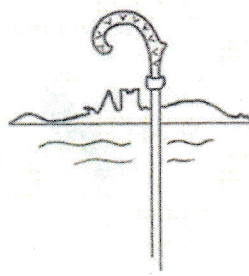


ST. FILLAN'S CROSIER



The Ministers Youngest Bride and Groom!

Following the Storyline Technique of teaching, Nicola Sutherland inspired classes P1 and P2 at Aberdour Primary School, with the story of the marriage of "Grannie Mainland" (Grace Nicol) to Neilly Beag from the book 'Katie and Morag' written by Mari Hedderwick. So enthused were her pupils that they enthusiastically re-enacted an adult wedding. Invitations were made and all the various requirements of a real wedding were prepared, which included interviewing the Minister. Fraser Adams became the Bridegroom and Clara Hagsstroem the blushing bride. Jack Wilkinson was the best man with Lexie Spillane as bridesmaid. A reception was held in the Aberdour Hotel which was thoroughly enjoyed by all the delighted participants. This system of teaching, so successfully played out in our village on December 2nd will hopefully help to equip our younger citizens for the future in their real lives.



St. fillan's lunches

A BIG "thank you" to all who kindly contribute to the success of "Lunches" by your gifts of paper plates, napkins, tins of corned beef, biscuits, sweets etc, etc. to help keep costs down. Through your generosity and the dedication of our "soup and egg mayonnaise makers" we were able to raise £2,265 towards church funds in 2011. If you haven't yet tried our fare, why not come along on the first Thursday of every month and enjoy home-made soup and rolls with tea or coffee, all for the princely sum of £2.50! As a taster, this month's "Lunches" included a choice of eight different soups, e.g. leek and potato, spicy parsnip, tomato and lentil, carrot and coriander, scotch broth, lentil, and puy lentil with chorizo. Filled rolls have a choice of egg mayonnaise, tuna & sweetcorn, cheese or ham, all washed down with tea or coffee and a good old chin-wag.... What a bargain!!

Catherine, Sandra & Ewart

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CHURCH FLOWER BEDS REQUIRE YOUR TENDER LOVING CARE

Volunteers who relish some light gardening in the quiet precincts of our church are required to occasionally help Sheila Robb, who would be delighted to hear from you.



Please telephone Sheila on 01383 860071.

Christian Aid Coffee Morning



Church Hall

Saturday 19 May

10.00 am to 12 noon

Stalls: bric-a-brac, bottles, homebaking, plants, raffle + Fairtrade

Contributions to stalls and assistance on the day would be appreciated

Contact: Eileen Harper (860151) or Lesley Gordon (860030)

VISIT TO INCHCOLM

St Fillan's annual pilgrimage to Inchcolm will take place on Sunday 16 September; depart Aberdour pier 1.50pm and return at 4.20pm. Tickets will be available in September – everyone is welcome to come.

Aberdour Churches Family Fun Week

Aberdour Churches Family Fun Week is to return this summer after an extremely successful summer week last year.

40th

FORTH ROAD BRIDGE WALK



Saturday 28

for

April

from 1pm

Christian Aid

For further information contact Eileen

Harper 01383 860151

The activities will start on

Monday 16th July and continue through until Thursday 19th July for Children from primary 1 to primary 7age group.

In addition there will be evening events throughout the week in the form of the family Quiz night on Tuesday 17th July and the Family B-B-Q on the 19th July.

Look out for flyers and posters for further information about the theme for the week, location and starting and finishing times. Put the date in your diary for another fun filled week for the Children.

For further details please contact Christine Waddell 01383 860802.



Aberdour Rainbows – we hope to get this unit re-opened before Easter, could you help run the unit or turn up as a weekly helper to enable it to re-open. Would you like to add your daughter to the waiting list, if so please call me, Heather McLean, on 418816 or email me all your/her details, including date of birth, to heather@bekat.co.uk – the unit will operate a weekly parent helper and will have 15 girls attending.

Look forward to hearing from you
Heather McLean, District Commissioner

Aberdour Brownies – can you help? We will need 2 leaders and one weekly helper after the summer. The current helpers would like to give up as their daughters will be moving to Guides after the Summer holidays, this is a well attended unit and it would be sad if it had to close. Could you help run the unit, the leader responsibilities can be split between 2 people making it easier to run? Would you like to find out more, please call me on 418816 to discuss or email me at heather@bekat.co.uk.

Look forward to hearing from you
Heather McLean, District Commissioner

Letter from the Manse

We are at the beginning of an exciting year, with the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen and the Olympic Games.

I am grateful that at a time when the Christian Faith is often criticised and sometimes marginalised, we have a Head of State who is not afraid to show her deep Christian Faith through church-attendance and her Christmas and other addresses.

Both these events offer opportunities for sharing, in giving thanks for faithful service to Nation and Commonwealth, and in celebrating great sporting achievement.

In mid February I went to see my Parents in their new accommodation just outside Utrecht. The Complex is set within wonderfully kept grounds, with small sheltered-housing bungalows, and two and one-person flats, as well as nursing accommodation. It was built by a Protestant Denomination, and still has a strong Christian ethos. The staff is marvellous, doing their duties cheerfully and competently.

It was great to see some old, familiar things from the house in Amsterdam in their new setting, including, of course, my Parents themselves! Their flat is airy and sunny, with large floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking woodlands, where joggers, dog-walkers and others present a form of entertainment

My Mother's 87th birthday involved a celebration lunch provided by the Centre, and some of her favourite wine, provided by my Brother. My own contribution was a whiskey-cake. What a blessing for the four of us to gather again round the old dining-table, laughing, eating and drinking, and being told off by the Birthday-Girl, who claims eating and laughing is a dangerous combination!

Shared meals are a common event in the Bible. They are occasions that bond people together, as family, a tribe or even a nation. The great Jewish Festivals were, of course, primarily religious occasions, but they provided opportunities for shared meals, as the thousands of pilgrims converged on the Temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps the best-known meal in the Bible is 'The Last Supper', shared by Jesus and His Disciples in an upstairs dining-room. It was a Passover Meal, at which the Jews remembered their escape from slavery in Egypt, and the beginning of the forty-year journey to the Promised Land. That year, in that place, God's long promised Messiah foretold His own suffering in a moving and symbolic way, with the bread He broke symbolising His body, to be broken for all on the Cross, and the wine symbolising His blood, flowing from His wounds as He hung dying between Heaven and earth. Sharing the consecrated Elements of Bread and Wine is the holiest act of the worldwide Church, as she re-enacts that shared meal in the upper room, and remembers her Lord's death, and looks forward to His coming again in glory. In that Eucharistic act, the Church proclaims her unity in diversity, and invites all who seek the love of God to share at the Lord's Table. In this time of Lent, let us remember Christ's great act of love, and in the light of His love, examine our own lives, to identify ways of improving our own words and actions, so that we may emulate Jesus more closely.

As Cecil Frances Alexander writes in the Hymn,

There is a green hill far away:

"Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved,

And we must love him too,

And trust in his redeeming blood,

And try his work to do."

Peter Gerbrandy-Baird

Parish Minister

ANNE STUART'S WORD SEARCH

Anne has set you all another challenge! This time she would like you to look for at least the 45 words listed below, but she says there might be a few more words hidden in there!

GOOD LUCK.

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

ANGEL. ARISE. BURIAL. COCKCROW(x2). COURT. CITY. CROWN OF THORNS. CRIES.
 CRUCIFIED. COURT. DEATH. DENIAL. DISCIPLE. FLEE. GROANS. GUARD.
 GETHSEMANE. HANDS. JUDAS. JESUS. LAST SUPPER. LOOT. LUCRE. LURE.
 MARY MAGDALENE. PAIN. PHARISEE. PILATE. PITY. QUAKE. RISEN. RESURRECTION.
 ROB. SEE. SEAL. SCORN.
 STONE. SUFFERING. STONE. THIRST. TRIAL. THREE DAYS. TOMB. WRATH.

STEWARDSHIP

At the General Assembly in May 2011 congregations throughout Scotland were instructed to carry out a stewardship campaign starting in 2012. The Church of Scotland has 1400 congregations all of which are very different in shape and format, some very large, some small and some in between.

As can be imagined, faced with such a large number of congregations with a wide divergence of views it would be a most difficult task to design a national stewardship programme where every congregation was expected to do exactly the same thing at precisely the same time.

The General Assembly has therefore presented congregations with alternatives and a flexible time scale which will allow St.Fillan's to adapt and carefully prepare a planned Stewardship programme linked to our vision for our church and where we believe God is calling us to be.

The initial step will be for the Stewardship Committee to map out the outline of the programme and thereafter planning groups will be established to comprise as wide a representation from all age groups as possible to implement and carry through the programme.

St.Fillan's is moving to a Unitary Constitution which will enable all members to participate fully in any of the activities involved in these most challenging of projects over the next few years. Christian giving is defined as the giving of **Time, Talents and Treasures** and in St.Fillan's we have an abundance of all of these!

Over the next few months the Committee will seek to explore ways in which we can fully participate in this programme and look forward to involving many new faces in our work to establish God's presence in Aberdour.

Giving in Grace Prayer

Heavenly Father, give grace to us, the living stones who form your church,

to reflect prayerfully at this special time on our love for You and our neighbour

Make us mindful of the many gifts You bestow upon us in our choice of giving; remember we are only giving back that which is truly yours.

Strengthen us, Lord, to meet this challenge according to your will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord who has given his life that all may live.

Amen

EwartMcSkimming, Stewardship Convenor.

As we are moving to Unitary Constitution it may be appropriate for us to revisit an article which appeared in our Newsletter back in 1971! Some may remember it, but to the many 'new' people have come to our Parish this may be 'something new' too –

ARE YOU?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meeting
and mingle with the flock,

Or do you stay at home, and criticise, and knock?

Do you take an active part to help the work along,

Or are you satisfied to be the kind that just belong?

Do you ever voluntarily help at the guiding stick

Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the "Clique"?

Come to the meeting often and help with hand and heart,

Don't be just a member, but take an active part!

Think this over member, You know right from wrong,

Are YOU an active member,

Or do you just "Just Belong!"?

(This little verse was printed inside the Ontario Medical Secretaries Association Agenda for the A.G.M.)

"Show-off organists put me off church"

The following article by David Campbell first appeared in the Sunday Post on 26th June 2011 and is reproduced by kind permission of DC Thomson & Co Ltd.

As you sat in your pew in church this morning.....what do you mean you weren't there? Do you mean to tell me there are some people in this God-fearing land who don't go to church religiously every Sunday? Good heavens!

Of course I'm pulling your leg. We all know churches are struggling to get bums on pews in these secular times, and that modern men and women prefer to spend their Sunday at Ikea, Ibrox or the 19th hole. But if you do run with the flock, or you used to, you may find your mind wandering of a Sabbath morn to the mystery of why so many left. The dyke-snow decline in congregation is generally put down to the competing attractions mentioned above, plus the influences of Darwin and Dawkins.

But has anyone considered the contribution made by church organists? Because it's always seemed to me that many of them are dedicated to driving church-goers away. I'm not talking about old Mrs Peppermint who kindly two-fingers her way through Psalm 23 as a favour to the minister, but the smarty-pants organists, the ones who are music teachers and fancy they are the only ones who understand music because they sent away for a Classic FM sticker for their car and know the difference between Schumann and Schubert.

They love to show off, to vent their frustrated ambitions to tickle the mighty Wurlitzer's ivories, and to remind everyone they're not a Mrs Peppermint. However, in order to keep their jobs they confine their flamboyance to the second last verse of every hymn. By then they reckon the congregation must have got the hang of the tune, so they launch into their own wild variation completely different from what the congregation is trying to sing, inspired by the sound of air-raid sirens and fingernails on blackboards, causing consternation in the pews, mirth in the choir and eyeball-rolling from the minister.

These anarchic accompanists are obviously agents of the Lord High Atheist, Richard Dawkins, sent to sow doubt about the existence of any loving God who would subject His people to this weekly ear hole torture.

PS: Dave Crawford welcomes your comments.

Parish and congregational register

Bereavements

2011 Sept. 27 – Mrs. May Weatherup; **Oct. 19** – Eddie McKay; Mrs. Margaret Bridges; **21** – Mrs. Kath Laver; **Nov. 21** – Virgilio Taddei; **Dec. 26** - Andrew Crawford; Mrs. Wilma Davie

2012 Jan. 8 – Mrs. Stella McKenzie; **11**- Charles Stobbart; **16** – Mrs. Josephine Cunningham; (Baby) Fraser Brown; **18** – Mrs. Catherine Baxter; **20** – Mrs. Jean Pollock; **30** – Mrs. Sylvia Hempseed; **Feb. 9** – John Curtis; **13**- Mrs. Margaret Currie; **19** - Mrs. Christine McKenzie; **22** – Bill Wilkie; **25** - Mrs. May Walker

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

2011 Oct. 8 – Louise Durkin and Jonathan Scott;

2012 Feb. 25 - Victoria Coutts and John Watkinson

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

Baptisms

2012 Feb. 19 - Samuel John Nimmo.

Jesus said "Let the children come to me"

Joining by Transference Certificate.

Mr. Ian and Mrs. Gill Hill

Joining by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Miss Deborah Gair; Mrs. Eleanor Maitland

We welcome and hope you enjoy your fellowship here

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

Messy Prayers?

Are your prayers all over the place? Do you sometimes start off & not know where to end? If you pray regularly every day, or sometimes miss out, do you still think 'Oh, I wish I'd said this or that'? I'm no expert, but this works for me as a person who needs structure and a format to work to. It's adapted from something devised by Nicky Gumbel, of Alpha fame, but I think it's simpler and can help us make our prayers more complete.

The acronym is **PATH** – the path to God through our Lord Jesus. Try this if structured praying is a problem for you.....

P is for Praise – we start our prayers by praising God, by acknowledging him as our God and recognising that he came to our world in the human and divine person we know as Jesus who is our key to God (and indeed the key to all we need on this earth)

A is for Apologies – saying we're sorry for the things we've done which are not in Jesus' name, for thinking and saying things we should not have, and for things we should have thought, said and done, but have not. Opportunities to say sorry. Perhaps missed chances to have been generous in a material or personal sense. Maybe opportunities to have said a kind word and didn't – that sort of thing.

T is for Thanks – we have so much to be grateful for, but often forget to give thanks to God, now's your chance! Take time over this and 'count your blessings'.

H stands for Help – here you can ask God to help you, to help others, either in your personal life or in the wider world.

Ask all this in the great name of Jesus, who is our Saviour, our Friend, our Counsellor, and who is with us always.

Sketches of the Protestant Reformers (III)

Introduction

In the first two articles in this series, published in 2011, we followed the lives and careers of two of the very first leaders of the Reformation – Martin Luther in Wittenberg and Huldrych Zwingli in Zürich. In the next three articles, we will look at three figures who took the Reformation further in the first half of the sixteenth century: Philip Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, and Heinrich Bullinger. We start with Philip Melanchthon, first among the followers of Luther.

Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

Philip Schwartzerd was born in 1497 in Bretten, in the south-west of modern Germany near Karlsruhe. He was the son of an armourer, but his father passed away when Schwartzerd was only eleven. At that point, he moved from the local primary school to the well-known Latin school at nearby Pforzheim, where his great-uncle – the humanist scholar John Reuchlin – taught. It may first have been Reuchlin's idea to render Philip's surname 'Schwartzerd' in Greek as 'Melanchthon', thereby to indicate that he was a scholar trained in the latest humanist ways. Either way, in 1509 Melanchthon went to the University of Heidelberg, graduating a mere two years later with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and in 1512 he proceeded to the University of Tübingen, graduating a further two years later with a Masters degree. He was a capable scholar across many disciplines, including theology, but was particularly renowned for his expertise in the Greek language.

Around this time, there arose a demand in the Wittenberg of the Reformer Martin Luther and his sponsor Frederick the Wise for biblical Greek and Hebrew to be taught at the University. Melanchthon was appointed its first Professor of Greek, arriving in late 1518, and within a short space of time, Melanchthon and Luther had forged a close personal and theological friendship. He began to accompany Luther on his trips, to defend his position in disputations, to take up his pen to support Luther in exchanges with their opponents, and to write forewords for Luther's biblical commentaries. He also pursued further theological studies, gaining a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1519, and married the daughter of the Mayor of Wittenberg, Katharina Krapp, the following year.

In 1520, Melanchthon started what was to become perhaps his most famous theological work, the *Loci Communes*, literally 'The Common Places [of Christian Doctrine]'. It was designed to 'sketch a common outline of the topics that you can pursue in the study of Holy Scripture', and was the first major attempt to do this from a Reformation perspective. Luther hailed *Loci Communes* as one of the best expositions of the Christian faith that he had ever read, second only to the Bible, and the book was so successful that it went through three editions and multiple reprints in diverse languages.

Loci Communes was published in 1521, the same year in which Luther was smuggled away to the safety of the Wartburg. In his absence, Melanchthon took over in Wittenberg at the helm of the Reformation movement. He was not perhaps ideally suited for this position, being a cautious and rather irenic man, lacking the strength of character and the will to discipline that Luther possessed. This became particularly evident when a group of radical Reformers came to Wittenberg from Zwickau and caused religious riots in the town. The event necessitated Luther's emergence from hiding, and Melanchthon was doubtless glad when his friend reassumed his position of leadership.

In the ensuing years, Melanchthon's career in Wittenberg continued to flourish, and he continued to publish works on both theology and Greek, turning down the offer of professorial chairs elsewhere. He carried on representing the Lutheran strand of the Reformation in Germany at large, and of particular note is his involvement in the writing and editing of the 'Augsburg Confession'. This work was presented to the Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 in an attempt to explain the religious convictions of the (Lutheran) Reformation, and became (and still is) one of the foundational documents of Lutheranism. Melanchthon was called upon many times thereafter to defend the Confession's teaching, notably at Worms in 1540 and at Regensburg in 1541.

However, his later years were marred by increasingly vicious theological conflict. On the one hand, the theological differences between himself and Luther – particularly in connection with the teaching on the sacraments and on the role of good works – became increasingly evident, and strained their relationship. Moreover, when the Lutheran movement fractured somewhat after Luther died in 1546, Melanchthon encountered outright opposition from certain Lutheran parties. On the other hand, the defeat of the Protestant armies of the Schmalkaldic League by forces loyal to the Pope in 1547 seriously jeopardised the theological position of Protestant scholars such as Melanchthon relative to the Roman Catholic church, and forced him on certain occasions towards positions of theological compromise. Trapped in this theological middle-ground, the last years of his life were plagued by opposition from all quarters and consequently great personal suffering. He died in 1560 as a result of complications developed after catching a cold on a trip to Leipzig.

Though not receiving anything like the same attention as Luther, Melanchthon was his closest friend and colleague. It was Melanchthon who systematised his haphazard teaching, who defended it in person and in print, and who rendered it in teachable and confessional forms. This rigorous and careful work of Melanchthon – in spite of the opposition it encountered from diverse quarters – was central in ensuring that the Lutheran movement in Germany was able to outlive its founder.

Opening Doors from Calcutta to California

Open Door took place from 13th October 2011 to 8th March 2012 and now takes a break until next Autumn. It has been another enjoyable and well attended winter programme.

Flying for Life was the subject of our first meeting. Bruce Davies our enthusiastic speaker from Mission Aviation Fellowship provided us with some excellent film footage of this remarkable Christian organisation, whose life saving ministry has assisted in flying medical aid into areas of natural disaster, as well as responding to the needs of remote communities around the world providing physical and spiritual care to those who live in isolation.

This was followed in November by Part 1 of Arthur Lloyd's travels to the USA titled 'The Wild and not so Wild West'. Arthur presented to us in his own inimitable way a fascinating travelog laced with humour and music highlighting wonderful images of the American landscape, a toe tapping delight to us all.

Canon Val Nellist recounted her trip to Calcutta in 2011 to experience the work of the Episcopal Church in Calcutta where they are establishing local projects to improve the lives of children and families living in abject poverty through the introduction of education and feeding programmes.

In January Jan Benvie who had worked in Palestine as a Christian Peacemaker gave us a very moving account of her work with Palestinian children, helping to escort them to school past Israeli settlements. Her selfless courage and dedication to keep these children safe was an inspiration to all of us present.

February's talk by Sally Watt brought to our attention the charity 'Operation Christmas Child'. Sally told us of her visit to the Crimea helping to deliver Christmas Boxes to poverty stricken children. The joy that these simple Boxes and their content brought to the children was overwhelming and for all involved a highly emotional experience. For those who wish a box collection will be made during the first week of November.

Arthur Lloyd concluded our winter programme with the Part 2 of his fascinating trip to the USA. He gave us another entertaining tour in film and music which was enjoyed by all.

From: Lynn Bastow Chairperson

What do you see in Church?

When you are sitting in church and looking around, what do you see?
Have you noticed the Mason's marks on some of the stones in the pillars?
Or have you noticed the eye watching you?
If you have a good imagination have you seen the sheep?
There are many other faces and animals to spot, can you find any more?
You could send your photo in to share with others in the next edition of the Crosier. David Graham

Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week is from 13-19 May this year. Throughout this week there are events all over the UK to raise money for folk in the third world. **Christian Aid** is a Christian organisation but it is not run solely by Christians, or only to support Christians. The charity began just after the Second World War with the aim of helping displaced persons throughout Europe. After that problem had been sorted, the charity continued to help those in need throughout the world.

It is easy to forget how much we have to be thankful for. There are lots of statistics to shock us. Here is one: 1.5 million children die each year as a result of diarrhoea – that's 4,100 every day or three children every minute. We want to help and we can.

There is the sponsored Forth Bridge Walk on Sat 28 April. As this is the 40th anniversary of this event, there is to be a party on the bridge between 1-2 pm before the walk begins. You can walk backwards and forwards across the bridge as many times as you like! Please register with me and I will give you a sponsor sheet and you can ask your friends and family to sponsor you. If you usually go for a family walk at the weekend, this might be fun to do. There is car parking at the Queensferry Lodge Car Park.

The annual coffee morning is on Saturday 19 May from 10-12. Please give something to the stalls – bric-a-brac, books, bottles, plants, homebaking, raffle. Let me know if you would like some tickets to sell. Bring along your friends to the coffee morning.

Half the money raised from the Sponsored Golf Competition is given to **Christian Aid**. This is a great opportunity to play Aberdour Golf Course. You can just sponsor yourself if you don't want to ask people for donations.

Please support us in some way. **We can make a difference.**

Eileen Harper (860151, sophieharp@googlemail.com)

Money Matters!

In January 2011 I was given the trust of the congregation for looking after the money side of St Fillan's, and after my first year as Treasurer it's as good a time as any to give some general feed-back on the current financial position. Taking over the role of Treasurer has been greatly eased by continued access to the experience of the previous treasurer Simon Fraser and the guidance of the Finance Committee. Without their support it would have been much more difficult for me. I certainly took over at the right time – the major works on the Church roof had been completed, the buildings are in generally good order, the congregation is generous and supportive and the minister is active and well loved – what more could any new Treasurer ask for? As Treasurer I have been made very welcome and I have certainly come to know many more people in Aberdour than would otherwise have been possible as an incomer. But on the other hand there's now rarely a spare moment to be had!

On recent dark winter evenings I have been looking at our financial records over the five year period from 2007 to 2011, and they make for interesting reading. Here are some trends which have emerged:

- i) excluding legacies and one-off gifts, within the range \pm £900 total regular general income has been the same every year
- ii) the top four income sources have been consistently the same each year. In descending order they are Regular Gift Aid offerings through bank SO's and through WFO's, the combined income from all uses of the Church Hall the tax refund on GA offerings and Open Plate offerings.
- iii) giving through the use of Gift Aid (SO and WFO) has increased from 41% to 47% of income but together all other forms of income have dropped in equal measure
- iv) the tax refund started and finished the period at about 12.8% of total income; a rise in the middle of the period has been cancelled out by a reduction in the generosity of central government. Total collections from Open Plate on Sundays have been consistently around 10% of annual income.
- v) there has been an 80% drop in investment income to the general fund partly due to the severe reduction of interest rates paid on cash held in the deposit account, but also because we had to use much of these reserves to pay for the roof repairs.

In this five year period when general income has remained pretty static inflation has averaged above 3% per annum, and so in terms of value the purchasing power of our general income has declined by about £10000. Regular general income has fortunately been supplemented by the generosity of some legacies and other occasional donations during the period, some of which have been used to help with the general running of the church, while others have been put into re-building funds for future needs.

The other side of the coin is regular expenditure and here the picture is very different, and it probably comes as no surprise that our costs have gone up significantly. The majority of our regular expenditure goes on six items where we have little day-to-day discretion: the Allocation payments to '121', Insurance, Electricity charges, Minister's travel, Presbytery Dues, and Manse Council Tax. Over the past five years the total of these annual costs have risen by around £6500 and accounted for well over 80% of all expenditure by 2011. Within these figures the annual Allocation to '121' on its own has risen by over £4000 and is over 60% of total costs. We have still been able to pay for what may be regarded as more discretionary items which are: for the salaries of the Organist and Cleaner, the cost of administration printing and stationary, the (increasing) cost of the Parish Assistant (which was zero in 2007), and all other miscellaneous costs and donations. Overall the combined costs in these five areas have actually come down slightly over the past five years and we have effectively managed to fund the increasing cost of the Parish Assistant by reductions in other discretionary spending.

In addition to these costs, we have also spent an average of over £2500/year on essential maintenance to our three buildings: the Church, the Church Hall and the Manse. We have also taken special retiring collections at various times in the year which has allowed us to donate about £3700 a year to various local and national Charities.

As a result of these income and expenditure trends and excluding legacies and other irregular donations, our general fund surplus has been steadily declining over the last five years. So what does this mean the future?

It is without doubt that some costs will continue rising, and it will no longer be possible to generate annual surpluses regularly, if we accept the status-quo. Discretionary spending has already been squeezed, and further cost savings will be much harder to find. We hope for more income and work to achieve this through expanding membership and even more generosity, but in the current climate this cannot be assumed. So to 'balance the books' in coming months a review of our priorities and some difficult choices will be needed. I'm sure that everyone will want to keep St Fillan's a vibrant part of Aberdour's village and faith communities, and so your thoughts and ideas on how to secure our future will be invaluable in the coming months.

Andrew Bastow (Treasurer)

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MINISTRIES AND MISSIONS CONTRIBUTIONS 2012

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you for supporting the worship mission and service of the Church through the money you give in your offering. It is important that you know what happens to this money. This letter tells you how your congregation's Ministries and Mission Contribution is used to enable the work of the Church.

Congregation:	Contribution
Aberdour St. Fillan's	£50,462
Ministries (86%)	£43,397

This provides over 1,000 ministers and other parish workers in communities throughout Scotland and in the Presbytery of England, and supports the costs of recruitment and training. The 2012 cost of a parish minister at the top of the stipend scale is £39,895 (stipend plus employer's national insurance and pension contributions).

Mission (14%)	£7,065
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This supports the Church's work in resourcing congregations for Christian education and outreach, in caring for the most vulnerable in society, in partnership with Churches in some of the most poorest parts of the world, and providing a Christian perspective on the issues of today. It also provides financial, legal, safeguarding and other services for congregations and committees, and supports the cost of the General Assembly and the Moderator.

*Please note that the Ministries and Mission Contributions only provide part of the total funding required for the work of the Church listed above. A fuller picture is given in the leaflet *Ministries and Missions 2012*, which is available free to all congregations.*

I hope that this helps you understand Ministries and Missions Contributions and shows you are enabling the sharing of the gospel through the money your congregation sends through the Church Offices to all parts of Scotland and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Rev Gordon D Jamieson

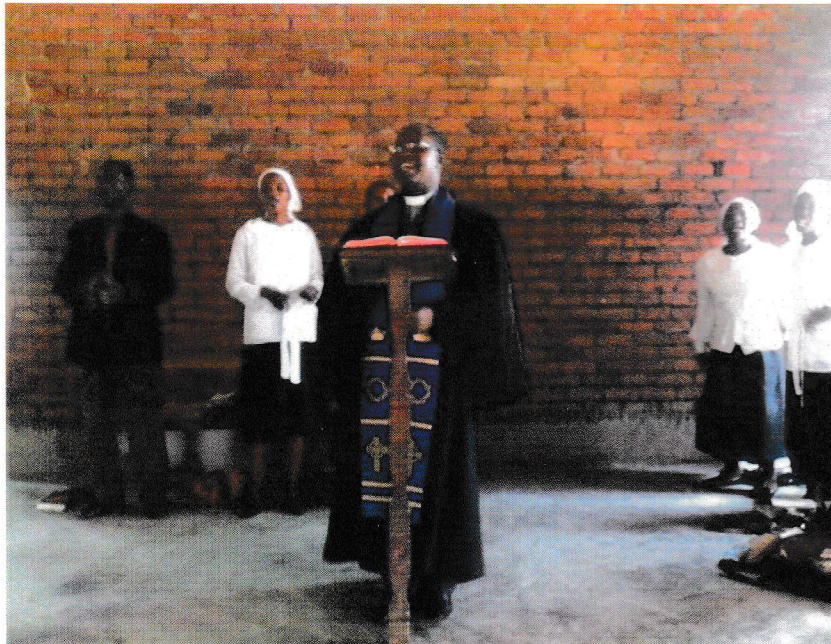
Head of Stewardship

Alumenda CCAP Update Jim Wyse

Reverend Dr AbalePhiri has been appointed as the new Minister to Alumenda CCAP. Rev. Phiri will reside at the Manse next to Makanda CCAP Church and will have responsibility for both churches.

During the absence of a Minister, initial communications focused on community projects since the church construction is well advanced. One favoured project is the promotion of a Kindergarten and planting of fruit trees within the church grounds. Now that Rev Dr Phiri is on board his endorsement would be beneficial to kick start this project. The money raised to date for the project is available within St Fillan's Alumenda funds and will be released to Alumenda CCAP through the established channel of 121 George Street and the Blantyre Synod.

The church concrete flooring is complete with the exception of two small rooms, high prices for cement has prevented progress in this phase of construction. The remaining works will be internal plastering, painting and electrics.



St Fillan's Website – coming soon to a computer near you!

The Kirk Session has agreed that we could benefit from a really good website, and Douglas Christie-Scott, an IT specialist, and member of our congregation was approached and kindly agreed to get this going. Within a week of being asked, Douglas has produced a framework within which we can get this exciting project going. We'll have a 'Home Page' which is a high level statement of what we're about, and underneath that a series of pages which will show, in an up-to-date way, what we do and what we aspire to. So, for example, there'll be pages about Young St Fillan's, about Worship, about outreach, about fund-raising and many other topics.

What would you like to see on the website – for example:

- How about a sound recording of our service each week?
- What about an electronic version of the Crozier?
- Upcoming events, including services at Easter and Advent
- Opportunities to assist in one of our committees, or roles needing filled
- What ideas do you have?

Please contact the Minister, Douglas, Eric Williamson or Richard Lloyd if you have ideas about what we should be covering.