



## Building Project - All Systems Go!

As intimated, a special Congregational Meeting took place on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> October, at which two items were on the agenda.

Firstly, there was a resolution in the name of the Kirk Session that the congregation adopt the Unitary Constitution of the Church of Scotland in place of the so-called Model Constitution. After an explanation and question time, those present voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution with only one vote being registered against. This has been communicated to the Presbytery of Angus and, in time, the Church of Scotland will issue us with a Unitary Constitution.

In some ways this is a somewhat technical matter. Even so, we believe that it will be to our advantage as we look to build the kind of structures that will best enable us to steer the congregation forward.

The second item of business was the planned refurbishment of our buildings. Following presentations from the minister and Ken Miller (representing the Building Project Group), there followed a period of lively and enthusiastic debate with a large number of those present putting forward questions and comments. This, of course, was the point of the evening! The Project Group listened carefully to all that was said and will do its best to

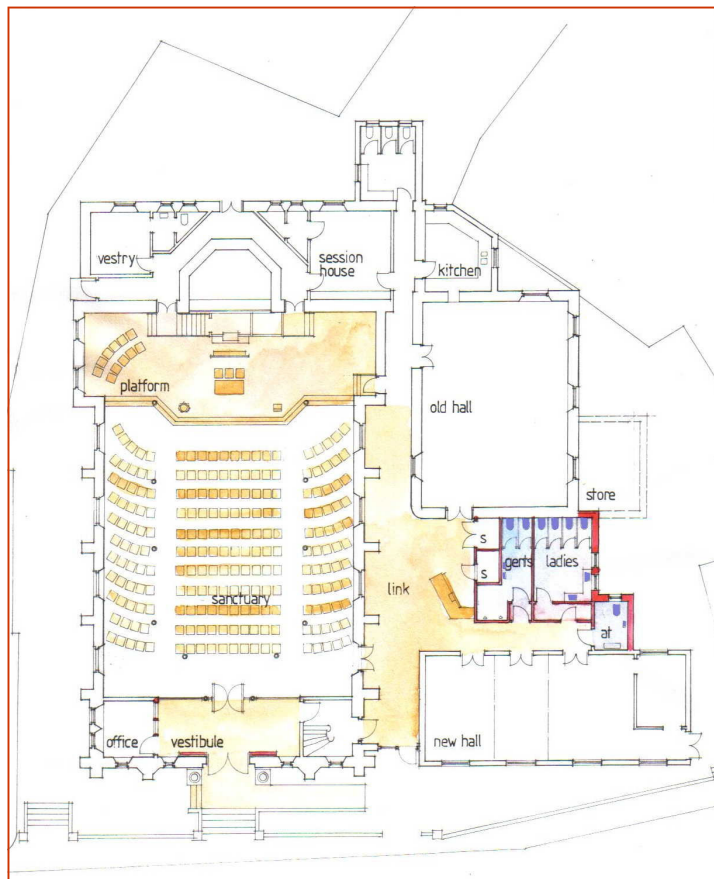
come up with a finished product that best meets the needs of the whole congregation (and community.)

The good news is that the meeting was very positive and that, as with the vote described above, there was an overwhelming *thumbs up* in favour of

down that road and are hopeful that before too long, they will give us the green light to proceed. From that point on, things will get really serious. We will need to finalise the smaller details of the plans and then obtain tenders from a number of building

firms etc. - and all of that will take time. While that is happening, we will be making plans for temporary accommodation during the building work, which might be anything up to six months.

Derek, our congregational treasurer, has done some work on the finance of this matter and, as you will see from what he has written on page 3, he is confident that we can do it. The total planned expenditure is presently at just over £400,000 though we all are aware that this may rise. However, Derek informs us that we can guarantee something like £160,000 from what we already hold - so that represents a great start towards the total. To supplement it, we will be approaching various funding bodies and grant-making trusts in the hope of securing further monies. Thereafter, it will come down to all of us, the members of St.



**Our Architect's plan (with some details still to be finalised) showing : disabled access to front door; improved vestibule and office; flexible seating; extended platform; a new exit door into the new link block; additional catering facility; new suite of ladies, gents and disabled toilets; larger store**

proceeding along the lines outlined by the Project group.

Though the Presbytery has given its backing, we still require the agreement of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. We have started

Andrew's Church.

**So, it is all to play for - exciting times indeed. We face a formidable challenge but we will face it together and we will face it in faith.**

**CONTACTS****MINISTER**

Rev Dr W Martin Fair, BA, BD  
873238

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Jane Miller : 875235

**CLERK TO BOARD**

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Mary Scott : 873874

**PRAYER CO-ORDINATORS**

Judy Spink : 872395  
Lesley Bailey : 436751

**SUPPLIES CO-ORDINATOR**

Norma Beattie : 873442

**CHURCH OFFICE : 431135**

Monday to Friday : 9 am to noon and for 15 minutes after Sunday service

**ADMINISTRATOR and BOOKINGS / ROLLKEEPER**

Alison Davie : 431135

**MAGAZINE EDITOR/CDs**

Ken Miller : 875235

**ST ANDREW'S ARBROATH****REGISTER OF MEMBERS**

July/August 2007

**Baptisms** - None

**Weddings** - None

**Funerals** - None

**DEADLINE DATES FOR DIARIES****DECEMBER EDITION**

Please note that **DEADLINE** dates **must** mean exactly that, with all articles and pictures submitted beforehand, or on those dates.

Friday 16th November (Written/preferably typed)  
Tuesday 20th November (Word-Processed file)

**Keeping FAITH In Schools**

To keep parents up-to-date, CARE, a Christian social reform charity, is running a road-

show in Dundee's Gate Church on Monday, November 26th. More information/booking is available from our Church office, or at [www.care.org.uk/careforscotland](http://www.care.org.uk/careforscotland)

**THANKS**

I would like to say a huge big thank you to all of you who made my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday one to remember. Thank you for all the cards, gifts, and birthday cake.

I was truly overcome with emotion to think that you all came to help me celebrate. I

was looking forward to a quiet meal at the Brewhouse, and had starved myself all day.

But Sheila had other plans!!

Once again thank you all for your love, and friendship. It really is good to be part of God's family.

Bless you all. Dave Paterson.

PS Bus pass on the way.

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE****SUNDAY**

10.30 am – Gathering for prayer in crèche room.

10.30 am – Choir practice in new hall.

11.00 am – Morning service (with short communion on the third Sunday of each month. Tea/coffee after.

Creche – up to age 3

Infants – ages 3 to 5

Juniors – ages 8 and 9

Seniors – ages 10 and 11

Sunday Club – Elaine Fair (873238)

Teen Scene – S1 to S2

6.30 to 8.00 pm – Sunday evening ICE-BREAKERS – up to age 16

8.00 pm – Sunday evening Youth Group – age 16 plus

**MONDAY**

11.00 am – Havilah – Drop-in Centre – Church Office (431135)

2.00 pm – Dorothy Dobson Over 50s Exercise Class

6.00 pm – Rainbow Guides – L Hadden (875379)

7.30 pm – St Andrew's Guild : Fortnightly – Jean Tasker (874664)

7.30 pm – Flower Club : Fortnightly – R Spink (874690)

**WEDNESDAY**

10.30 am – Midweek Meeting Point – M Fair (873238)

11.00 am – Havilah – Drop-in Centre – Church Office (431135)

5.45 pm – Brownies – Morag Scorgie (01674 820721)

7.30 pm – Wednesday@Seven30

7.15 pm – Guides

7.30 pm – Women's Group – first Wednesdays – Elaine Fair (873238)

**THURSDAY**

10.00 am – Parent and Toddler Group – Joan Archer (876522)

2.00 pm – Friend's Club : first Thursdays – L Smith – B Gerrard, secretary (434821)

6.00 pm – Anchor Boys – J Tasker (874664)

6.00 pm – BB Junior Section – W Ewart (876114)

7.30 pm – BB Company Section – M Clark (437758)

**FRIDAY**

9.30 am – Coffee morning, main hall

11.00 am – Havilah – Drop-in Centre – Church Office (431135)

**Intimations, changes of address, hall bookings etc., please contact Alison Davie at the Church office, Monday to Friday, 9 am to noon and for 15 minutes after Sunday Service, telephone 431135.**

**Printing, tickets, syllabi, etc – W Marshall (873376).**

**Please call 878594 in the event of corrections or omissions, and an updated sheet will be produced.**

# Martin Fair



Letter From The Manse

November 2007

Dear friends,

Though it doesn't involve many of us on a day-to-day basis, as St. Andrew's folk we have a share in the ministry of Havilah. Havilah began a little over a year ago in response to the desire that some of our number had to reach out in love to the many in our community who, for whatever reason, often find themselves excluded, isolated and unloved. In general terms, the first year was about getting started and though some people came, numbers remained low. Now, however, there's been something of a breakthrough and in recent weeks, we've been welcoming 12-16 men and women into our halls on a regular basis.

Make no mistake about it, this is difficult and demanding ministry. Our team has shown levels of commitment and perseverance on an astonishing scale. Havilah opens three times a week, from 11am to 2pm each time, and with only a relatively small number on the team, it puts great demands on each one. But though it is demanding, it is also proving to be worthwhile and rewarding. Of course it should be; as the Gospels make clear, this is the kind of ministry that Jesus was involved in!! So, to be ministering in Havilah is to be doing as he did – in love, getting alongside those looked down on and despised.

Most churches don't get involved with this group of people and generally such people are pretty clear in their minds that they wouldn't be welcome in churches. But here at St. Andrew's, we're beginning to change that. It's a costly business in many ways and some might say it's the kind of work that's more trouble than it's worth. But it's what Jesus would say that matters.

What about you? Well, taking a share in the Havilah ministry isn't for everyone and that's fair enough. We're all gifted and called in different directions. But you can play a part by praying regularly for the work and by taking opportunities to encourage our members who are on the front line. I, for one, am clear in my mind that as we continually faithfully to extend ourselves in this way, God will look favourably on us. Some of the people coming to Havilah are finding themselves accepted and loved as they've never known before. That's what God would want.

God bless,

Martin, Elaine, Callum, Andrew, Fraser and Flossie!

MartinFair@aol.com

## Building Project - Finance

Here is what Derek Scott, our treasurer, writes:

*Over the last five years, we have built up a Church Redecoration Fund of £42,595 but I guess this will now be a 10% deposit on our much bigger project! We now appear to have a lot more to do before the painters arrive!! The estimated cost represents a formidable target and it is right that we should have some apprehension about achieving the total. If, though, it is God's plan for our future, HE will provide the resources we need.*

*General income increased by 45% in 2006. At the end of September 2007, a further increase of 9% had been*

*achieved, but we have in place two further ministry team posts since 1<sup>st</sup> August '07. At the end of last year, we had a balance in Reserve Account and unrestricted funds of £85,000 with projected surpluses for 2007 and 2008 of £27,000 and £20,000. We have expendable endowment funds in Fabric of approximately £30,000. So we have available reserves of approximately £160,000.*

*We need, therefore, some £240,000 plus, to finance our project, but if the congregation responds as they have in the past, we could reach this total by the end of 2009, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Andrew's Church. The funds will come from one-off donations and by further pledging over two years and, if the congregation responds to our very special appeal as above, we will also be rewarded by some £45-50,000 from the tax office due to Gift Aid donations.*

## Friends Club

At our October meeting Liz Smith, President, welcomed everyone to the meeting. After our opening and business she introduced the Carnoustie Traditionals. Under the leadership of Neil Alexander on the accordion and keyboard,

Jimmy Cook on the keyboard, the group members could sing along to. Irene Sim included John Phillip, Tom Driven, sang 'Tammy', 'The old lamplighter' and Neil and John Wilkins told stories and jokes. Isobel Mitchell gave the vote of thanks. The members and guests then enjoyed refreshments. The next meeting is on 1st November and members, old and new, are always welcomed.

## Home and Away - OUTREACH - Home and Away

### St. Andrew's in the World

In last month's QUEST, we shared with you the decision made by the Leadership Group of the Church to shift our main overseas focus from Cambodia to Malawi. With a little more space available in this edition of QUEST, here are the factors which influenced the decision.

We began in Cambodia some five years ago, developing our partnership through the international aid and development agency, World Vision. During these years, we've given a figure of around £54,000 towards the work. Since our commitment was to £1,000 per year, clearly we've done much more than we could ever have imagined possible! On top of that, there are almost 20 individuals and groups within the congregation who have sponsored children. That money amounts to something like another £4,000 per year.

So, there can be no question of it that St. Andrew's rose magnificently to the challenge placed before us. And, with two *see for yourself* visits having taken place, we were able to satisfy ourselves that our money was being well spent.

However, any such partnership needs to be a two-way street and in that sense, we've been disappointed. Our hope was that the Cambodia Connection would be transforming for us – that as we got to know more and more about the situation of the people there, and were thereby enabled to pray in an informed way, we ourselves would be changed. The problem has been that World Vision has been unable to sustain the kind of flow of information and understanding that we were looking for. Indeed, it's been almost a year since we've had anything from them with regard to how things are going. Getting information back from World Vision was difficult from the very beginning and never matched the levels that they committed to (monthly e-mail updates, quarterly reports etc.) And as time has gone on, this has continued to deteriorate.

The bottom line is this: it becomes very difficult to come to you, the members of the congregation, seeking your support without an ongoing flow of information as to what the needs are and what's being achieved.

As you all know, this summer a group of our young people went to Malawi and got involved with the work of Aquaid – work among orphans. The visit was a tremendous success. The group, using the money that they raised (much of it from within the congregation,) was able to do a

tremendous amount, including financing the building of a new day-care centre and residential block and another residential block to be added to an existing day-care centre. These have been named after our church – the St. Andrew's Day Care Centre and St. Andrews House in Malawi! With all of the enthusiasm that you'd expect from our young people, they made a commitment to do what they could to see to the ongoing running costs of these new builds – something like £500 per month. Given that there was a likelihood that a significant proportion of that money would have had to be raised from within the congregation, the Leadership Group felt strongly that a decision had to be made – that it was going to be difficult for the congregation to properly support two different ventures.

Bearing in mind the problems outlined above with regard to the World Vision partnership, and given our unstinting commitment to backing our young people as they grow in faith and exercise that faith in the world, it was decided – unanimously – to make the work in Malawi our main focus. Whereas World Vision is a massive, worldwide agency, Aquaid is small – almost a family business. And, given that we have very strong personal links with them, we are much more confident that the kind of partnership we were looking for will be possible. There should be no difficulty in ensuring a steady and reliable stream of information concerning what's happening through the work in Malawi and with visits and much more regular contact, we believe that what God might do among us will be just as vital as what we're able to do in Malawi. The group who spent their summer there are, already, the proof of that.

Though we are sure that this was the right decision, it was not an easy one to take; many of us throughout the congregation feel strongly about Cambodia. And so we are very much hoping that the child sponsorships can continue and that there might be occasional gatherings to focus on the needs of Cambodia. Happily, there is something like £2,500 in the bank from this year's efforts to date and all of that money will go to Cambodia. Thereafter, we may be able to continue with a small annual gift to keep the channel open.

As we go on from here, we trust that St. Andrew's will continue to prove itself committed to the world and that we ourselves will become ever more at one with those who know so little of its riches.

### Appreciation Blitz

A big 'thank you' to all those who played a part in our *appreciation blitz*. It involved going out to schools and various other work places – police station, health centres etc. – with gifts of home-baking and cards, which expressed how much we appreciate what people do for us in the wider community. Too often, we take such service for granted.

From the feedback we have received, it seems that the cards and gifts were warmly received. As an example, here is what David Macdonald, Rector of Arbroath Academy, wrote:

Dear Martin,

Please pass on my thanks and the thanks of the staff of Ar-

*broath Academy for the lovely, home-made card and the cakes that we received this week.*

*This was a most unexpected and up-lifting gesture at a time when staff are feeling the pressure and often do not feel that their efforts are being noticed, so I can assure you that there were smiling faces all round when I took the card and the cakes to the staff room.*

*Teaching staff and support staff alike are very grateful for your kind wishes. We will continue to do our best for the children of their part of Arbroath and look forward to working closely with you all.*

Yours sincerely,

David Macdonald, Head Teacher

## Malawi Christmas Fundraising

The Young people are now planning ahead for our trip out to Malawi in the summer of 2009. As a means of subsidising this trip as well as supporting the work we started in the summer of this year we are now getting back into fundraising. Come and visit us at the Fundraising Table in the Hall after Sunday morning services or else contact Sheila on 01241 873218.

**Christmas Card Delivery:** We will be delivering Christmas Cards in Arbroath and surrounding area. The box will be left in the church foyer from the beginning of December and the final day for leaving cards will be Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**Christmas Crackers:** These are attractively made containing a hat, joke and chocolate. They cost £1 each and orders will be taken for any amount. A sample one will be on display at the fundraising table.

**Malawi Calendar:** This year we will be selling calendars with Malawian photos. You can view our sample one at the fundraising table.

**Christmas Gift Wrap Service:** If Christmas Gift Wrapping is a chore to you why not let us help you out. We can wrap them for you!

**Alternative Christmas Gifts:** Lots of you may have used World Vision's catalogue to buy an Alternative Christmas Gift for someone. This year we are offering you a chance to choose from a list of different gifts that will benefit one of the children in Namisu village or one of the daycare centres that Aquaid run. We have arranged this with Aquaid Malawi to ensure that your gift will go to where it is most needed. Instead of struggling to find a gift for someone that has everything they could possibly need why not give them a gift of sending it to a child in Malawi who has so little. Visit us at the fundraising table to see our wide choice of gifts at different prices as well as our choice of cards and place your order!

## Singing To The Lord

**Do you enjoy singing in church?** Listen to this story about an elderly couple in North Korea. Forbidden for more than fifty years to gather to worship God, they often walked far out into the mountains pretending to look for herbs (to supplement their meagre diet). Eventually they would enter as far as they could go into a deep cave. When they were sure no-one but God could possibly hear them, they lifted their voices to heaven and sang every Christian song they could remember. To this day, Christians in that land who are prepared to take the risk to gather in twos or threes to worship, can 'sing' only by moving their lips, making no sound. Meanwhile, untold thousands of Christians have died in North Korea's brutal prison camps, often with a song on their lips, to the chagrin of their torturers.

North Korea is only one of many countries where Christians pay dearly to believe in Jesus and to worship him. Barnabas Fund and Open Doors are just two of the organisations that exist to inform the church of the plight of such believers and to help them in practical ways.

These two organisations provide such stories and information as we have read above, and which is shared by a small group of church members in the informal atmosphere of a home, over a cup of coffee and warm fellowship, monthly on a Thursday morning. We can read how God's Word has helped individuals to cope in hard circumstances such as imprisonment or rejection or the loss of loved ones who have been murdered for their faith. We ask ourselves: "If Christians in such difficult situations can be helped by reading God's Word, can even **sing**, cannot we do the same in our everyday difficulties?" So we encourage each other while we pray for our brothers and sisters around the world and think how practically we can help them.

If any reader would like to be part of this little group or know more, then ring Wilma on 01241 874269.

## The Guild

The Guild began the new Session with a service of Dedication and Communion held in St Ninian's Chapel and conducted by the Rev Fair.

The next meeting was a Mr and Mrs evening and, although not politically correct, still very popular, with no one phoning their solicitor as much fun and laughter was created.

The Guild invited the young people who had travelled to Malawi to come and speak at their meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>. This was another opportunity for church members to hear their fascinating story.

During November The Guild will take part in Guild Week giving us a chance to share with others the love of God through our work and witness. We shall take part in the Sunday Service and are offering a Cream Tea to the elderly of our town's residential homes and a concert to be enjoyed by all in the church on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

Other meetings, which are open to everyone and to which you will be made most welcome, shall be noted in the bulletin.

## Boys Brigade

Christmas is almost upon us and there is Halloween and Bonfire Night as well. We as a Company are helping to fill Christmas Shoe Boxes and they have to be ready for the Blythswood Van on 13<sup>th</sup> of November. If you have a box filled then please hand it into the church and we will get it on the van for you. We would like boys to have a shoe box filled and labeled ready to go. Please see any B.B. officer if you have any questions.

We will have had a fancy dress party on 1<sup>st</sup> of November and then our next big event is the outing to the local panto at the Abbey Theatre this year. They are doing OLD MACDONALD HAD A PANTO written by Alan Christieson (one of our boy's dad). We have booked the whole theatre for the night Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> of December. There are extra seats available and if you would like to come and be part of the St. Andrew's Church B.B. outing we will have a table in the hall after Sunday Service soon. Tickets are £5 each. A good clean proper panto!!

Captain E. J. Matthew M.B.E.



## Clerk's Corner

Following the vote in favour of the adoption of a Unitary Constitution (see front page) the Kirk Session is now involved in the next stages of the change.

Already we have a Leadership Group in place, and now we are moving towards the creation of the other groups. We have a five-fold understanding of

Church life core values :

**Worship  
Service  
Evangelism  
Fellowship  
Nurture**

and to these we add

**Fabric  
Finance**

Thus, we will have seven Core Groups.

At the moment, the elders are considering where their talents and interests

lie and will soon indicate which of the Core Groups they wish to serve on. In due course, members of the congregation will also be given this opportunity.

All of these changes involve complex issues and it will take time for the smooth running to be achieved. We pray for wisdom, patience and understanding as we go forward in faith. (Jane Miller)

## A LONG ROAD

### The first instalment on the work of Bob and Sue Pritchard in Senegal

I can remember my mother saying to me, and then me saying to our children: "Yes, you can have that painting book or model making set, but what you start you must finish". Perhaps this injunction, coupled later by my Christian convictions and consequent help from above, helped me to "keep right on to the end of the road" as the soldiers' song expresses.

My husband Bob and I lived and worked under the auspices of WEC Int. (known formerly as the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, but due to unhealthy aggressive connotations, now called Worldwide Evangelism for Christ) for around 40 years. Our country of service was the ex-French colony of Senegal, West Africa and by fairly constant moves around the country, we were able to see what other missions as well as our own, were doing to evangelise, give biblical teaching and help people socially.

In 1985, the Fraternity of Senegalese missions in the country asked us to write a small book about Christian outreach in Senegal. We did this and they were challenged by the life and service of some of our missionary colleagues. This book was printed in 1987 and distributed in Senegal. Although it proved helpful to some fairly new converts, the emphasis was on missions rather than on churches. Until the end of the 80s there were very few churches and practically no indigenous pastors.

Then at the start of the 90s came the wind of change. The prayers and in many

cases, toil and tears of missionaries and a few Christians, began to bear fruit. People were baptised, churches sprang up and men were sent away for theological training. Chronological Bible teaching in local languages was aired over the radio so that even those minding cattle away out in the bush, could rest in the heat of the day and listen. Although religious teaching was not allowed in schools, young people were wanting to learn to read so we were able to share simple French Bible stories outside and sometimes because of the teacher's curiosity, inside school premises. In contrast to the UK, women and girls were the hardest to reach but contact through village dispensaries, sewing classes and micro-projects, all played a part in seeing changes in the women's attitudes and their lot in life. Another big milestone was that another African country (Nigeria) sent workers to Senegal and in 1998 an indigenous Senegalese mission was formed. Nationals were evangelising their own people.

Now, we praise the Lord for all this, but what was our part in this encouraging work of God's Spirit? The Lord laid increasingly on our hearts that something of this should be recorded. The younger generation needed to know what had gone before. As we shared these thoughts with the committee members of the Fraternity which now consisted of far fewer "toubabs" (white people), they were enthusiastic and give us a free hand to write about the growth of the church up until the year 2000. (continued)

## Topsy-Turvy World

Leading arms manufacturer BAE Systems is designing a new generation of 'green munitions' including 'lead-free' bullets. BAE also want to cut toxins in

its jets, fighting vehicles and rocket artillery, which 'can harm the environment and pose a risk to people'.

The initiative is being backed by the MoD, which has proposed quieter war-

heads to reduce noise pollution and grenades that cause less smoke. Experiments have even taken place to see if explosives can be turned into manure. Enough said !!!

## LOOKING AHEAD

In addition to those detailed below, we have -

A 40 Min service every Wednesday at 10.30 am

**MESSY** Church, 4-6pm, last Sunday of every month, for all the family, with games, craft, worship, & all-together meal

## NOVEMBER

Sunday 4  
11 am - Worship Service  
8 pm OFF the W.O.L.

Sunday 11  
(N.B. earlier time)  
10.50 am - Worship Service  
beginning with  
Act of Remembrance

Sunday 18  
11 am - Worship Service  
followed by  
short Communion  
7pm - Service of welcome &  
Introduction for  
new members

Sunday 25  
11 am - Worship Service  
4 pm - **MESSY** Church!  
Brand new, all-age option

## DECEMBER

Sunday 2  
11 am - 1st Sunday In Advent  
All-age service  
with Communion  
8 pm OFF the W.O.L.

Sunday 9  
11 am - Worship Service

Sunday 16  
11 am - Worship Service  
(Christmas Gift Day)

Sunday 23  
11 am - Christmas Celebration

Monday 24  
6.30pm - Nativity &  
Christingle Service  
11.15pm - Traditional  
Watchnight Service

Tuesday 25  
10.30am - Christmas Day  
Service

Thursday 27  
7pm - Service of Memorial &  
Thanksgiving

Sunday 30  
11am - Worship Service  
in St. Andrew's  
with our Old & Abbey  
neighbours  
4pm - **MESSY** Church!

# David Searle

## Trembling Faith

Most readers of *Quest* will know the work in my last appointment involved trying to help congregations which were at various stages in their very different journeys of Welcome, Worship and Witness.

Most congregations I worked with were in good heart and were pressing forward with much to encourage. Occasionally, however, I would be invited to visit a congregation where there were particular problems. Let me give three examples.

The buildings of one congregation were in urgent need of renovation, with both church and halls in atrocious condition. Though situated in one of the wealthiest suburbs of a Scottish city, and though funds were available to meet the entire cost, more than half the elders opposed any change; they liked their decaying Victorian buildings as they were. The months of intense pressure on both minister and session clerk had broken their health—the former had a heart attack and the latter a nervous breakdown. I'm glad to say that ultimately that congregation did go for an excellent scheme and today they are flourishing. Also both men have recovered from their health problems.

Another congregation I worked with had a very talented Kirk Session which had dreamed up a new structure for their church. Set out in a lengthy document, it read like a business plan for some multinational corporation. So why was I invited to spend time with such gifted people? Because several years after launching this new structure, nothing had happened. It had never been implemented, and no one seemed to know why.

A third Kirk Session I worked with had been forbidden by the Presbytery to meet unless I was present, for there

was open warfare between elders and minister. The first meeting I attended, I advised the minister not to sign the minutes of the previous meeting as their comments about him amounted to libel; he had foolishly allowed a discussion about himself to take place and the slander that had been freely aired had been meticulously recorded by the session clerk. I was caught between a rock and a hard place with that first problem, and ended up appealing to the principal clerk of the General Assembly to rule on the matter.

You'll gather, therefore, that life was never dull during my ten years as Director of Rutherford House—hectic, stressful, demanding, perplexing, but never dull!

Though now retired, I'm occasionally asked to visit congregations to help in various ways. I want to tell you about a visit I made earlier this year to a small independent church in the central belt—let's call it the 'Mustard Seed Church'. Their building is situated in an urban priority area. The local shop-windows are covered with tough protective wire-netting—so are the church and hall windows. As I parked my car, I wondered if the wheels would still be on it when the day's work was finished. The congregation's total membership congregation was exactly 50. Of 32 senior citizens, 21 were widows. Apart from several young people, the rest were in the 40 age-group. There were about a dozen children.

The minister and four elders of the Mustard Seed Church had just taken the momentous decision to employ a community worker to engage in outreach in the parish. Try and work this out in your head. They pay their minister the same as the Church of Scotland minimum salary, with a manse

and car expenses. The new community worker was to be paid £18,000 per annum plus expenses. (He had completed a full theological training that would have qualified him to work in the national church; at the time I was with them he was engaged to be married.) So a membership of 50 had taken on the challenge of finding a total of £65,000 a year (which includes national insurance and pension payments) to fund their two full-time workers. In addition, they must find another £20,000 to pay heat and light and maintenance of church and halls.

Though convinced they were rising to the challenge of their situation, they knew their faith was being stretched to its limit. A quick calculation will show the Mustard Seed Church was expecting an average of £1700 a year from each member and £3400 a year from each married couple. Though there will be tax repayments from contributions under Gift Aid, all the same it was a phenomenal amount for such a small congregation, in a deprived area, to give each year.

As I listened last week to Martin outlining the plans for our own church building's refurbishment, and as I heard the estimated cost, I reflected on the trembling faith of the Mustard Seed Church. Though they had faith, nevertheless they were filled with apprehension—'Would they meet the challenge?'

I'll confess to you my thoughts as I drove home to Arbroath: 'I wouldn't like to live in that area, but I'd love to be a member of that congregation.'

Yes, there's a serious contradiction in my thinking. I'm left wondering if having it tough might be far better for us than having it easy; for trembling faith will force us back upon God. And that is the best place for us to be.

## Getting To Know You - Meet Brian Anderson

**Brian, you have been coming to St. Andrew's for a while now. How have you found it?**

I have found the friendship and warmth very rewarding for me. It is like the support I had on board where people would put themselves out to help you like a big family.

I find that very humbling and always look forward to meeting them and knowing that my friends are with me when I am in God's house.

**You come to Church on both Wednesday and Sunday mornings. Do you have a preference for one or other of the services? What is different about them?**

I find that I enjoy both, but Wednesday is my favourite. I love the readings that Martin chooses as they always sound so personal, and also the closeness of how everyone comes together. I can enjoy my tea and chat after the church service as I don't get that chance on Sunday when it is too crowded and noisy.



**You have not had to go looking for problems in recent years, particularly in relation to your health. Would you say that your faith in God, and being part of his Church, has been of any help to you?**

Without a doubt. Three years ago when my voice went, I found it hard - yet again another part of me failing to work. I lay in bed and prayed so hard with silent tears running down my face asking for Gods help, and two weeks later I found out they were to try me with a Servox voice box ( that's the device I use to talk with ) to see if I could use it. I then had a voice of some kind which made me determined to get back to my faith, to help in God's work, and to help others as best I can. The industrial Chaplain Pete Donald told me that there was a small church service on a Wednesday morning at St. Andrew's church and I jumped at the chance to go and never looked back.

**What did you do career wise before you became incapacitated?**

I was a Petty Officer Chef in the Royal navy and have been on aircraft carriers and the Royal Yacht and then nuclear submarines for sixteen years after my service. I was then a Senior Chef at Gleneagles Hotel and ended up being a Chef supervisor for Dundee College just before I became ill.

**Often, people imagine that someone with an obvious disability cannot do anything. You make it abundantly clear that nothing could be further from the truth!!! Give us an idea of the kinds of skills and abilities that you have (remembering that we have limited space!!!)**

I have a number of skills from arts and crafts, fixing things, to cooking, which I have acquired with many more along my career. I love to help others if I can.

**Finally, do you have a favourite hymn or song that you like the congregation to sing?**

My favourite hymns are "Psalm 23 Crimond version" and the sailor's hymn "Eternal Father strong to save"

## Baptism

Last month, we had an article and photos relating to Becky's baptism (in the sea). Some of us still shiver when we think about it! The point was made that Becky had not been baptised as a child and, therefore, that such a baptism was possible.

Why doesn't the Church of Scotland conduct so-called *second baptisms*? The thinking is as follows.

We believe that God is gracious – meaning that he always makes the first move. As the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John makes clear, *we love only because God first loved us*. Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is made clear that God's love is unconditional... that he loves us regardless of who we are or what we have done. In Romans, Paul puts it this way: *while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...*

Do you see, God does not wait till we are *good* people; nor does he wait until we have decided to turn to him. He loves us just as we are and reaches out to us, wanting to include us in the number of his people. That is amazing grace!

The ancient Hebrews had the rite of circumcision as a

sign of this love. Boys were circumcised when only days old as a sign of the covenant love of God. Through circumcision, a sign was being given that God loved them though, of course, they were far too young to appreciate that for themselves. We believe that baptism is, similarly, a sign, of this love.

So, the main point is this: in reformed theology, **BAPTISM IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT WHAT GOD DOES...not about what we do.**

Therefore, if we baptise someone again – someone who has already been baptised – in effect, we are suggesting that God did not get it right the first time! Of course *we* find ourselves in a totally different place – having grown up from being a child – but God was at work from the beginning.

For those who were baptised in infancy, and then find themselves, like Becky, at the point of making a personal commitment, we have other ways and means of making that possible without *re-baptising*.

So, very briefly, that is the position held by the Church of Scotland and by which all of its ministers are bound. Either of our ministers is more than happy to meet with anyone wanting to discuss this further.