
From the Manse...

... at Burnfoot.

I am writing this Christmas letter to you in the lead up to 27th November and making ready for the Sole Nominee, the Revd. Alistair Cook to preach in both St. Mary's & Old and Teviot & Roberton.

A secret ballot to elect or not based on one service conducted by Alistair. It is not much of an opportunity to get to know him and find out what he is like. To hear him speak, and preach, and pray. Some of us have heard him speak, and some have heard him preach and pray, and a couple of us have had coffee with him. Woohoo, you might say, or maybe not. None of us have had too much time with him.

Do you know 2000 years ago a young man (he was 16 years old) was getting himself ready for what God was going to do next in his life. He had heard the stories told by his mum of what had gone on in his past life. And his dad too. They must have been dewy eyed whenever these stories were retold. And yet this young man had to work out for himself the reality of what God was going to do next. He had to believe that something of God was in these stories of his early life. He could not have come to any other conclusion. I am sure that the more and more he read about the history of his faith from their sacred books, the more and more he was drawn in to the idea of God doing something with him. It was certainly there in the past, but what about the future, God?

No one apart from his friends and family knew who he was, none had heard him speak publicly, none had heard him pray except in the family situation, and none had heard him preach. He was by all accounts someone who was building a reputation by working quietly and steadily at his father's side, creating and fashioning things which were needed by their community.

And somehow, into the life of Alistair Cook the Spirit of God enables him to respond to a call from Hawick: St. Mary's & Old linked with Teviot & Roberton. And sometime in January we will be able to have Alistair and Sheila stay among us more permanently and not just be names which roll off our tongue in hope.

But if the young man 2000 years ago managed to seek the face of God and know the direction he was to go in, and Alistair Cook is able to discern the mind of God by the Spirit, the same has to be true for the church.

Advent and Christmas remind us that knowing the leading of God is possible—think of all the people in the first Christmas story 2016 years ago who were able to hear something of the story of the birth of a saviour. And they might not have got the full story, just a little bit was enough. So they heard, understood and played their part.

As we look forward to Christmas through this Advent season, as we prepare for a new minister coming in January, what part of the future story of God are you hearing? What is your part in that story? What are you going to do in terms of making that story of God a reality, that brings honour and glory to our God, which blesses his Son our Saviour Jesus, and which allows his Kingdom to be entered into by other people.

Please let the joy of a saviour's birth fill your household in this Christmas season, not just because you are getting a new minister—although you really should give thanks for that—but because God came and lived amongst us, and is still with us through His Holy Spirit.

Blessings to you,
Charles

New appointment

Appointment of Rev Alistair Cook

On Sunday 27th November, the Rev Alistair Cook preached as sole nominee for the vacant charge of St Mary's & Old linked with Teviot & Roberton Church.

Each congregation had to vote in their own church then the votes from both churches were counted together.

Rev Alistair Cook was unanimously elected to the vacancy and accepted the call from both Kirk Sessions.

He will be inducted early in the new year, and we look forward to welcoming him and his wife Sheila.

We give thanks to God for bringing us a new minister, to Rev Charles Finnie for his diligence as our Interim Moderator and to our Nominating Committee for all the time and effort they have given to the task.

*Pat Sutherland
Session Clerk*

Guild

Go in Joy

The Guild met on Wednesday 16th November, when we considered how we can work towards fulfilment and travel along the road to joy.

We looked at quotations from a number of writers and thinkers, we thought about various readings from the Bible, and we talked about what gives us joy. While family, friends and chocolate were all high on our lists, we had to admit that nothing beats Christ's promise to bring us life in all its fullness—and eternal life with him.



We have experienced the joy of meeting with our extended Guild family over the past few weeks:

- firstly when some of us joined with Jedburgh-East Presbyterial Council for their Autumn Rally on 19th October, to hear Karen Gillon, the recently-appointed Associate General Secretary of The Guild, talking about how the Guild as a whole goes in joy.
- secondly when Teviot hosted a meeting of Jedburgh-West Presbyterial Council on 4th November, which was addressed by National Convener Rosemary Johnston and General Secretary Iain Whyte. The Council discussed its current situation and hopes for the future.
- thirdly when we met with Burnfoot Guild on 30th November to hear about the work of Street Pastors. This initiative from Ascension Trust, to reach out in Christ's name to ordinary people enjoying a night out at weekends, works across Scotland, and has a local presence in both Galashiels and Hawick. Both Teviot and Burnfoot Guilds

have chosen to support the Guild Project which seeks to support Street Pastors in extending this work.

- we also look forward to celebrating the advent and birth of Christ in company with our sister organisations through the month of December.

Teviot Guild's own Christmas celebration will be held on Wednesday 14th December at 2.30pm in the Church Lounge. It's not a party as such, but there will be cake and lots of song and laughter, as well as quieter moments of reflection as we prepare to receive our King:

Joy to the world! – the Lord has come!

Please contact Lesley or Mairhi about transport if you would like to come to this or any meeting. (Lesley: 01835 864488, Mairhi: 01450 218519)

Our syllabus for the year is now on the notice-board in the Crush Hall; a summary of our 2017 meetings is below: please remember that you are all invited to any of these meetings.

Wednesday 25 January 2.30 pm	<i>Going not in joy to Hong Kong</i>	Betty Smith
Wednesday 22 February 2.30 pm	<i>Going in joy to Kenya</i>	Margaret Borthwick
Friday 3 March 7 pm	World Day of Prayer Service prepared by Women of the Philippines: "Am I Being Unfair to You?"	<i>venue to be intimated</i>
Wednesday 15 March 2.30 pm	<i>Arriving in Sorrow; Going in Joy: the Road to Emmaus</i>	
Wednesday 20 April 2.30 pm	<i>Rejoice in Song</i>	AGM

And on behalf of all Guild members, may we wish you much joy at Christmas and in the new year ahead!

Lesley Donaldson

Ed: January's meeting has a very intriguing title, and the speaker is one of our own. A good opportunity to pop along and find out what goes on at the Guild and what Betty has to say!

Breathing space

Waiting patiently for God always includes joyful expectation. Without expectation our waiting can get bogged down in the present. When we wait in expectation our whole beings are open to be surprised by joy.

All through the Gospels Jesus tells us to keep awake and stay alert. And Paul says, "Brothers and sisters...the moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up, because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe. The night is nearly over daylight is on the way: so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for

the light" (Romans 13:11-12). It is this joyful expectation of God's coming that offers vitality to our lives. The expectation of the fulfilment of God's promises to us is what allows us to pay full attention to the road on which we are walking.

"But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." Micah 7:7

Henri Nouwen. From Bread for the Journey, ©1997 Harper, San Francisco.

Psalms is of course the book of poetry and prayers and we have the following piece from Psalm 1:1-16 (NIV).

Blessed Is the Man

Blessed is the man

who does **not walk** in the counsel of the wicked
or **stand in** the way of **sinners**
or **sit in** the seat of **mockers**.

**But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates
day and night.**

He is like a tree planted by streams of water;
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.

Whatever he does prospers.

Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
Therefore the **wicked** will not stand in the judgement,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the Lord

**watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

Psalm 1 is not prayer, exactly, but preface to prayer. We do not begin to pray by praying but by coming to attention. Psalm 1 is the biblical preparation for a life of prayer, a kind of entryway into the place of prayer. (*Psalms—Prayers of the Heart* by Eugene H. Peterson).

Evelyn

Mary's Meals

Our Christmas Appeal

Mary's Meals is a registered charity (www.marysmeals.org.uk) that sets up school feeding projects in some of the world's poorest communities where hunger and poverty prevent

children from gaining an education. It was founded in 2002 and has grown from its first feeding operation of 200 children in Malawi, to a world-wide campaign, providing free school meals in hundreds of schools and feeding 1.1 million children daily.

**At Mary's Meals, we are focused on one goal—
that every child receives a nutritious daily meal in a place of education.**

These life-changing meals attract hungry children into the classroom. The food fills their empty bellies so they have the energy and opportunity to learn, giving them the chance of a brighter future. The meals also support families struggling to feed their children while boosting the country's wider economy.

Our school feeding programmes are owned and run by community volunteers in the countries where we provide food. For example, there are over 65,000 volunteers in Malawi who take turns to prepare, cook and serve the daily meal in each school.

School feeding committees—made up of parents, teachers and volunteers—are crucial to our work and one of the first things to be established in any new area receiving Mary's Meals.

Our monitors work closely with these committees. They regularly visit schools to ensure the precious ingredients we provide are cooked and served correctly and to offer training and encouragement to the community volunteers.

Wherever possible, we serve locally produced food. This supports the local community and its farmers as well as the wider economy.

Research has proven that school feeding has a range of positive impacts, since children who are not suffering from hunger are able to make the most of their education.

Around 61 million of the world's hungriest children do not attend school. In order to survive, they have to work or beg. Even if they do make it into the classroom, hunger affects their ability to learn.

For as little as £12.20, one child can be fed for a whole year. Wouldn't it be great if we could feed 100 children for a whole year. That would be an amazing gift to give.

Pat Sutherland

Data protection

It would be great to see you

There has been a very good response from the members on our Church Roll to completing the Data Protection Consent Paper, thereby giving us permission to keep a record of your name on the church roll.

Thanks to those of you who have completed the form. If you have not yet returned it, please return it to me at your earliest convenience. If you do not wish to stay on the roll, it would be greatly appreciated if you could inform me.

It has been very encouraging, as many members who we don't often see in church have, by completing the form, indicated that they are still interested and wish to keep their association with Teviot & Roberton Church.

If you are a member who has not been to church for a long time, we would be very happy to see you return. It would be so good to welcome you back into the life of the congregation.

On Sunday 27th November we heard Rev Alistair Cook preach as sole nominee for our vacancy. Members present on that day voted to call him as our new minister.

We are about to start a new chapter in the life of our church. It would be great if you could be part of it.

Yours sincerely

Pat Sutherland
Session Clerk

Rotary shoe box appeal

On behalf of the Rotary Club may I thank all of you who filled boxes for us during October. We have sent a total of 104 boxes down to the collection point in Preston ready to be sent to Eastern European countries. These boxes go directly to families who have very little, who are identified either by local Rotary Clubs or a charity in the area that works with Rotary.

This month two batches of boxes have been transported by volunteers—1200 to Belarus and 13,000 to Ukraine. They are busy making up another load to go to Iasi and Moldova in which, hopefully, our boxes will be included.

Your generosity in helping us is most appreciated.

Mairhi Trickett
Rotary Club of Hawick

Special services activities and events

Rock Solid dates: December 2nd and February 3rd. No January meeting due to school holidays

Teens: Meeting at Teviot on 11th December with the longer group to make Crismon symbols and finish packaging cookies.

Prayer meetings: Thursdays at 5.30pm in Teviot Church lounge. Contact Evelyn or Kerry for details.

Christmas services:

Sunday 11th December: Gift service 11.00 am at Teviot led by Rev Una Stewart. Our Christmas gifts are again going to the Social Work Department for distribution to local families.

Suggestions were in last month's magazine. Gifts for teenagers are particularly appreciated as this age group tends to be less well covered.

Sunday 18th December: *Christmas service* 11.00 am at Teviot led by SMOP Worship Group.
Carols in the country service in Robertson at 6.00 pm.

Wednesday 21st December: *The Christmas "Do"* from 5.00pm-7.00 pm in the Church Hall. All ages welcome. It would be good to see you. If you plan on coming would you let Pat Sutherland know so that we can organise the catering.

Saturday 24th December: *Watch night service* 6.00pm at Teviot led by Rev Charles Finnie.

Sunday 25th December: *United Christmas Day Service* 10.00am in Teviot led by Rev Charles Finnie. We will be joined by our friends from the congregation in Burnfoot.

Sunday 1st January 2017: *United Service* 11.00 am at SMOP.

Church contacts

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