

From the Editors... Jutta & Harald



Dear Readers

You probably realized that we like to start this magazine with some sort of introduction. This time we want to introduce the Kirk Session to you.



Kirk Session – who or what is that?

Well, since I'm not an original English speaker I questioned myself what or who the Kirk Session is and made some interesting research.

Kirk is a Scottish word and means "church" and the "Kirk Session", following the Presbyterian pattern, is the governing body of the congregation, and is composed of Elders who have been invited by the Kirk Session, and appointed in a special service involving the whole congregation. So in other words the Kirk Session is the regular church meeting of elected people who "run the business".

Ours consists of 11 members: 10 are ordained as elders: David O'Neil, Christa Wiegand, Lesley McRoberts, Peter Lloyd, Dot Hunter, Ian McLeod, Sharon Abbot, Harald Thiele, Norrie Alexander, and David

Smith; they come from 3 different countries. The minister, Doug McRoberts, is the chairman, or “moderator” of the meeting; it is normal practice for each Kirk Session to be moderated by an ordained Minister of Word & Sacrament. Elders, when they first accept the invitation (either here or in a previous church) are also ordained to the eldership – and, like ministers, this ordination is for life. In our church, they are invited to serve five years actively on the Kirk Session.



I was curious to find out more about the persons or “elders”, about their motivations to engage themselves in the Kirk Session, what is important to them and therefore did some interviews.

What they all have in common, is that they were asked to volunteer to become elders. Nobody brought her/himself forward on his/her own. So I figured they must be some inspiring people, that they were asked. Some of them had been already elders in their previous churches in other countries. They didn't take the decision easily, some even first decided that it was not the right time to devote themselves to this duty and delayed their commitment. I was very happy when I learnt that some said “I prayed about whether I should take that role” - because,

yes I recognized when they spoke about being asked, that there was this flattering feeling but also everybody is aware of the commitment to get involved. This brought me to another question, “what is your main duty/reason why you became an elder?” The various answers such as: “most important to help others”, “to serve God through the people”, “being an inviting church so that it would not disappear”, “to be eyes and ears – listening to what people have to say, to be approachable”, “what elders can do, also a member can do”, “to be humbled with dealings of the church and respectful to other people”, are matching partially what I can find in the bible in Acts 20:17,28 “Paul... asked the elders of the church to meet him...” He said “...keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God...”

The portion which I was missing was more along Acts 6:2-4, to spend time in prayer and teaching the word. So I asked “What about if some of the congregation approach you to pray with them – is this also the duty of an elder?” – the answer came a bit hesitantly: “well I am not used to it, but yes I would do”.

I appreciate the work and dedication of the members of the Kirk Session and would like that we as a congregation share this prayer for our elders with me: ***“Dear Lord, our elders carry a major spiritual burden, that is why you instructed us to assist them in their mission and to constantly pray for them. Give our elders a spirit of wisdom. Help us to love and understand each other. Help the elders to be comfortable and secure enough in each other’s presence to discuss problems and concerns. We ask Your blessing on the elders and ask that You will keep all members of this congregation safe in Your loving care. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”***

From the Manse...



Dear Friends –

Jesus of Nazareth. Carpenter? Rabbi? Or both?

That's what we've been focusing on over recent months in our services. Several people have asked me to write a little more about this in *Crossroads* – so here goes...

There's only one reference in the whole Bible to Jesus as a carpenter. It's in the opening verses of Mark 6, where Jesus has been teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth – and the locals say "Where did he get all this from? How does he perform these miracles? Isn't he Mary's son – the carpenter?..." The word translated as "carpenter" is the Greek word *τεκτον* (it sounds like "tekton", and it's the word we get "technology" from – it really means a man skilled in working with all the tools of his day, in stone, wood and metal.)

But there are around 60 references calling him "rabbi" or "teacher". Important people called him that. *Teachers and rabbis* called him that. His disciples called him that – and so did Jesus himself! In John 13, just after Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, he said "Now do you understand me? You call me Rabbi and Lord – and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am..."

He preached in the synagogues. And the only people who were offended by it were the people who were mistaken about Jesus. The synagogue authorities recognised Jesus, quite properly, as a rabbi... and there was also nothing unusual about a rabbi also earning his living through a trade. The greatest rabbi of Jesus' era, Hillel, was a woodcutter.

There's no recorded instance of Jesus making something out of wood, or stone, or being invited to fix some Pharisee's dinner table. But there are plenty of times when he's invited to dinner to discuss his ideas and his teachings. Total strangers walk up to him for healing; for advice; for

teaching. So he was *recognised* as a rabbi – and he probably dressed like one! When the old woman with the haemorrhage touched the hem of his robe and was healed, the word used for the hem of the garment is the technical word for a rabbi's garment fringe.

To become a rabbi, Jesus would have gone through three stages of education. With the other kids in Nazareth, between 5 and 12, he went to *Bet Sefer* – House of the Book. There he would learn to read & write, and study the Torah – the law.

At age 12, came selection. The ablest (boys only!) would go on to *Bet Midrash* – House of Study, until they were 15. This is more like high school. Jesus clearly did – and probably none of his disciples ever got the same chance!

Then, there was further selection through the call of the teaching rabbis. A rabbi would call individuals – only the best and brightest – with the words "Come, follow me!" This was effectively university – *Bet Talmud* – House of Learning or Interpretation. The rabbi would be asking himself "Can this potential disciple *really* become just like me? Can he do my work by living my life?" And it lasted until the pupil was 30!

And that, of course, is the age Jesus was when his ministry began. A Jewish father might then publicly declare his son, at this point, to be the inheritor of all he had. And remember the words heard so clearly when Jesus began his ministry by being baptised? "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased!" – exactly the words the proud father of a new rabbi would utter!

But it's the words Jesus, the rabbi, used to call his followers that echo down the centuries. He said, simply, "Come, follow me!" The very words the disciples never heard from any other rabbi... the words that women would *never* hear from the lips of any other rabbi... the words that would never be heard by anyone who wasn't Jewish – until Jesus spoke them... the words that called fishermen, tax collectors, political activists, women of high and low standing, and even other rabbis...

We don't know which rabbi first called Jesus. But there's one rabbi whose teachings find echoes time and again in the words of our Lord – Gamaliel. When Jesus was in the temple at age 12, Gamaliel – already Judaism's most prominent young rabbi – would be there.

The Jewish Talmud refers to Gamaliel as “teaching a student who displayed impudence in learning” – a precocious young man. Some thought this could be Paul. Might it even have been Jesus? Just over 20 years later, this same Gamaliel was president of the Sanhedrin when Jesus preached and healed. He would chair the heated debates we read of in the gospels.

And he was still there when Jesus was on trial. He had already become the teacher of Saul of Tarsus. He also presided over the trial of Peter and the other apostles (read about it in Acts 5) when they claimed Jesus to be Messiah.

There are many Christian legends about Gamaliel – most without any real foundation. But here's something. Near where David met the armies of the Philistines, is Beit Gamaliel; it's where the great man lies buried on his own estate. And here's a fascinating account, from a traveller named Nelson Price:

'One of our friends said lets drive up to Beit Gamaliel, a religious co-operative in central Israel. We had not been there. As a matter of fact we had never heard of it. While walking around enjoying the beauty of the place my wife noticed a plaque and called for our friend, a guide in Israel for over forty years, and me to come see it. It read: "Buried here: Stephen and Nicodemus." Our well schooled guide did not know of it and was astounded to see it.'

Nicodemus – the Pharisee who came to Jesus by night, called him “Rabbi”, and who would later help to anoint his body for burial – was a fellow member of the Sanhedrin with Gamaliel. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. Why would such a prestigious scholar as Gamaliel have these two men of all people buried on his estate? Could it have been the scholarly student who was appointed by the court – Saul of Tarsus – came back and

shared with his mentor that he now knew Jesus as Messiah and Gamaliel also became a believer?

We'll never know this side of heaven. But we already know that something Gamaliel said is eternally true: at the trial of Peter and the other apostles, he commanded "Do not take any action against these men. Leave them alone! If what they have planned and done is of human origin, it will disappear, but if it comes from God, you cannot possibly defeat them!"

He didn't say "we" – he said "you"!

Gamaliel is one of the most respected figures in all of Judaism's history – one of only seven men ever to be accorded the title *Rabban* – it means "The Master".

But Jesus was called something even more wonderful. It happened in the garden outside the empty tomb. Through Mary's tears, she heard her risen Lord say "Mary..." And she knew he was alive. She hugged him, and said, "*Rabboni*." It's very, very personal. It means "My master". It's as true for you and me as it was for her. And every bit as personal.

I hope you enjoy the rest of our exploration of Jesus the Rabbi – and have a blessed and relaxing summer.

Your minister,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug McHale".

WELCOME – DAVID & MAGGIE LUNAN

The Very Rev David Lunan, and his wife Maggie, will be with us at St. Andrew's Scots Church later this summer. When Doug & Lesley McRoberts are in Scotland, David & Maggie will be living in the manse, and David will be taking the services on three Sundays, from 25th August to 8th September.

David was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2008/9, after a ministry which included youth club work in Glasgow, parish ministry in Moray and Glasgow, and study tours with Christian Aid to the Philippines, Malawi and South Africa. He also recently preached for a winter season at the Scots Church in Melbourne, Australia.

He says "We're really looking forward to our time in Malta. When I was Moderator, one of my overseas visits was to the Presbytery of Europe, and we heard about the beginning of what has become ***Out of Africa... Into Malta***. Now we'll be able to see for ourselves how things are developing. It makes the prospect of being in Malta even more exciting"

They're expecting some more excitement while they're here – one of their four sons expects to become a dad in early September, in Slovenia!



David & Maggie Lunan at St. Andrew's Church, Blantyre – celebrating another African mission!



... and ready to celebrate a birth!

Christians Together in Malta

Ecumenical Service – 16th May in St. Andrews Scots Church



The service was held during the Pentecost period. Pentecost is the feast, not only of the birth of Christianity, but also of the shift from plurality to unity: many united in one body. It is therefore right and fitting to continue to pray for unity amongst Christians during Pentecost.

The theme was: 'Come Holy Spirit.'

little
~ TOP TWENTY SONGS OF / FAITH ~

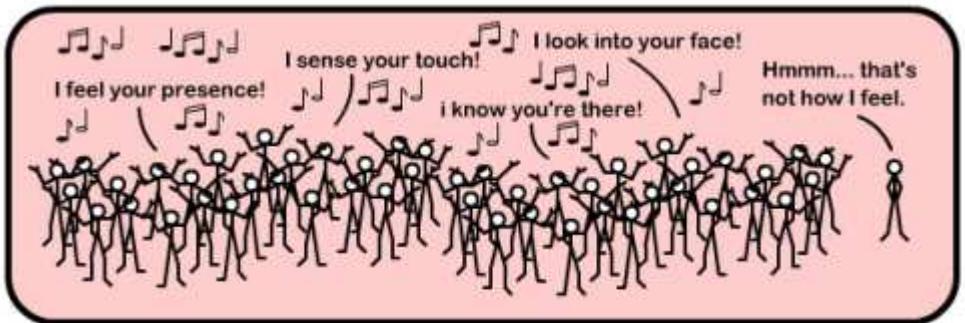
THE WAY WE'D REALLY SING THEM IF WE WERE HONEST

Take My Life and Let Me Be
Come Holy Ghost, When I've Got the Time
It Is My Secret What God Can Do
Blessed Assurance, This Pew Is Mine
Just As I Am Pretending to Be
When the Saints Go Tiptoeing In
Sit Up a Bit for Jesus
A Comfy Mattress Is Our God
Go Tell It on the Quiet
Praise God From Whom Some Nice Things Flow
O, God, You Live in Ages Past
Pillow of Ages, Fluffed for Me
I'm Fairly Certain that My Redeemer Lives
What an Acquaintance We Have in Jesus
The Lord is King! Now Still Your Voice...
Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Someone Else
Blest Be the Tie that Doesn't Cramp My Style
Fight the Good Fight with the Guy on Your Right
Joy to the World, the Present's Come!
May the Mind of Christ My Saviour Bother Me from Time to Time



THESE DAYS WE DO NOT NEED HYMN BOOKS
AS ALL OF THE WORDS TO THE SONGS
CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET

CartoonChurch.com



Feeling like an alien.

Learning the Language?

In April, Mrs Regina who the community at St Andrew's helped a few years ago, died, leaving behind the grandchildren who depended on her. I was very concerned when I heard the news, especially because one of the children is mentally ill and it was likely that the relatives would find it difficult to take him on along with the other children. By my human estimation, that is. However, God provided for them through the relatives who took on the care of the young man along with his siblings.

How many of us would have taken on these children to become part of our families? In our culture it is almost inconceivable. Is it because the simple faith of the people in Tugwashanye is linked to simple and full trust in God? Is it because their simplicity and poverty rids them of the clutter of material possessions and gave them the inner freedom that allowed them to see all this as the natural step resulting from Mrs Regina's death? Is it because they take Christ's words seriously when he says:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6: 25-26)"

Sister Catherine says that they still miss Mrs Regina who worked with them in the office. But, she says they accompanied her in

her prayers as she died, "In our heart we feel that we are leaving her free on her journey towards God". Praying was a crucial part of the process since, Sr Catherine added, "Without prayer, there is no interior freedom."

In his conclusion to his weekly address on June 6th, Pope Francis recalled the Gospel of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, as he reflected on the need to look after the earth of which we are mere custodians. He emphasized the significance of Christ's response as all five thousand were filled and twelve baskets were leftover. "Twelve is the number of the tribes of Israel, symbolically it represents all the people. And this tells us that when food is shared equally, with solidarity, nobody is devoid of the necessary, each community can meet the needs of the poorest. Human ecology and environmental ecology go hand in hand."

So we need not be concerned that we are well off if we are not attached to our possessions, if we look out for those around us when they are in need and are ready to meet these needs, whether this involves our money, our care and attention, our time. Sometimes those around us need us merely to notice that they are troubled so that they can share their thoughts with us. Often others come on behalf of those who need our money. In one evening recently, on the local Maltese programme *Xarabank*, viewers and others responded to a call to support a mission project in Kenya. The response was a concrete €500,000. Others will respond by joining the core team that will go to Kenya

to physically realize the project. A similar appeal and response was made not so long before for a local charity. It is a case of different people using their different talents to enable the sharing to take place.

We can't all go off to Africa to build a hospital or a school or even to look after orphans there. We all have different talents and different material goods. We simply need to be ready to use them when we are called to do so. We also need to be inspired by all those others who respond to calls made in different languages, calls we may not hear because we do not know all those languages.

Meanwhile, we can join Sr Catherine in her prayer for us all at St Andrews at the end of her email: "Come Holy Spirit, Come inflame our hearts with your LOVE and dwell within us." That love will enable us to respond to the calls of those around us, some miniature calls, some very loud. We simply need to open our eyes and listen intently with hearts filled with that LOVE that will enable us to learn the languages of the calls made by those around us even if we never learn the actual words in those languages. It is the spirit that counts after all, the spirit that will inspire our response provided we journey towards that inner freedom.

Marie Alexander for the Mission Team



“Here’s something really interesting ...”

On the 12th of August 2011, I received an email from Doug that commenced “Here’s something really interesting” that went on to say that the Church of Scotland’s World Mission Convener and secretary were “strongly suggesting” that, based on our existing ministry to the migrant community, that we submit a bid to become a Guild project that would receive funding of £30k or more for the three years 2013 to 2015. And can we put together a “properly backgrounded and costed” draft project over the next few days!

In under 2 years St Andrew’s Scots Church will have become the owner of a not for profit company and financial institution licensed by the Malta Financial Services Authority to give loans to transform the lives of the poor in Malta, targeting women and migrants. We will have the official launch with NGOs and others who work with the poor in attendance along with the employment of our first part-time support worker. Over this same period we have seen the return after some 50 or so years of the crypt (and the storeroom next to it) and we will soon see this fully refurbished as a centre that will serve as an office and boardroom for Malta Microfinance Ltd, be a centre for our language teaching and where we plan to work in partnership with others, in particular IAFR the refugee body.

I will admit that when, on that weekend almost 2 years ago, I suggested creating a bank for the poor based on the model of the Grameen Bank, I did not realise how much work was involved in putting this together. However, what happened was that, as we shared the vision of what we were seeking to achieve we found that others with the necessary skills have joined us. Of these, I must acknowledge the substantial contribution of Carla, a lawyer with the human rights body Aditus, who is now the company secretary.

George Macleod the founder of the Iona Community used to comment after he had experienced God moving that “if you think this is all co-incidence then I wish you a very dull life”. Being part of what God is doing here in Malta is exciting and I cannot wait to see how God will use St Andrew’s Scots Church, Malta Microfinance and the crypt in the future, let alone the other opportunities that will appear.

Peter Lloyd



www.maltamicrofinance.com

STATIONING PROCESS FOR SEPTEMBER 2014

As you know, Rev Doug and Lesley will leave us in the summer of 2014 and arrangements are already being made for his replacement. As part of the local ecumenical partnership agreement, the ministry of this church alternates between that of the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church of Great Britain and as the next minister will be from the Methodist tradition the process of selection will be carried out according to its practices. This process, called 'Stationing', is very different from that of the Church of Scotland, so we feel it is important to explain briefly how it will work.

The Kirk Session has been asked to decide who will be on the Invitational Committee which will oversee the Stationing and it has been agreed that this committee will comprise the Current Kirk Session, with the exception of the Rev Doug & Lesley McRoberts, and David Smith, all of whom stood down voluntarily, and will include Mr Franklyn Wilmot. The South East District Superintendent, the Rev, John Hellyer is the Chair but if any meetings take place in his absence then Dot. Hunter, as Circuit Steward, acts in his stead.

The Invitational Committee is now working on the Profile of Appointment, for prospective candidates to be given, so that they can better understand the life and needs of the church. By the end of July this should be finalised so that advertisements can be placed early in September through the usual Methodist channels.

The time table is such that short listing will be done early in October this year and interviews will be held towards the end of October. Hopefully an appointment will be made by November 1st. If no appointment is made by then we will repeat the process so that (DV) on September 1st 2014 a new minister will take over from the Rev Doug.

It is the Invitational Committee's wish to keep you fully informed at every stage and to have an open Stationing process, but this of course does not preclude the confidentiality of candidates and any sensitive information. As a committee we ask for your prayers and support in the coming months and hope that the whole process runs as smoothly as possible.

Dot Hunter / Circuit Steward

Dates For Your Diary



Sun 7th Jul:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 14th Jul:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 21st Jul:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 28th Jul:	Service at 10.30 am – including Communion.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 4th Aug:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 11th Aug:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 18th Aug:	Service at 10.30 am.	Rev Doug McRoberts
Sun 25th Aug:	Service at 10.30 am – including Communion	Very Rev David Lunan
Sun 1st Sept:	Service at 10.30 am.	Very Rev David Lunan
Sun 8th Sept:	Service at 10.30 am.	Very Rev David Lunan

Sun 15th Sept: Service at 10.30 am. Rev. Doug McRoberts

Sun 22nd Sept: Service at 10.30 am – including Communion.
Rev. Doug McRoberts

Sun 29th Sept: Service at 10.30 am. Rev. Doug McRoberts

Note:

Notte Bianca will be on Saturday 5th October – our church will be open from 6.00pm through midnight; everyone is welcome – and Harald Thiele is looking for volunteers! It's a great night – we expect well over a thousand visitors!



Get up-dates.

Read interesting and funny stuff.

Join in and hear from people and congregations from all over the world.

With "saintandrews scotschurch" on Facebook

What is a Prayer Chain?

A prayer chain is a group of like-minded people who wish to pray for people and their situations that arise during our daily lives. It is also used for praise.

This started in our previous church also called St. Andrew in Cardiff 34 year ago. When it was started there it was all done by phone as no one had a computer back then.

A Coordinator was informed of a person who needed prayers. There would be about 4 or 5 "Chain Leaders" who would each receive the message, and they would then contact the person underneath them on the chain, who would then contact the next one on the list, and so on, there may be 6, 7, or even more hence the chain. So with the exception of the Coordinator no one had to call more than one person. It was a wonderful feeling to know that people were praying for your situation.

With the advent of computers being owned by lots of people now, it was suggested to me a couple of years ago that I might want to move with times and bring the prayer chain into the 21st century by using email as well. It made a tremendous difference, as people who had odd working hours and/or used their computer a lot were able to participate more easily. Of course there are people who don't have a computer, or just prefer a phone call which is fine.

In fact, after talking about it last Sunday, immediately after the service I had 9 people who wanted to join and by the end of the day I had 2 prayer calls.

The power of prayer is truly amazing.

If anyone would like more information or to join the prayer chain, please don't hesitate to contact me.

My details are as follow:

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