

Buccleuch & Greyfriars

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Newsletter

CONTENTS

Ministers' Updates

Dates for Your Diary

Congregational News

Wonderfully Made

Buccleuch's Identity, Vision
and Mission

Rotas

Activities



December 2006 / January 2007

Minister's Update

How different was the real event of the birth of Christ from modern ideas of Christmas! Christmas for us is a cosy time with family, a time to indulge ourselves and be indulged. For Joseph and Mary it was a time fraught with doubt and difficulty, darkness and death. The birth of a new King of the Jews at that particular moment of history was not a cause for celebration, but for fear.

Of course those days may come again (and have come again at various times and in different countries), when those who follow this new King are accused of political disloyalty, of having “another King, one Jesus” (Acts 17:7).

Those days seem to be coming quickly upon us in Scotland, when Christians are vilified for refusing to call good evil and evil good, for being politically incorrect and for standing for freedom to express the truth.

The birth of Jesus announced “peace on earth” (Luke 2:14), but the correct translation of the words that follow is something along the lines of “to people on whom his favour rests”. The birth of Jesus

did not bring peace to all. It did not bring peace to King Herod, who died shortly after in a self-tortured and vindictive frame of mind. Nor did it mean peace to the self-appointed priests and other religious leaders who refused to recognise the King of Kings, the Prince of Glory, the Saviour of the World.

We tend to forget that Jesus himself often spoke of his birth and the reason for his coming into the world. On one occasion he said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind” (John 9:39).

There is a great evidence of a spiritual blindness in our land today, not only in the secular world, but in the ecclesiastical too, not least in the inability to see that the coming Jesus Christ is a defining moment, one that calls for decision. Will we, like despised shepherds and foreign star-gazers, fall at his feet and worship him as King of Kings, or will we reject him like the political and religious authorities of that day?

If we worship him, then truly his birth is something to celebrate and honour, a time for

giving and receiving, a time for wonder and praise.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Alex MacDonald

Assistant Minister's Update

As we pack for a vacation to America, Heather & I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Joyful New Year. I am excited to return home but a bit anxious, as my father's health has not been great in recent months. It's great to have the opportunity to visit family, see friends and relax. I hope you can enjoy these same blessings as well in the coming weeks.

We have appreciated your prayers, support and friendship throughout this past year and we look forward to 2007.

The words of Psalm 90 remind us that as the years pass, God's love and concern for us never changes. It begins with these words of confidence, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations," and it closes on this note of prayerful expectation, "May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us— yes, establish the work

of our hands."

May you all know God's blessing and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in the year that lies ahead.

Yours faithfully

Bob Akroyd

Hospital

Mrs Margaret Mackay (Professor John L's mother) is in the Royal Infirmary recovering from a massive stroke. At the time of writing her rate of recovery is amazing, but obviously her condition is still serious.

Ian MacLeod continues to make progress in Astley Ainslie after his stroke. He recently was able to say Bob's name!

150 Years Old on Monday!

The official opening of the Buccleuch Free Church building which we still occupy took place on December 18th 1856. In that year the 18th fell on a Thursday. The date has come between our celebration for the Re-opening of the Church in April and the completion of the renovation works (kitchen etc.), so we are not having a special celebration just now. But it would be remiss of us not to note such a

remarkable birthday. Not many buildings being built today will last 150 years, and there are not many buildings as striking as Buccleuch. She is a grand old lady and inevitably is showing signs of her age, but with continued careful upkeep, there is no reason why she should not serve the Church for another 150 years!

Welcome

It is always a pleasure to see new people in the congregation whether they are students, new residents in Edinburgh or visitors passing through Edinburgh on holiday. We hope you feel welcome and that you enjoy your time with us at Buccleuch.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Prayer Breakfasts

There will be a prayer breakfast as usual on Saturday 16th December and 23rd December at 9am. The prayer breakfast is **cancelled on 30th December.**

We will restart the prayer breakfast on January 6th. See you there.

Home Bible Study

The next home bible study will

be on Wednesday, January 10th. We will continue our studies in the New Testament book of Ephesians using a Bible study book prepared by John Stott. Please take this opportunity to join a district group if you haven't already done so as this enables you to get to know more people from the congregation.

The hosts and venues for the next bible study are:

North West: Neil & Mary Campbell, 54 Strachan road, EH4 3RG (343 6067)

East: Bob & Heather Akroyd, 275 Guardwell Crescent, EH17 7SL (664 6306)

South East: Fergus & Dolina Macdonald, 113 St Albans Road, EH9 2PQ (667 1546)

South: Donald & Mairi Forsyth, 24 Blantyre Terrace EH10 5AE (447 6908)

South West: Donald & Joan MacDonald, 6 Craiglockhart Grove EH14 1ET (455 8777)

Buccleuch church hall

Christmas Eve Guest Service

On the evening of Sunday December 24th there will be a Guest Service at 6.30pm, followed by seasonal refreshments served in the hall

and carol singing. This will be a good opportunity for families to come together and also to invite friends.

There will also be a guest service on Sunday, January 21st at 6.30pm when Bob Akroyd will preach. Please take this opportunity to invite your friends to church to hear the Good News about Jesus Christ and pray that God would use these occasions to convert those who attend.

Mince Pies

Helpers are required for serving refreshments after the guest service on December 24th. If you are able to help and/or provide mince pies please speak to Sarah Lytle.

Sarah Lytle

New Year's Day Service

There will be a service on New Year's Day at 12 noon in the Church. Come along and get your year off to the best of all possible starts with God's Word.

Scripture Union

On Wednesday January 31st, 7.30pm, there will be a guest speaker at our midweek meeting in the Buccleuch hall.

Lesley Crawford, an Es-team worker with Scripture Union, will speak about her work in Edinburgh schools. Please make every effort to attend this meeting to support this work in prayer.

Joint Service at St Columba's - 4th February

At 6.30pm on Sunday 4th February, there will be a joint evening service for the three Edinburgh congregations at St Columba's Free Church on Johnston Terrace opposite the Hub near the top of the Royal Mile. There will be **no** service Buccleuch that evening.

Meetings of Kirk Session and Deacons' Court

The Deacons' Court will meet on the following Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the hall.

February 13th

May 15th

August 21st

December 4th

Deacons' Court

Congregational Finances: It is anticipated that by the end of the year approximately £70,000 will have been paid to Central Funds. (Central Funds pay for

ministers and missionaries salaries, running of the Free Church College, Offices, bookshop, etc.) In addition, the following donations will be made to organisations outside the Free Church:

Amica	£325
Bethany	£325
CARE	£100
Edinburgh City Mission	£150
Fresh Start	£50
Gideons	£50
Scottish Bible Society	£300
Scripture Union	£100
Edinburgh University Christian Union	£100

Insulation of loft in Gilmour Road manse. Volunteers are required to join the team to carry out the laying of the required additional loft insulation.

Heating System & Timer. While the heaters in the church are satisfactory, problems remain with the timer. The matter has been raised with the contractors and it is hoped that the addition of two time clocks may prove the answer.

The former practice of weekly recording of meter readings by those on door duty should be recommenced

immediately. This would have two benefits:

1. To monitor the weekly usage so that the most economic use could be made of the new system.

2. To ensure that readings are available for the power supply company, who had not taken readings since Sep 2000!

Work Team: The Work Team met at the church on 28th October and many of the matters on the Property Maintenance Schedule were carried out on that day and thereafter.

Decision making between meetings of the Deacons' Court and recording thereof: It was agreed that some decisions would require to be made by email and that these decisions would be recorded by the Clerk at the next meeting of the Court.

Lease Agreements: All Non Congregational usage of the building should be the subject of a lease, irrespective of whether a rent was charged or not. It was agreed that the normal procedure for issuing a lease would be for Alasdair

Black to clear the use of the building with either minister and thereafter issue the lease.

International Students' Meal

International Meal: Free Food & Fellowship!

Attention all internationals: Our next International Meal is on 20th January at the home of Eric and Moira Mackay, 7 Shandon Street, where haggis will be served! Meet at the church at 6:30pm. For more information, please contact John & Angela Tweeddale (xxxxxxxxxxxx)

We look forward to seeing you!

John Tweeddale

Informal English Classes

The informal English classes meet in the church hall on Tuesdays from 2:00pm-3:30pm. Please speak to Ena Mackay for more details.

Christianity: Explored and Exploring

On Thursday evenings in October and November, over twenty individuals from Scotland, England, America, Germany, Israel, and China met together in the church hall for a study entitled Christianity Explored. Each evening began with a home-cooked meal

graciously supplied by members in the congregation. Hot food and hearty fellowship proved a perfect combination for sharing the gospel. After the meal, we watched a short video on the book of Mark followed by discussion on central aspects of the person and work of Christ. For some this was their first encounter with Christianity. Others came interested to learn more about the Bible, and still others wanted to grow in their faith. By the end, everyone wanted to know what was next!

As a result, Jeff Brannon and I started a follow up course on the gospel of John (see announcement). Please join us in prayer for this study. Also, come and take part in the evening. Above all, let us give thanks to God for this wonderful opportunity to advance his global glory. He has brought the nations to our doorstep, so let us bring the nations to Christ. If you're interested in providing a meal and/or attending, please contact me or Jeff.

John W. Tweeddale

Introduction to the Gospel of John (Thursday Evening 6.30–8.30pm)

Following our recent Christianity Explored Course, we will begin a follow-up course on John's Gospel on Thursday nights in Buccleuch Church Hall. This course presents us with Jesus Christ, who describes himself with these words, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

From 6.30 - 8.30pm, we have the opportunity to share a meal, watch a video and join in discussion. The topics for discussion are as follows:

January 11 Jesus: Feeding
 January 18 Jesus: Shining
 January 25 Jesus: Dividing

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Non-Celebrity Squares

On Friday the 1st of December the hall reverberated with great excitement as folks from Buccleuch and their friends came to put their general knowledge to the test. It was the fund raising quiz night in aid of the refurbishment of the

kitchen. Thirteen teams took part in attempting to prove their superiority in matters trivial. Some teams covered themselves with glory, while others will be heading off to the dentist surgery to brush up on celebrity gossip for any future event. The competition eventually went to a sudden death question with the Non-Celebrity Squares snatching victory from The Lonely Brain Cell.



The winning team

To single out members of the teams would be unfair, and in my case impossible. My short term memory is going it seems. However, may the members of the victorious team enjoy their grapes and the spirit in which they came.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening with £950 being raised for the kitchen.

The competitors wish to

thank all the ladies who helped organise the event and the craft stall for a great evening. And whoever thought of helium filled balloons should be congratulated. To hear Shanana squeak was equally unforgettable.

Douglas Campbell

Thank you, my beloved friends of Buccleuch!

It would be impossible to explain how much the last four months have meant to me. Your love and friendship have been a tremendous blessing and there is no doubt that I will never forget this experience or the endearing people of Edinburgh.

It was so unique for Katie and me to join in on all the activities of the church, to meet and get to know so many of you through them, and to reach out into the community through Bethany. To be able to serve such a diverse number of lovely people was one of the most incredible aspects of being an intern at Buccleuch. I can hardly believe that we were able to be a part of so much and to get to know so many of you in so short a time. To put it simply, I love you all.

I am so thankful that God brought us to you, to get to know you, to be served and loved by you, to come alongside you in your work and faith, and to be able to develop such friendships I will always treasure.

Along with Katie, I pray the richest blessings of Christ over you, that He will show you as much love, grace, and encouragement as you have shown us.

With a warm and grateful heart,
Sarah

Rotas

If you are unable to carry out rota duties on any given occasion, as a matter of respect to those whom you would be serving, and as a matter of courtesy to others on the rota with you, please arrange for a substitute.

Mail

This is a note to remind everyone that there are trays for mail in the vestry. Trays are marked for the Minister, Assistant Minister, Session Clerk, Clerk to the Deacons' Court, the Treasurer and Others. To ensure that mail doesn't get

misplaced in the hall please put all mail in the relevant tray.

Donald Forsyth

Happy Birthday

Happy birthday to Colin who celebrated his birthday on the 16th of December and Alexander on the 8th of December.

Amy has a birthday on the 3rd of January, Quinn on the 12th of January, Isaiah on the 26th of January, and Ben has a birthday on the 28th of January.

On the Move

Donald, Mairi and Ed Forsyth are on the move this month (their new address will be 24 Blantyre Terrace, EH10 5AE). Their new telephone number will be 447 6908.

Calendars

'Through these eyes' desk calendars are available at the Free Church bookshop at £6 each.

Anyone for Tennis?

Come and keep fit on a Saturday morning and have a game of tennis. We are now playing at Craiglockhart due to the weather, and the time can vary. If you are interested speak to Evelyn, Heather, Mairi or

Moira (a.k.a. Maria S.)

Practical Application

The 3rd of December sermon from Ecclesiastes 4 (especially vs 8 & 1) was being worked out in the church even before it was preached. In my experience you are not a 'zero' (ie with no one to help) in Buccleuch. Thank you to all the caring people who are so ready to support those who need help.

Elizabeth MacKenzie

CAMPBELLS STAYING, GOING AND RETURNING

It seems like only yesterday when we arrived back in Edinburgh for our first extended furlough after nearly eight years. Now as the date of our intended departure approaches, we would like to thank you for your welcome, meals, the birthday parties, Sunday school, mums & toddlers, babysitting, fellowship and so much more.

However, after much prayer and deliberation, we have decided to return to Scotland fulltime. Our resignation from the work in South Africa was accepted by the International Missions board at its meeting in late November.

We will be heading back

to South Africa on the 29th of December for about two weeks in order to pack up our things and say goodbye to friends.

We hope to return to Scotland on the 16th of January and we are thankful that we can continue to stay at 3 Hope Park Crescent for the foreseeable future. From April Douglas will begin preaching and be available for a call.

Douglas Campbell

WONDERFULLY MADE

The Koala

The koala is characterized by a rounded head with a black, plastic-looking nose, dense woolly fur, long limbs with strong claws and a very short tail. It is between 20 and 30 inches long and is not really a bear although it is often called one. It is found on the eastern coast of Australia from Queensland, through New South Wales and into Victoria and, in that range from north to south, its body size increases, its ears become shorter and its fur colour changes from light grey to brownish-grey.

It lives in eucalypt forest and feeds on the leaves of certain types of eucalypts which it digests extremely slowly. It is a very agile climber and can leap from tree to tree. On the ground it can move swiftly if it perceives a threat and it can also swim well.

It is more active at dusk and during the night, but may be active during the day if the weather is cooler.

Koalas do not make a den or a shelter, usually sleeping in the fork of a tree well away from the ground. The Male is

larger than the female, is more aggressive and guards its territory. The female rarely has more than one youngster which she keeps in a backward-opening pouch for about five or six months. After that it is carried on her back until it becomes independent when it is a year old. The female tends to remain in the area of her birth.

Koalas may look cuddly, but their claws are long and sharp and they know how to use them to gain a good grip.

Common Wombat

The wombat is a very different type of animal from the koala apart from being a marsupial. Larger than a koala, about three feet long or a little more, it is a ground animal about the size of a fat dog or pig. It has a large, broad skull with one pair of incisors in the upper and lower jaws. The limbs are short with powerful claws and the tail is a stub. Its hair is coarse, but without any on its nose, although there is another species called the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat in Western and Southern Australia.

Its habitat is eucalypt woodland with adjacent

grassland into which it moves to graze at night. During the day it sleeps in a long and sometimes complex burrow which may be from four to twenty yards long. The male and female are both territorial and they are also aggressive. They mark their individual feeding areas.

Like the koala the female wombat rarely has more than one youngster which she keeps in a backward-facing pouch for about eight or nine months. It

also becomes independent at the age of one year.

There are many other unusual animals in Australia, but time would fail to tell of them all: the Gliders - the Greater, the Feathertail and the Sugar; the Possums - Pigmy, Ringtail, Brushtail and Honey; the Numbat; the Bilby; the Bandicoot; the Cuscus; the Dunnart; the Kowari; and the Dingo.

WMM

BUCCLEUCH & GREYFRIARS FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Our identity, mission and vision	
Identity	Local congregation of the Free Church of Scotland which is a branch of the universal Church of Jesus Christ
Mission	To worship God together To spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ To care for and encourage one another To show practical compassion for those in need
Vision	<p>A church which is characterised by friendliness towards, and genuine interest in, all those who cross the door whether regularly or only once.</p> <p>Relevant-to-the-times, applied preaching and enjoyable worship.</p> <p>An increasing proportion of those attending committed to Buccleuch as central to their life and Christian witness.</p> <p>A congregation increasingly united as a “family” through fellowship and through working together in the “in-reach” and “outreach” work of the congregation.</p> <p>A church that values all of the people who are associated with it and in particular one that appreciates its full-time ministers.</p> <p>A church with strong and effective leadership whose leaders lead by example and which equips its members to fulfil their calling as witnesses and servants.</p> <p>A church where the members gladly serve one another in love.</p>

ROTAS**Crèche**

17 th Dec	Evelyn MacDonald	Norma MacLean
24 th Dec	Mairi Forsyth	Kirsty Clunie
31 st Dec	Jonnie McCrea	Neil Campbell
7 th Jan	Jocelyn Hammer	Jen Brannon
14 th Jan	Flora MacPhail	Kenny Macleod

Amplifier

17 th Dec	Rob MacDonald
24 th Dec	Ken MacKenzie
31 st Dec	Douglas MacDonald
7 th Jan	Graham Hardy

Cleaning

23 rd Dec	Dolina Macdonald	Calum/Norma MacLean
30 th Dec	Karen Murray	Rob MacDonald
6 th Jan	Lois Eddie	Mairi Forsyth
13 th Jan	Esther/Alasdair Black	Alison MacDonald
20 th Jan	Kenny Macleod	Johnnie Macleod

Door Duty

17 th Dec	Roddy MacLeod	Neil Campbell
	Ken MacKenzie	Alison MacDonald
24 th	Eric Mackay	Alasdair Black
	Stephen Hammer	Willie Lytle
31 st	Donald Forsyth	Dolina Macdonald
	Mairi Forsyth	
7 th Jan	Willie Mackay	Calum MacLean
	Rob MacDonald	Kenneth Macleod
14 th Jan	John MacRae	Neil MacRae
	Iain Gill	

ACTIVITIES (in church building unless marked by *)

Sunday	11:00am	6:30pm
17 th Dec	Alex MacDonald	Alex MacDonald
24 th Dec	Alex MacDonald	Alex MacDonald
31 st Dec	Bob Akroyd	Bob Akroyd
1 st Jan	New Years Day Service at Noon Alex MacDonald	
7 th Jan	Bob Akroyd	Bob Akroyd

Crèche and Junior Sunday School during morning service.

Monday

BG's Youth Club	7-8pm – contact Alison MacDonald (664 9038) or Kenny MacLeod (555 1010)
*Bethany House Outreach	8-10pm – contact Bob Akroyd (664 6306)
*Deacons' Court	8pm monthly –

Tuesday

Informal English Class	2-3:30pm – contact Ena Mackay (447 5937)
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Wednesday

Prayer Meeting	7:30pm
*Home Bible Studies	7:30pm (2 nd Wednesday of the month)

Thursday

*Eight-a-side Football	9:30pm – contact William Lytle (477 1403)
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Friday

Mothers and Toddlers	10:00am-12 noon
Women's Fellowship	as announced

Saturday

Prayer Breakfast	9am
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CONTACTS

Minister	Alex MacDonald	(667 4651)	AlexJMacDonald@blueyonder.co.uk
Assistant Minister	Bob Akroyd	(664 6306)	bobandheather@talk21.com
Newsletter/sheet	Moira Mackay		moira.mackay@blueyonder.co.uk

Buccleuch and Greyfriars web page www.buccleuchfreechurch.co.uk

PROCEDURE FOR BOOKING THE CHURCH HALL

- 1) Check availability at www.buccleuchfreechurch.co.uk -> Newsletters -> Church Year Planner
- 2) Contact Alasdair Black (buccleuchyearplanner@hotmail.co.uk), who will check suitability with the ministers and respond to you