has rules and regulations, the hallmark of a human institution

needing money, membership and discipline. That's all good and well, but it appears rather far removed from the life and work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Upon careful reading of the four Gospel-versions I can find no instance of Jesus asking a blind man or an ill woman, - both seeking healing - : "Did you go to the Synagogue last Saturday? No? - then you can stay ill, I'm not healing you!"

The brilliant thing about Jesus is that He did not go round accusing people, but He went round teaching and healing, so living out a Godly life. It is in trying to become Christ-like, to live a life based on the life and Ministry of Our Lord that we find our true purpose in life, which is loving God, and sharing God's love with all Creation redeemed through Christ.

It is easy to judge the behaviour of others, and say that those who want to get married in Church, or who seek to have their children baptised should conform to the rules the Church sets for them. But Jesus did not put up barriers; He did not push people away. Instead He invited them to Himself, and reached out beyond religious and social custom to those who needed Him.

I believe proclaiming the Good News through welcoming friend and stranger alike, through seeking to live a life modelled on that of Christ, and through treating every human being with the love of Christ in one's heart is more effective evangelising than quoting Bible-texts out of context or stuffing religious tracts through letter boxes.

As Sebastian Temple paraphrased the great Prayer of St Francis of Assisi:

*"Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.*

*Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love with all my soul."*

Peter Gerbrandy-Baird

Parish Minister

FAMILY FUN WEEK

On July 19th we once again welcomed Phil Wray and his team from Scripture Union Scotland to join with us in running our Family Fun Week. Phil brought with him his wife Kim, kids Luke and Poppy and his crack team of helpers to aide our team of volunteers in providing another fun packed week of activities.

As always the members of both St Fillan's and St Columba's welcomed the team openly and offered great hospitality throughout the week. Whether it was by providing bed and breakfast, making soups and sandwiches at lunchtimes in the church hall or feeding the masses in their own homes in the evenings, it was all greatly appreciated. In many ways the villagers contributed to what was another special week for the team and the children who came along every day to enjoy the fun. We warmly thank every one of you who did so in any way.

Our venture is called 'Family Fun Week' and fun it certainly was...from the little ones who came along to 'Toddle Time' in the institute, to 'Xpedition Force' in the church hall, to those just that wee bit older who gave up their mornings to help make it for the kids!

Great times were had by all.

Toddle Time Aimed at the pre-school age group, was very well attended this year with mums and grannies bringing their little ones along to enjoy stories, songs and even some toddler friendly crafts while they had time for tea/coffee and a well earned chat.

Xpedition Force Our P1 - P7 group this year saw around 30 kids embark on daily expeditions up our mountain. With our 2 teams aptly named, The Rockies and The Munroes faced daily challenges to earn points to see who would make it to the top first. Each day brought new crafts and games and a story and related memory verse which taught us all the story of Jesus from

the Palm Sunday celebrations through to his death and resurrection. With the Last Supper proving a very popular day amongst the children as they got to make scones and eat them!

Unfortunately this year our Fusion Cafe for the secondary school age group didn't do so well. Sadly we had only one visitor on the Monday and Tuesday evening and so closed for the rest of the week. Our planned trip to the outward bound centre at Lendrick Muir was also sadly cancelled due to lack of interest from the older age group but we were able to reach out to friends on their SU mission in Elie, who took our space and were able to enjoy the activities there.

A great turnout converged on the church hall for the family Quiz Night with the winning team of the Weatherups, the Waddells and the avid young brain of Daniel Pritchard taking home the coveted trophy. The Saturday night BBQ was again kindly run for us by the rotary and despite the rain, we all had good fun at the Silver Sands.

Then on Sunday after our service of celebration and thanksgiving, we all shared another fabulous lunch in the church hall, so kindly provided by our fabulous church members.

It's amazing to see the church pull together to provide such a great week and everyone who helped or contributed in any way should give themselves a huge pat on the back. Sadly this was Phil and the team's last year of mission with us and we are ever grateful for all their hard work and prayer over the last three years. Great friendships have been forged and we would welcome them all back to Aberdour anytime.

I hope that we as a church can continue the good work and pray that next summer will bring a new challenge for all those involved and for those who feel they're ready to accept that challenge so that we can again enjoy our 'Family Fun Week'.

Leona Weatherup

Family Fun Week Word Search by Anne Stuart

Y	G	R	O	U	P	S	G	N	O	S	V	H	A	I	M	E	H	E	N
R	L	A	E	M	I	T	E	L	D	D	O	T	E	L	M	X	R	R	G
O	W	N	M	O	P	M	U	N	R	O	E	S	O	L	O	X	O	N	Y
T	E	O	Y	E	O	H	E	S	E	K	A	C	I	T	E	S	C	E	Z
S	S	I	N	C	S	G	A	S	R	O	T	Z	R	E	S	N	K	H	Z
E	R	S	Z	H	T	I	A	X	S	L	Z	T	E	A	B	O	I	P	I
N	E	S	I	A	B	E	H	P	A	Y	N	U	N	U	F	F	E	E	E
I	V	I	U	T	O	L	R	O	S	I	C	P	O	I	N	T	S	T	T
R	Y	M	Q	L	X	A	K	N	A	E	O	H	D	R	U	S	S	S	T
E	R	O	A	R	I	A	R	P	B	A	C	D	A	A	L	L	A	G	E
H	O	O	L	S	T	E	E	R	I	I	U	H	N	L	E	O	N	A	N
T	M	O	E	H	Y	Y	A	L	P	P	B	L	A	A	L	I	H	P	N
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N	T	E	R	A	G	R	A	M	E	N	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	N	E
M	I	K	E	A	C	C	E	B	E	R	O	N	N	I	E	N	N	A	S

- A ALL, AGE, ANNE
- B BARBECUE, BIBLE
- C CAKES, CATHERINE, CHANT, CHAT, CHRISTINE, CRAFTS
- E ELAINE
- F FUN
- G GAMES, GROUPS
- H HELEN
- I IZZY
- J JANNETTE
- K KATHLEEN, KIM
- L LEIGH, LEONA, LIZZY
- M MARGARET, MEAL, MEET, MEMORY VERSE, MESSY CHALLENGE, MISSION, MOUNTAINS, MUNROES
- N NEHEMIAH
- P PAINT, PLAY, PHIL, POINTS, POST BOX, PRAISE, PRAYER, PUDD
- Q QUEST, QUESTIONS
- R REBECCA, ROAR, ROCKIES, RONNIE, ROSS
- S SNOWMAN, SONG, STEPHEN, STORY
- T TEAM, TODDLE TIME

Parish and congregational register

Deaths

2010

March 8 - Mrs. Mary Macphee; **10** - William Farquhar; **May 23** - Mrs. Nancy Holmes;
29 - Mrs. Patricia Borella; **June 23** - Mrs. Mairi Thomson; **27** - Vivien Owers; **July 12** - Mrs. Mary Adams;
16 - Johann Heuser; **29** - Len Findlay; **August 28** - Robert Kerr; Keiran Martin
September 13 - Valerie Simpson; **14** - John Henderson; **18** - Jean McLeod.

Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining
have all been prepared by God for those who love Him **Corinthians 2: 9**

Marriages

2010

May 1 - Paula Marrian and Steven Hyslop; **22** - Natasha Settle and Scott Walker;
July 4 - Victoria Kennedy and Richard Short; **9** - Diane Gibson and Stuart Burns; **10** - Claire Inglis and Steven Forsiky;
Aug. 7 - Angela Johnston and William Innes; **13** - Tineke Dusse and Graham Kintour;
Sept. 3 - Heather McManus and Scott Mackie; **10** - Sarah Allan and Gary Thomson; **11** - Julie Cook and Ryan Smart.

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Baptisms

2010

May 30 - Glen Wilson; Ella Neild; **July 11** - Holly Elizabeth Hay; Angus Michael Archibald

Jesus said "Let the children come to me"

Joining by Profession of Faith

Joining by Transference Certificate

Alisdair Bayne; Mr. Colin and Mrs. Elizabeth Hay; Mrs. Liz Lunn

Joining by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Ms. Marilyn Hynds

We welcome and hope you enjoy your fellowship here

(NOTE: Please advise editor of any omissions from above – these will be included next time)

Aberdour Rainbows Needs Your Help!

Aberdour Rainbows needs new adult helpers and leaders to continue running. Rainbows are girls aged 5 to 7 years old and enjoy adventures, cooking, crafts – the glittery the better and making new friends. The current leaders will no longer be running the Rainbow unit after Christmas 2010 and we have a shortage of adults coming forward to offer their time to run the unit. Without someone coming forward to be the unit leader this successful Rainbow unit will have to be closed down after Christmas.

Would you be prepared to help us keep this unit open?

I know that there are many people who, like you, already lead very busy lives but we would like to keep this unit open and we would make it as easy as possible for you to become a unit leader. We'll make sure that you feel welcomed and valued, and of course you won't be left on your own. You will be supported by others sharing similar experiences, balancing the demands of home, family and quite probably work too.

To find out more about how you can help please call 01383 824361
or email: mckenzie.sam@talk21.com

I look forward to hearing from you.



Samantha Mackenzie

District Commissioner for Girlguiding in Aberdour and Dalgety Bay.

***** **OPEN DOOR 2010 / 2011** *****

OPEN DOOR

begins again on Thursday 14th October at 10.30am

!!! St Fillan's Church Hall !!! !!! Everyone welcome !!!

... enjoy each month's event ... bring friends ... make new ones

enjoy tea, coffee and home baking ...

- 14 October** *... Old Abdourd: part 3*
... with John Taylor
- 11 November** *... The Abbot House, Dunfermline*
... the Heritage Trust
- 9 December** *... Flying for Life*
... Mission Aviation
- 13 January** *... Vienna – a tour of Austria's capital*
... with John Burrell
- 10 February** *... Planning to Protect the Environment!*
... with Adam Payne from Briggs Environmental Services
- 10 March** *... The Leprosy Mission Story*
... with Rev A Roy

... there will be a FAIRTRADE stall each month ...

Answers to Spring edition crossword

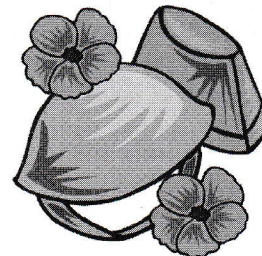
ACROSS: 4. pilate 5. spices 6. cyrene 9. herod 10. arimathea 12. vinegar

DOWN: 1. caesar 2. mocked 3. insurrection 7. coverus 8. Barabbas 11. nine

Amount raised for Christian Aid by the coffee morning in May and the sponsored golf in June was £1900 - many thanks to all those who helped in any way to raise this magnificent sum.



Remembrance Sunday:



Joint Service in the Church Hall at 10am,



St. Fillan's Lunches

(Church Hall - First Thursday of every month - 12noon - 1.30p.m.)

As we start out on our **fourteenth** year of Lunches we never fail to be amazed and pleasantly surprised at their increasing success. Yet again we have superseded our Festival Lunches total by this year serving **179** (!) diners. Never before have we felt we might need to ask our customers to "come back later" in order to find a place at table!

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big **THANK YOU** to all our regular, and new, customers who make all our efforts worthwhile. So too, we must say **THANK YOU** to all our valuable volunteers - those who come along to serve, who attend the pots (making sure they reach the required 82°C) - who wash the dishes and in particular, adding our appreciation, to all those who so generously and regularly donate all the scrumptious soups and egg mayonnaise of which we all partake.

As always - if there is anyone out there who would like to become involved in any of the above ways (aprons provided for servers) you will be made very welcome - just have a word with Sandra (Tel. 832454) or Catherine (860611). The more the merrier.

Do come along to try our good food and take the opportunity to share in some great Fellowship.



ABERDOUR SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Dancing started again on the 15th September in St Fillan's Church Hall.

This is an adult class up to the age of 80 and beyond! Dance to live music.

Why not try something different this winter and keep fit at the same time!!

Look out your dancing shoes and come and give it a try.

Cost £2 (including tea and biscuits)

(all proceeds go to St Fillan's Church)

For further information telephone Sandra on 01383 823454

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY – ST FILLAN'S NEW CONSTITUTION

A message from the Minister

The Kirk Session has decided to apply to the Law Department of the Church of Scotland for St Fillan's to change from a "Model" to a "Unitary" constitution.

To date we have operated under a Model Constitution, with the Kirk Session responsible for pastoral, religious and social affairs whilst the Congregational Board dealt with financial and property matters.

Elders were expected to have skills relevant to all the responsibilities of the Session and were appointed for life. The great majority of the work of the church has been conducted by members of the Session and Board.

The significant disadvantages of this arrangement were firstly that people were reluctant to take on a lifetime obligation; not everyone has the skills relevant to all the responsibilities of the Session and thirdly working for the church tended to be limited to those willing to become members of the Session or Board.

Under a Unitary Constitution the work of the Session and Board are combined in the Kirk Session.

Arrangements for pastoral districts and appointing one or more persons to have oversight of each district will remain but, importantly, the need to have an elder to cover each district will not be the sole criterion in deciding on the number of elders required. It is now envisaged that elders will bring many different gifts to the government of the church and that outside the Session itself anyone who feels that they have talents to offer can work for St Fillan's without having to be a member of the Kirk Session.

It may be months before the new arrangements are approved, but I believe they offer an exciting opportunity for many to work with St Fillan's in a wide field be it Pastoral (including visiting), Social, Youth & Education, Worship, Finance or Property or simply helping in Church. If you are interested in any of these do please contact me or any church official.

HAND CLAPPING IN CHURCH

David Crawford

Over the last few years I have noticed the progressive development of hand-clapping during worship in various religious services generally.

In particular, there appears to be a growing tendency for members of congregations to clap their hands while singing certain items of praise.

I almost said rhythmic clapping, but that is where the problem lies.

One has only to watch a show on television where there is a live audience to observe the enthusiastic clapping of hands to the music being performed. What is wrong with that you ask? Its not uncommon for people to instinctively tap their feet, snap their fingers etc to a good going tune.

However, what comes naturally to some in the way of pulse and rhythm unfortunately does not occur in others. In consequence, the resultant hand clapping is invariably out of synchronisation with the music, i.e., clapping on the incorrect beat hence moving the accent to the wrong place relative to the musical time signature and therefore compromising the whole value of the praise. The affect might be compared to a platoon of

soldiers marching out of step, the emphasis being in the wrong place.

Although hand clapping may be praiseworthy, this practice raises a few questions; is it done because God wants us to do it?, is it presumptuous?, is it for our own benefit? or is just because we enjoy doing it?

Furthermore, what is the real origin of hand clapping along with praise?, is it from heaven or mankind?. Since clapping hands is a reasonably recent practice does that mean that Christians have not been worshipping God in an acceptable way until now?

Drums for example do not have a melody line and therefore would be unacceptable in praise to God because they do not give the "fruit of the lips" the type of praise specifically requested in the New Testament (Hebrews 13:15). Surely hand clapping falls into this category as the hands are not musical instruments.

I have found a few references to hand clapping in the Old Testament; Psalms 47:1,2 "O clap your hands, all peoples; shout to God with the voice of joy. For the Lord Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth." Psalms 98:8 reads, "Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord." Isaiah 55:12 says, "And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL LUNCH

The annual Congregational Lunch was held in the Church Hall on Sunday 25th July 2010 to coincide with the end of the Scripture Union Fun Week.

Over 80 members and guests attended, and once again were treated to a sumptuous feast generously provided by a number of our members. Most of those present hurried through the 'main course' to sample one of the delicious strawberry cream tarts (mouth-watering pictures further on!) and other equally tempting sweets.

Many thanks to all those who contributed the food, to those who helped on the day, and the willing helpers who set up the tables and chairs and helped to clear up at the end.

David Robertson

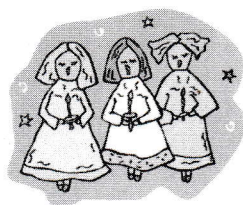
MEET THE NEW ELDERS

Bill Paterson comes from the West of Scotland and joined Neilston Old Parish Church in 1957/58. He was educated at Paisley Grammar School and Strathclyde University and before retiring in 2000 he was director of Engineering of the Northern Lighthouse Board based in Edinburgh. Bill's claim to fame is that he has visited every lighthouse in Scotland with exception of Sula Sgeir (between the north of Lewis and Fair Isle). He also accompanied the Princess Royal on various occasions when she has visited sites where lighthouses have been built. Bill's hobbies are golf and amateur radio (communicating only by Morse code) learnt in his days as a radio officer in the Merchant Navy. He is currently Convenor of the Property Committee.

Sue Llyod came to Aberdour in 2003 and originally hails from Gloucestershire. She went on an Alpha course and joined The Church of England in 1996 where she served as secretary to Parochial Church Council whilst she and her husband Richard stayed in Kent. In 2002 they moved to Burntisland and worshipped in St Serf's then initially to St Columba's when they moved to Aberdour. Sue came to St Fillan's during our vacancy in 2003 and subsequently became teacher in the Sunday school. She retired from her position as librarian at Dunfermline High School in 2007 and is now working towards a diploma in counselling whilst acting as a counsellor for Talk Matters. Her hobbies are gardening, cooking, yoga, reading and handbell ringing.

Isobel Clegg is a local girl, Aberdour born and bred and started her Church life in, what is now Cornerstone Church, in the days of Rev. David Rutherford. She joined the Church in 1981 whilst under the auspices of Peter Elston, then transferred to Aberdour in the late 90's. Isobel still works and is a midwife in Forth Park. She started her nursing training in 1982 and did three and a half years general nursing before specialising in midwifery. Isobel is married to Nick and has two daughters, Lisa (just off to university) and Rachel. Isobel's grandfather, Joe Moodie, was for many years an elder in Burntisland. Her hobbies are yoga and attending exercise and fitness classes.

The minister and Kirk Session are grateful to Bill, Sue and Isobel for taking on the mantle of eldership and look forward to working with them to further the work and witness of our Church in Aberdour.



Christmas Music:

Our Organist, Dave Crawford, has organised a Concert of Advent and Christmas music for Saturday 18 December in St Fillan's Church at 7.30pm.

An opportunity to hear choral and organ music, and to join in carol-singing.

An occasion not to be missed!

Christmas Services:

Christmas Eve:

6.30pm Family Service;

11.30pm Watchnight Service (please bring a torch!)

Christmas Day:

10am Family Christmas Communion Service

(all welcome – will include a show of presents)

Book Review:
Silence and Honey Cakes by Rowan Williams
 (2003, Medio Media)

Silence and Honey Cakes is a brief but inspirational exploration into Christian spirituality and the life of the Church through the writings of the desert fathers and mothers. These religious teachers lived in the third and fourth centuries in the famous monastic communities of the Egyptian desert, which are the main source of the monastic tradition within Christianity.

However, if you were looking for a potted history of monasticism, this would not be the place to find it! Instead, Rowan Williams uses the writings to demonstrate the desert fathers' and mothers' vision for the Church and to articulate some of the difficulties and responsibilities involved in being a Christian. Despite Williams' reputation as a chaotic thinker, this book is not heavily theological and is written in a relaxed, straight-forward style.

Williams begins by looking at the purpose of ascetic communities, which is not to flee "normal life", as though God could be found outside of our everyday experience, but to step back from one's neighbour in order to understand better how to live with other people. He challenges us to accept that our calling is to open the door to our neighbour to the transforming power of God; but that in so doing we have to put aside our own agenda, our own ideas of what our neighbour might need, or need to know, and let God speak to our neighbour through us. This reflects a general theme in Williams' writings of the need to allow God's Holy Spirit to work in us so that we become more and more Christ-like; it is this, not clever argument, which will have an effect in other people's lives.

Williams' emphasis on the importance of doing God's work *within* our daily lives, of the role of our whole being - physical and spiritual - in our calling to love God and love our neighbour, is also characteristic.

So the ascetic life is not about escape from the difficulties of being a Christian in a hostile world, but a way of learning *how* to be a Christian in a hostile world - or more specifically, how to be truly *ourselves* in Christ's image. This is a lesson desperately needed today, in a time when the Church is in decline and many people believe that the natural sciences have eclipsed theological and philosophical thinking. One question we need to ask is; what is the Church all about? Williams provides us with some excellent thoughts to ponder in this book, including an insight into perhaps why he is unwilling to be seen as standing on one side or the other in Church debates on contentious issues (for which he has been heavily criticised).

An important aspect of the desert teachings was that all people are different - some of the ascetics would be very much the model of asceticism that most of us would associate with the word; silence, fasting, physical deprivation. Others were more social and would not give up as much; however, the desert fathers and mothers taught that neither silence nor honey cakes are necessarily better or worse than the other (hence the choice of title!). Williams emphasises this teaching to show that we are all unique and each person has a role within the community that no-one else could fulfil. This is what is meant when Paul uses the image of the Church as the Body of Christ. We are not simply individuals with the generic ability to make decisions and think our own thoughts; we are *persons*, persons made in the image of God. We are all called to love God and love our

neighbour, yes; but we are called to do so in a way unique to us. This is why we should not think that fleeing our daily situation is the way to become holy or "find" God - instead it is *within* our particular situation that we are able to respond to God's call in our lives and open the door for our neighbour.

The second half of Williams' book expands on these themes through discussing two apparently contradictory aspects of life in the desert in his chapters 'Fleeing' and 'Staying'. The importance of fleeing, as we have seen, is not to escape the world but to know how better to relate to the people in our community as persons made in Christ's image. Fleeing is necessary if we are to recognise within ourselves our tendency to talk ourselves up, to surround ourselves with people who will prop up our self-image and allow us to justify what we say and do. For Williams, we need to be much more silent - not in a maudlin way, but in recognition that sometimes our words can be a block to God's love, both for us and for our neighbour.

Staying, on the other hand, is necessary so that we can ground ourselves in a place, become part of a particular community; carry out our calling within the mundaneness of our ordinary, daily lives. The desert fathers and mothers, while ascetics, were also part of a monastic community and were critical of those who moved from one community to another, trying to find something that suited them perfectly. There was a restlessness about such people that showed they had not found peace with God. Students of the desert fathers and mothers were often told to go and stay in their cell until the boredom and discomfort with silence had worn off and they started simply to live the lifestyle to which they were called. For some of us, procrastinators especially, this sort of advice is important, when we would rather fill our days with busy-ness and distractions than face the work that needs to be done. But what we do in our daily lives is important to God, and the communities in which we do it are the locus of the work to which we are called.

Although we sometimes get bored with our community and wish we were somewhere else, or think that it doesn't "suit" us, it is important that we stay and live out God's particular calling to us in this particular place.

While some of the themes that Williams discusses can be quite abstract - it is difficult always to see how his ideas can have a practical application - *Silence and Honey Cakes* is definitely a book I would recommend. For a start, it will give a much better exposition of the themes than I have here! But reading it is also an exercise in spiritual development, which is something we should all be open to. You do not always have to agree with Rowan Williams, but to read a book by him is to wrestle with difficult and challenging ideas and to be touched by the thoughts of a deeply faithful and - to my mind - holy man.

Caroline Gerbrandy-Baird

Dr Rowan Williams has been Archbishop of Canterbury since 2002. He was previously Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford University, Bishop of Monmouth and Archbishop of Wales.

St Fillan

Beside the road between Crianlarich and Tyndrum there is a beautiful glen known as Strathfillan. This is where St. Fillan, to whom our church is dedicated, was believed to walk and minister to the people living in the area, there is the ruin of a priory built to recognise his teaching of the Christian way of life. There is also a modern notice-board explaining that St. Fillan came over from Ireland and made his life among the country folk, preaching and supporting them as they endeavoured to make their living from the land. He was believed to carry a staff topped by a bronze crosier which was later covered by a larger silver-gilt one. This, together with the Bearnane Bell which is also attributed to him, can be seen displayed in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

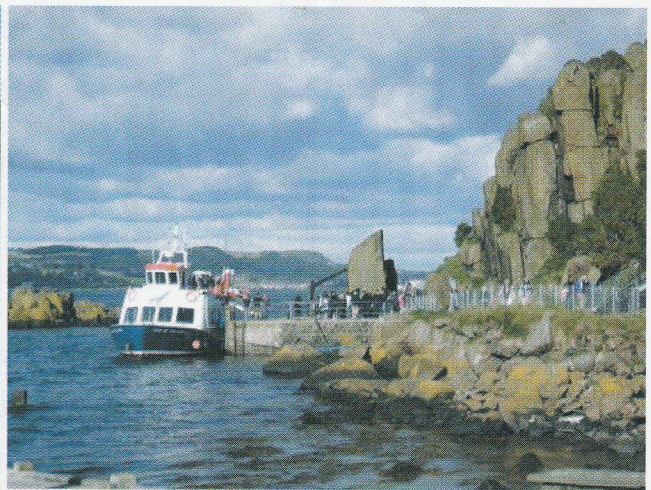
On leaving the rush and speed of the A82 and avoiding the cheerful walkers on the West Highland way, it is delightful to wander quietly in this area, imagining that a brief flash of light could be the reflection from an ancient staff and the deep clang of a bell might announce the approach of a revered saint, St. Fillan.

Linda Brown



Good food and good company enjoyed by all at the congregational lunch.





134 and 3 dogs boarded the Maid Of The Forth for the annual pilgrimage to Inchcolm



The New Elders



Bill Paterson



Sue Lloyd



Isobel Clegg