

# ***CONTACT***

The Newsletter of  
Rosyth Methodist Church and  
St. Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church  
Queensferry Road, Rosyth.  
Telephone: 01383 418752



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## **Methodist**

Senior Steward David Salthouse 01383 889212

Pastoral Leader Gwyneth Kirby 01383 624779

## **St. Margarets**

Minister Rev Tim Bennison, 17 Ardeer Place, Dunfermline. (720532)

### **Ministers Message**

There is a big and very prominent poster stuck to the wall of one of the churches in Dunfermline which, though I fully appreciate and support the reason it's there, I find rather disturbing.

The poster asks a very simple question: 'Does God exist?'

Possible answers are: 'Yes'; 'No'; 'probably'

Every time I see that poster I can't help muttering under my breath (or, sometimes, if I'm in the car and on my own, actually shouting out loud): 'Don't answer! It's a trick question!'

Of course, it's not meant to be a trick question, but to my mind, it's a meaningless question, or at least one based on a faulty presupposition.

The same question arose in St Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen, about 10 year ago at a service to celebrate Bruce Cameron's election as Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

In that service, some of the young people of the diocese staged a version of 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire with Bruce as the contestant. He was asked several questions about the Church and his faith which inevitably required him to 'Ask the Audience' or 'Phone a Friend' at various points. Finally he was asked: 'Does God exist?' Bruce thought for a while, and then decided he would ask the audience.

And so, whilst the Who Wants to be Millionaire music blared out in the background, members of the Cathedral congregation, including all the diocesan clergy were asked to give their opinion as to whether or not God existed.

As you might expect, the answer was almost unanimously in favour of God's existence. Only one person had the courage to put his hand up and say that God did not exist - though the fact that he was the Provost of the Cathedral, made his opinion somewhat more noteworthy than it might otherwise have been.

In fact, most people thought he was joking, and laughed. But he wasn't joking. He was deadly serious and though I didn't have the courage to say so at the time, I agree with him. And, if I had a ladder and thought I could get away with it, I might climb up the wall of that Church in Dunfermline with the poster and paint a big red cross in the box next to 'No'! And while I was up there, I would add another question to the poster. Next to 'Does God Exist?', I would add, 'Does God **not** exist?' 'Yes'; 'No'; 'Probably' and again put a cross in the 'No' box.

God neither exists nor does not exist - and the arguments of those like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens who try to 'prove' that God does not exist are every bit as meaningless as the arguments of Christians who assert that God does exist.

You may well by now be wondering what on earth I'm talking about: How can a Christian Priest think God doesn't exist? Isn't that sheer hypocrisy?

Well, the observant among you will have noticed that I have not said I don't believe in God, I have simply said I don't believe God exists (and neither do I believe God does not exist). My point is that it is simply not appropriate to apply the category or concept of 'existence' to God.

'Existence' is very much a 'this-wordly' category. Existence refers to objects around us, to things we can see or hear; to things we can perceive or experience in the world and in the universe. I exist, an elephant exists; a dodo does not exist, a black hole probably exists.

But none of this applies to God. God is not an 'object' in the material world to be investigated; to be proved or disproved; God can not be the object of rational enquiry or scientific methodology - he just isn't that kind of thing. In fact he's not a 'thing' at all, though when we speak of his existence or non-existence; when we try to prove or disprove it, that's what we reduce him to: a thing; an object.

At best, a god who 'existed' could be nothing more than a 'being' like us. Even if he were the 'supreme being' he would still be a 'being' like us. And surely, for Christians, God is somewhat more than that.

So, the question: 'Does God exist?' simply isn't the right question. Better questions might include: 'What does the word 'God' mean to you?' 'Do you believe and trust in God?' 'Will you choose to be loyal to God?'

Tim.

### **Editorial**

My time as editor has now come to an end and will be taken over for a two year period by the congregation of St. Margaret's. Thanks to all of you who have supported me over the last few years. Please continue to send in your contributions to St. Margaret's.

I have been asked by a few members of our Church to issue a plea to you all regarding the noise level in the Sanctuary before our services. Some people would like to use this time for quiet reflection and prayer, others for a catch up with friends and others to conduct Church business. Could we all be a bit more conscious of each others needs, and if there is business to conduct or catching up to do, perhaps it could be done in the Crush Hall before or after the service?

Susan Hitchon

### **The Bookcase No. 11**

While books and reading are very important to us for many reasons, we do learn a lot through television and very often seeing a film as well as reading the story imprints itself on our minds quite firmly.

In the bookcase we have two DVD's of Bible Stories you will probably have read.

- (1) Entitled 'Jacob' in which the conflict of Jacob and Esau is followed. The cast includes Sean Bean and Joss Ackland.
- (2) Entitled '@Esther' a Jewish girl who becomes a Queen to King Xerxes and saves the Jewish captives from death. Esther is played by Louise Lombard of 'House of Eliott'.

Both these films are well work seeing and each lasts about 1 ¼ hours.

Jack Fowell



### **Trust**

How they toiled in rowing; the disciples were afraid  
Jesus watching from the shore, walked out to their aid.  
They thought He was a spirit; then saw it was their Lord.  
Their fear and toil was over, as they welcomed Him aboard.

So don't keep striving uselessly, when all you have to do,  
Is welcome Jesus to come aboard, he will see you through.  
Whatever may be hurting you, or causing pain or woe.  
Jesus is all powerful, if only you'll let go.  
Ask Him now, into your life, He died just for your sake.  
He will come, and still the storm. As He did upon the lake.

Iris Lines

### **Extracts from other Parish publications.**

The best vitamin for a Church is B1.  
Welcome to **your** Church.  
Under the same Management for over 2000 years.  
You are not too bad to come in, you are not too good to stay out.  
Can't sleep? Try counting your blessings.  
Aspire to Inspire before you Expire.

### **Thankyou**

Thanks to the Ladies and Gentlemen who organised, baked and served at the Cornish Cream Teas.  
£169 was raised for the 'Friends of Matthew Rusike' and £169 was raised for 'Action for Children'.

Thanks also to all who helped organise, serve, prepare, and washed up etc, for the leaving lunch for Deborah. Your efforts were very much appreciated by the Cornish family and members of our Congregations.



### **Wednesday Fellowship**

Where has the summer gone?

It's that time of the year when we look forward to the beginnings of the activities we are involved in – after a break for the summer. It's the start of a new year within the Methodist Church.

Maybe you have heard that our 'Women's Own' which was the longest established mid-week Church activity, has now changed its name to 'Wednesday Fellowship'. This was approved at our AGM in May, and by the Church Council which met shortly afterwards.

If it's good, why not share it?

It was agreed we should move with the times and open up the fellowship to invite the men in our congregations as well as the members of the former 'Retirement Fellowship', and all the recently retired who people who now have time on their hands(!). We've also 'cast the net' further and invited other Churches in Rosyth to join us. Maybe they will enjoy attending some of the meetings. We meet every Wednesday afternoon, in the Church Lounge at 2.15. We usually begin with a cup of tea, a time to catch up and greet each other, before a short time of devotion. Most afternoons we have a guest speaker; copies of the syllabus for the Autumn session are on the notice boards in the Crush Hall. The first meeting will be on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, a devotional time during which we will dedicate to God this time of a new beginning and fellowship. Please accept this invitation to come along, even if only for some of the meetings which might interest you. We would ask that you will ask God to bless us as we move forward in this venture.

Mary Kidd

## Rosyth Methodist Church

### Wednesday Fellowship

(formerly Women's Fellowship)



### Autumn 2009

### Meetings at 2.15 pm

Sep 2	Opening Devotional	Rev'd Malcolm Trew
9	Speaker	Rowland Lines
16	Gideon's International	Jack Mitchell
23	Poetry Please	Mary Kidd and Bill Tulloch
30	Rosyth Baptist Church Ladies visit and Quiz	
Oct 7	Desert Island Discs	Jack Fowell
14	Speaker	Janet Murray
21	Mission Aviation Fellowship	Craig Dewar
28	Speaker	Alan Taylor
Nov 4	Speaker	Evelyn Kenny
11	Speaker	Rev'd Ross Kennedy
18	Bring and Buy Sale	
25	Speaker	I na Dodds
Dec 2	? Gem Stones	Jim Norman
9	Visit by Brambles Playgroup and Christmas Quiz	
16	Celebration of Christmas and Close of Session	

Men & Women are warmly welcomed

More information from Mary Kidd & Mary Dempster



### **Church Flowers**

As your newly appointed Flower Secretary I would like to thank all those people who have supplied flowers and given money for the flowers during the last year. This is an important part of the Ministry of our Church. Not only do they add beauty to our worship area in the sanctuary, and add to the welcome cheer of the crush hall, they are also appreciated by recipients afterwards, maybe in the comfort of their home on a day when a visit is made.

I would also like to thank those people who have taken time and care to arrange the flowers in recent months – Jennifer Irvin, Evelyn Kenny, Lesley Yellowlees, Betty Terry and Ruth Allan. Thanks also are due to our Treasurer, Howard Kirby who ‘manages’ the Flower Fund. Any contributions to the fund may be passed on to him – inform him of your gift envelope number if you are a ‘gift aider’.

Two new lists will appear on the notice board early in December for you to add your names for 2010. Please indicate if you are willing to supply the flowers, or arrange them –maybe both. Perhaps you have a special date, an anniversary or birthday you wish to commemorate in this way. Would you like to be part of a team arranging flowers, perhaps once every two months? I would gladly welcome your help and any new ideas.

Please let me, or the Duty Steward know of anyone who is ill at home and would appreciate flowers.

Flower arrangers please note – all the containers, Oasis and equipment required for your artistry are now stored in the corner cupboard in the back entrance room. There also are visiting cards and a record book which will be helpful to those who are distributing these messages of good cheer with love from our Church.

Mary Kidd



### **Evening Worship**

Following discussions in "The Way Ahead" meetings in May it was decided to use the evening service on the 4th Sunday of the month as a means of outreach, both to our own congregations and the wider world. By the time you are reading this two services will have taken place under the heading Sunday @ 6 - "Midsummer Praise" - a selection of songs and poems and including instrumentalists and the choir; and "God is Here" - a service led by Malcolm and based on the Methodist Worship book.

Other services that include Taize, Iona and Gallery Music are all being planned but it is also hoped that people from outside the congregations could be invited from time to time. If you would like to be involved, or have some ideas for outside speakers etc. please contact either Malcolm or Sue.

Look out for the programme and come and join us in evening worship once a month. You won't regret it!

Sue Masson

### **Our New Lecterns**

Four years ago I discussed with Dennis Cook possible further alterations to our lectern since it was too high for the majority of our preachers. In the end we agreed that this was not feasible so, in faith, we decided to ask Mr Garland from Pitlessie to make us a new one in keeping with the Welcome Table, the Memorial / Audio Cabinet and the two bookcases he had crafted for us earlier. We wanted it to be height adjustable to suit both short and tall preachers. So we invited an engineer friend of Dennis to design the mechanism to make this possible. Delays occurred through illness, and just as we were ready to contact Mr Garland, we became aware of the possibility that the sophisticated mechanism which had been designed might prove unstable. We couldn't take the risk of it trapping the fingers of any preacher or reader. So we decided it would be safer to purchase a tried and tested gas-height

adjustable one from a firm in Somerset. We were still unsure where the money was coming from.

At this point the Church Council agreed that we could use some money bequested a few years ago, to pay for a lectern. It had been originally suggested that some of this gift could be used to purchase a Good News 'Pulpit Bible', but these were no longer being printed. Then Jack Fowell discovered that Granton Methodist Church had two such Bibles, and was willing to donate one of them to us. This enabled us to order two matching lecterns with built-in microphones and lights, one for the preacher and one for the Bible.

The order was placed on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2008. Then we waited and waited, and finally they arrived - one week before Deborah's last service with us. How's that for timing! They were dedicated by her on 26<sup>th</sup> July, and Jack read from the 'new' pulpit Bible from Psalm 119: 97 - 105 which includes the well known words "Your word is a lamp to guide me and a lamp for my path".

Jack is brother-in-law to Betty Anderson who left the legacy which has been used to purchase the lecterns. Betty was active for many years in our church before she transferred her membership back to Plymouth Central Hall in December 1993. How grateful we are for people like Betty whose generous gifts enable beautiful and useful items to be placed in our church. It is pleasing that the decorated "fall" donated in November 1999 in memory of a former Circuit and Senior Church steward, and which used to hang from the pulpit, now hangs from the Bible lectern.

The Church Council will be asked on 15<sup>th</sup> September to allow our heavy font to be moved so that one of the lecterns can stand on more even flooring, in its place. The old lectern is being modified to make a smaller table-top lectern to be used by speakers in the lounge.

Malcolm Trew (Church Property Secretary)

### **Rosyth Methodist Church – Arrangements after Deborah's departure**

As many of you are aware, following Deborah's move to Ledbury in August, there will be no full-time minister for Rosyth and Kirkcaldy Churches. This will be the case for at least the following 12 months.

Arrangements have been made with support from the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Office to make sure that all aspects of our worship, pastoral care and administration here in Rosyth are tended to. These are detailed as follows.

**Worship** – The existing Circuit Plan will continue in its current form. The Senior Steward will liaise with the Superintendent during the Plan preparation each quarter to make notification of any special services or alternative arrangements required for a given Sunday during that quarter. The Joint Holy Communion service will continue to be shared with St Margarets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month. These will be led by Tim Bennison and Methodist Ministers on a similar basis to that currently

experienced. The Sunday Funday will move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in the month and will be followed by the existing 'All-age' Worship. All other services will continue to be led by Local Preachers from the Circuit.

Additional services such as weddings, funerals and baptisms outside normal services will be led by a minister from the Circuit.

Eric Potts will be the Presbyter with Oversight (Minister) for Rosyth. Eric has volunteered to provide up to 10 hours per week in this role. There may however also be some obligation by Eric towards Kirkcaldy and we will therefore be flexible depending on specific needs, eg if he is required to preside over a funeral there will be a certain amount of preparation and organising time over and above the actual service itself which will restrict the availability of Eric during that week for other matters.

**Pastoral Care** – This will continue to be provided by the Pastoral Visitors. Additional to their existing role, some Visitors have volunteered to administer Holy Communion using reserved sacrament to housebound or hospitalised members of the congregation. Anyone requesting this or any other pastoral need should in the first instance speak to their own Visitor or to the Pastoral Secretary Gwyneth Kirby (01383 624779). Only in need of emergency pastoral support, eg bereavement, should Eric be contacted directly.

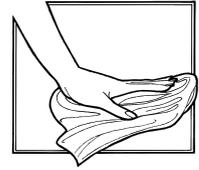
**Administration** – The Church Council and its sub-committees will continue to be the primary administrative body of the Church. It is a requirement that the main Council is chaired by a serving Minister so initially this will be performed by the Superintendent, Andrew Letby. Going forward this role may be assumed by Eric. Enquiries or concerns on subjects such as hall lettings, finance, Church Council, general property matters will continue to be addressed by those with existing responsibility, eg Howard Kirby for finance, Martin Rogers for hall lettings, property and John Cowie for Church Council business. For all other matters or general enquiries, the initial point of contact will be either the Senior Steward (David Salthouse 01383 889212) or the Circuit Office (0131 221 9029). Except as mentioned above, contact should not be directed to Eric.

**Future Ministerial staffing position** – The Circuit is currently undergoing a review of its existing and future resourcing position. Discussions and review meetings have been ongoing between Ministers, Gary Williams (District Learning and Development Officer) and congregations to understand the needs and expectations of the Circuit members. The report of the meetings is due in September which will detail proposals for the future of this Circuit. Until this report is presented it is unclear what the proposed future support for Rosyth will be. Once the report is available we will have a better understanding of the future which we can all help to shape going forward. At the end of September the Circuit will make known its staffing request for 2010.

David Salthouse  
Senior Steward

## Help with Property Maintenance

We rely a great deal on voluntary help to keep our premises in good order. We have 2 paid cleaners who do the bulk of the cleaning work in the Church but this is supplemented by 5 teams of voluntary cleaners. On average there are 3 members in each team who work on a rota system cleaning the Church sanctuary and vestry. Some teams do their stint on a Friday and others on



Saturday and it takes about an hour. We have lost 2 members in recent times so would appreciate some new volunteers to swell the ranks. If you can help or would like further information please speak to Myra Tarr (723989). There are also ad hoc DIY jobs requiring to be done from time to time such as repairing tables and maintaining the vacuum cleaners. If anyone can help with these tasks, please speak to me (415458).

Can I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to those who currently help with cleaning and maintaining our premises. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

Martin Rogers



### Harvest Thanksgiving.

On Sat. 26th Sept. we will be holding our social which is our fund raiser for Christian aid.

Starting at 6.30pm we will have a light supper, then a Beetle Drive after that we will draw the raffle ( prizes for this will be much appreciated) followed by a team game of "Call my Bluff". It will be an evening of good fun so do come along.

On the 27th which is our Harvest Sunday you are asked to bring along donations which will be given to the Highland Food Run which is organised by Blythwood Care. We have been asked to donate : Breakfast Cereals: Tinned Fruit: Tinned Mince: and UHT Whole Milk and that is all so please do not bring anything else. Watch for the poster which will be in the Crush Hall also there will be a large box for donations.

Please don't hesitate to ask me if you have a query.

Thanks

Mary Dempster

### **Benevolence Fund – a fresh look**

What is the Benevolence Fund all about, and how should we apply it? Uncertainty about this led the Church Council recently to determine on a fresh approach.

Formally, the fund is defined as “money collected for the specific purpose of relieving poverty and distress.” Many years ago it used to be called the Poor Fund. In the days when there was no such help as the present day National Health Service, Social Security Benefits or Pensions, the 'Poor Fund' was used to help people who were truly destitute, by for example buying food.

Times have moved on. It is not that “people who are truly destitute” are no longer with us, but that the church’s role in doing something about it has become less obvious. But the fund remains, with changed name but unchanged intent: and the reason for this is that *the relief of poverty and distress is one of the purposes of the local church*. The fund is to be applied primarily for the relief of poverty and distress “in the congregation and neighbourhood”. Whilst payments may, as in times past, be made at the confidential discretion of the minister, the Church Council has authority to adopt and implement a scheme for its distribution.

Hence the Council will now be identifying each year a charitable organisation whose principal purpose is the relief of either poverty or distress, and distributing to it some or all of the funds received into the Benevolence Fund. In 2009 the charity helped in this way has been the Dunfermline Samaritans, through the August retiring collection. For the future, the Council has decided to set up a small working group, to review with the aid of expertise from other organisations what types of poverty and distress exist in the neighbourhood, and thence to determine what gaps in meeting those needs might best be filled by the Methodist Church, perhaps in association with others. If you would like to help in this, please let Howard Kirby know.

Howard R Kirby (tel: 01383 624779; e-mail: [howard.kirby.1961@pem.cam.ac.uk](mailto:howard.kirby.1961@pem.cam.ac.uk))

### **Diary Dates**

#### **September**

6	0930	Sung Eucharist	Pentecost 14
	0600	Area Council Service at St Serf’s Burntisland	All welcome
13	0930	Sung Eucharist	Pentecost 15
20	0930	Sung Eucharist	St Matthew
27	1100	Joint Communion Service No Sunday at 6pm	Harvest – Fr Ross Kennedy

#### **October**

4	0930	Sung Eucharist	Pentecost 18
11	0930	Sung Eucharist	Pentecost 19

18	0930	Sung Eucharist	St Luke - Bishop David
25	1100	Joint Communion Service	
	1800	Worship at 6	Bible Sunday – Myra Tarr/Mary Kidd

**November**

1	0930	Sung Eucharist	All Saints
8	0930	Sung Eucharist	Remembrance Sunday
15	0930	Sung Eucharist - 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	St Margaret
22	0915	Annual General Meeting of Congregation in Church Lounge	
	1100	Joint Communion Service	
	1800	Sunday at 6	
29	0930	Sung Eucharist	Advent Sunday