

March 2009

# Guth Allt na Muille

Knock Free Church Magazine



[knockfreechurch.co.uk](http://knockfreechurch.co.uk)

connecting and serving our communities through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Dear Friends,

Although much of what used to appear in the newsletter is now included in the weekly intimation sheet, there are other matters of importance to the congregation that require more space. So, we hope to produce a quarterly magazine (in March, June, September and December) as much to provide information for those outside the congregation as within. In other words we want to use the magazine to promote the work of the congregation throughout all our communities in the various districts of Point and beyond.



In regard to this aim the magazine will contain articles produced by various people within the congregation, particularly those involved in the activities of the congregation such as the Sunday School, Point-2-Life, and Women For Missions. An update on such activities will also keep those within the congregation informed about what goes on in the life of the congregation and who are involved. There will also be testimonies, contributions from the children and young people, and even a competition or two from time to time!

The past eighteen months or so have been most encouraging for the congregation. We have seen growth in numbers attending services and other activities and there has been an obvious unity and sense of purpose among you. This is commented on by those who come from other congregations and denominations to preach, speak or visit, and it has been very evident to me in preaching regularly to you. Having an awareness of a real interest on your part makes such a difference to me in preaching the gospel; it's personally uplifting but it also makes me relish the prospect of preparing and speaking to you of the things of God. This situation is a blessing we need to protect and pray God to keep with us. Unity is a benefit bestowed by God through the work of the Holy Spirit, hence the reason it is called "the unity of the Spirit" in Ephesians 4:3, but the same verse teaches us that we are responsible for "maintaining" that unity "in the bonds of peace." Whatever can be achieved when we have unity, not much of value can be achieved without it.

Over these past eighteen months we have welcomed individuals and families into the fellowship of the congregation and we trust that they will all continue to establish their place in the congregation in the months ahead. In comparison to many other congregations in the island we have a high percentage of young families at the moment and we do want to see them becoming more and more active in the life of the congregation. I am increasingly of the view that "family religion" - the cultivation of the Christian life within families - is of the utmost importance. I am working of something at present which I hope will be of help to families in this, particularly with regard to family worship.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and that you use it to promote the work of the congregation throughout all districts. God bless you all.

Yours affectionately,

*James Maciver*

## Sunday School

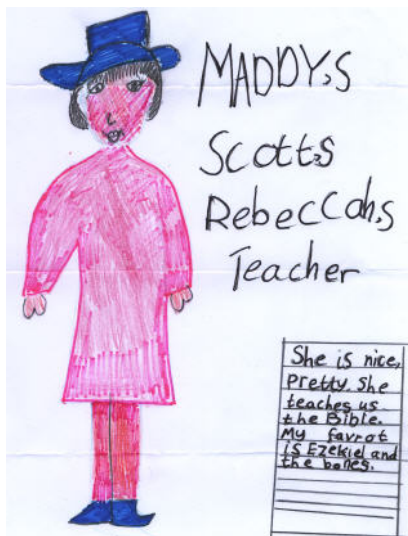
Sunday School is one of the most important areas of our congregational life. It is so good to see over 20 children each week eager to get to their classes. We are really thankful to have them and grateful to Iain Duncan, Margaret, David and Christine for their commitment each week to the teaching involved. Maddy Cumming has given us this drawing of her teacher. Can you guess who it is? She will be very chuffed with Maddy's description anyway!

The Sunday School welcome children from ages 5-early teens. All our teachers have a Disclosure Certificate under the Church's Child Protection policy. A number of children are taught in Gaelic, as the choice of their parents, and we are fortunate to have teachers who are able to teach in Gaelic.

With the Sunday School running from 10.30am till 11.40am in the church hall at Garrabost, the children come to the 10.30am English service with their parents and after a short children's talk and prayer from the minister they leave for their classes with their teachers during the singing of the first psalm while the service continues. The service and the Sunday School are timed to conclude at the same time (11.40am) so that the children leave with their parents or whoever has brought them.

Our concern and aim in having the Sunday School is that children will learn the primary teachings of the Bible in a way that is pleasant, safe, unforced and enjoyable. We hope that what they learn may prove to be a good foundation for life in the world. Indeed we have God's own promise, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." In a world that gives so much prominence and importance to personal choice, even to the extent that immoral lifestyles are regarded as acceptable if freely chosen, it is crucial that our children make personal choice of the way of true and lasting happiness - the way that God has specified and commends to us in Jesus Christ. This is after all the recommendation of the One who made us and who knows our need.

If you want to get in touch regarding any aspect of the Sunday School please refer to the contact details on the back page of the magazine.



## Women For Mission

In August 2004, it was decided to form a Women For Missions (WFM) group in the congregation. The focus of WFM is to:-

1. provide support for the Church's Mission at home and abroad;
2. raise funds for mission projects;
3. promote interest in home and international missions, #;
4. encourage fellowship and give opportunity for women to use their gifts in service.

The group meet once a month, from September to April, and most months we have a speaker focusing on mission work. We have also had crafts displays, where women with special interest in craft work have given a demonstration of their work. The meetings also have a stall with a variety of items and home baking for sale.

In the previous two years we have had several supper evenings in the Aird Community Centre, for which the ladies of the congregation each prepare a dish and after the meal we have fellowship, showing of slides and singing. As the photo of the 2008 supper evening shows this is a very popular and enjoyable evening and generates excellent funds.



Once a year, all WFM groups throughout Lewis, Harris and Uist have the opportunity to meet

together for an evening out at a chosen venue. This year the venue is the Caberfeidh Hotel, on Friday 19th June; there will be a meal served, two speakers, crafts, baking and book stalls. This is a popular event and more information will be available nearer the time.

Our group have raised several thousand pounds and we have been able to contribute a sum to the ongoing WFM projects each year. The main WFM committee of the Free Church sets a Mission Project each year and various WFM groups throughout the church raise funds for this project. The project for 2009 is entitled "Health Matters" aimed at raising funds for three vital health projects in India, Romania and Peru. A leaflet is available on the shelves in the church hall.

All the WFM meetings are open to all women in the congregation and their friends, young and old. There is no age limit, and all are very welcome. Information regarding meetings can be found on the congregational intimations leaflet and on the congregation's website at [www.knockfreechurch.co.uk](http://www.knockfreechurch.co.uk).



Christine Macleod

## Caption Competition

A free book as the prize for the best caption for this photo of a younger Alasdair! The entry judged to be the best will win a brand new (50th anniversary edition) copy of the Christian classic “Basic Christianity” by John Stott. This is one of the clearest expressions ever written about the gospel, including the person of Jesus, the significance of his death and the evidence for his resurrection, the paradox of our humanness, made in God's image but fallen and rebellious, the possibility of a new birth into a new life, the challenge of personal commitment and the cost of discipleship. Your caption can be amusing, serious, English or Gaelic, must be relevant to the photos, but not offensive! Go easy now!



Just send your caption to The Editor, Free Church Manse, Garrabost, HS2 0PW or email to [manse@knockfreechurch.co.uk](mailto:manse@knockfreechurch.co.uk). Closing date is 30th March.

## Knock Psalm Singers

The Psalmody sessions arranged prior to the introduction of Sing Psalms seem to have been both enjoyable and profitable for those who attended and also of benefit to the congregation in adding to the quality of praise. While it would be good to hold such sessions again (and indeed this is likely to be the case) it would also be good to have a psalm-singing group made up of singers who could sing the musical “parts” of alto, tenor and bass to give a three-part harmony. We have quite a few accomplished singers in the congregation who could do this, especially with regular practice. The group would not only form a core singing group for the congregation but could also sing a various events like fellowships to promote good psalm singing.

The minister is interested in setting up this group if a suitable time can be found for practice sessions. It would be for any adults in the congregation, adherents as well as members.. The only qualification is a reasonably good voice and a willingness to learn the “parts” even if you cannot do this already. The group need not be big, probably between six and twelve, but there is no set size, and everyone interested will be welcome. If you would like to take part in this please put your name on the sheet in the hall for this purpose - if we can get a list of names first we can then hopefully work out a time that would be suitable.

## **Sweet The Fragrance**

How sweet the fragrance drifting through,  
And from Immanuel's land,  
To settle in each seeking soul,  
The blessing of His hand.

How sweet the fragrance of His word,  
That claims us as His own,  
Is writ upon His palm, each name,  
Which treads the narrow road.

How sweet the fragrance of our Lord,  
In Jesus day by day,  
Doth lie our hope; salvation cries  
To save us in the fray.

How sweet the fragrance clearly seen  
In eyes which to the Lord  
Are lifted up, there to espy,  
Redemption, our reward.

How sweet the fragrance, O, my friend,  
Of Christ for you and me,  
Shall last beyond the edge of time,  
From burdens shall be free.

How sweet the fragrance drifting through,  
And from Immanuel's land,  
To settle in each seeking soul,  
The blessing of His hand.

by William Angus Matheson, Flesherin

## **Time**

When I was a child I laughed and wept - time crept  
When as a youth I dreamed and talked - time walked  
When I became a full grown man - time ran  
And later, when I older grew - time flew  
Soon I shall find, while travelling on - time gone  
Will Christ have saved my soul by then?

author unknown - contributed by Donna Macleod, Bayble

## **If God Went On Strike**

It is a good thing God above  
Has never gone on strike.  
Because he wasn't treated fair - or  
For things he didn't like.

If he had ever just sat down  
And said, "That's it, I'm through;  
I've had enough of those on earth,  
So this is what I'll do.

I'll give my orders to the sun,  
Cut off your heat supply;  
And to the moonbeam, no more light,  
And run the oceans dry.

Then just to make it really tough  
And put the pressure on;  
Turn off the air and oxygen  
Till every breath is gone."

Do you know, he would be justified  
If fairness was the game;  
For no one has been more abused  
Or treated with disdain.

Men say they want a better deal,  
And so "On strike" they go;  
And what a deal we've given God  
To whom everything we owe.

We don't care whom we hurt or harm,  
To gain the things we like;  
But what a mess we'd all be in  
If God should go on strike!

author unknown - contributed by Kenneth Macrae, Garrabost

Thanks to those who composed and contributed these items. There are more but we have no space for them this month so they are stored for next time. Keep sending in your contributions, poetic or prose, self-composed or someone else's work.

## Point - 2 - Life

The meetings of the young people's group Point-2-Life continue to be a source of encouragement to us. Since it was begun it was intended to be a meeting that all young people from the Point district and their friends outwith could come to. The young people themselves prefer to have most sessions of Point-2-Life in the form of testimony meetings, although a variety of other types of evenings are also included. The meetings are held in the Aird Community Centre, at 8.30pm on a Sunday evening, usually every fortnight and avoiding holidays and local communions. We are deeply grateful to the committee overseeing the Aird Community Centre for providing us with their facilities which are ideally suited to this type of event. We are also grateful to Andy Cumming, one of our deacons, for acting as Leader to the Point-2-Life committee, and to all the other adults from all congregations who give their time to the organising and running of Point-2-Life.

When these meetings were being set up at first we wanted a name that could be easily remembered but that also had a particular message or ideal included. "Point-2-Life" is for the young people of Point and their friends but it is also for the purpose of both "pointing to life" in Jesus Christ and "bringing Point to life" by the blessing of God. We are so thrilled that some of the young people attending have already come to profess faith in Christ while others are now openly following the Lord and attend the Prayer Meeting.

In addition to having their regular meetings the young people have also been involved in trips to Scaladale and to the mainland which have given them more time together and also more time to focus on biblical teaching and example from the adults who accompanied them. Other trips are planned for this year.

It is good to hear these meetings specified before the Lord in the public prayers of the Lord's people, which shows that they are being remembered in private prayer also. This is so important, not only for the obvious reason that the blessing of God is something we must constantly pray for, but also so that our young people themselves will be assured that we think about them a lot, that we value them highly and that we want the best for them, which can mean only one thing - God's best.



Group on the ferry - October 2008 trip to Inverness

## The 13.05 Check Up

**I**t began as “Emmaus”, took a detour for a little while to “Homeward Bound” and has now arrived at “The 13.05 Check-up”! The Sunday evening course has had these three formats but has on the whole been fairly constantly focussed on the same issues - what is a Christian? How do I know if I am saved? Why should I want to be a Christian? The present course is designed along these same lines, based on a classic book called “The Christian’s Great Interest”, which has as its secondary title “The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ.” It was written by a 16th century minister, William Guthrie, yet the book is of permanent relevance seeing it deals with how we are to carry out an assessment of whether we are saved or not and how can know this - a subject which can never become outdated or irrelevant.

One of the best things about the course is that a lot of good discussion is generated which means that many things of real importance to those who attend are freely shared and thought out. Worksheets used at various stages of the course are designed to facilitate this. This sharing is such an important aspect of personal spiritual development and the course deliberately gives emphasis to this.

Plans for the future include adapting this course for young people, holding a course - such as “Christianity Explored” - for people who do not come to church at all and need an introduction to the Christian faith, and a course on what membership of the church means and what is involved.

## Parent and Toddler (P & T)

**F**or a good few months now a P & T group has met on Thursdays every week from 1.30-3.00pm. With around 6 children to start with it has now built up to the stage that there are 20 children pre-school children in all, although not all can be present every week. Some of the children belong to families already in the congregation but most are from outwith. The meetings take place in the hall at Garrabost and the parents (almost always mums!) enjoy a cuppa and a good blether. This is an excellent way of getting to know others with younger children throughout Point, although some actually come from Stornoway and beyond! It’s a service we are very happy to be able to provide and hopefully shows the caring, social side of the church, so that people can realise that belonging to the church is not about long sermons and long faces! We hope that it will lead to lasting relationships and friendships and that we will welcome those who come from outwith the congregation into the congregation’s life and witness.

A leaflet will be available soon promoting the P & T so that hopefully even more parents and children will come along. If you need any information or know someone who might be interested please see contact details on the back page.



## God's Window



The photo on the left was taken in Mpumalanga, South Africa, in 2005, at a spot called “God’s window”, so called because of the amazing view from there across miles of countryside as far as the eye can see. The old tree stump which Alasdair is leaning on has a bin inside it, hence the sign stating “Please keep God’s window clean.” This also has application to our lives as Christians.

In many ways the life lived by God’s people, especially when considered as God’s church in the world, is “God’s window” for the world. Through this “window” people should be able to see across the wide vista which stretches over as far as the horizon of eternity. Indeed Ephesians 3 verses 9-10 speaks about the “unsearchable riches of Christ” being declared in the gospel so that “through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” The church is the window through which people are to look at the wisdom of God as displayed in the gospel and in the lives of his people. Many people around us never read the Bible and never hear a sermon yet they are avid readers of the lives lived by God’s people. Some, sadly, look for excuses to convince them that they are right to keep away from God and religion and sometimes, sadly, we provide them with the excuses they need, not that God will ever accept such an excuse as valid. Others, however, are genuinely asking themselves questions about the serious issues of life and are looking for some guidance or encouragement from the way they see Christians live. On many occasions a consistent, godly Christian life has been the means of convicting others about their need of making their peace with God.

Which is why we are to “keep God’s window clean.” After a trip to Edinburgh and back with the car last week, with all the salty grit on the roads and having long spells behind lorries on the A9, the windows of the car were in a right state! The window of our lives also gathers a film of “grease” daily which we must be sure to wipe off. Our lives must never obscure Christ from view. What we believe, and especially the One we believe in, should be made clear through the window of how we live. This is nothing less than what the Bible calls “holiness”, a likeness to Christ.

We know that we always come very far short of this, yet we really want to be exhibitors of Christ. When our window becomes dirty we must go to the “water” of Christ’s grace so that by the Holy Spirit we may be led into greater dedication and devotion to God and greater resolve against the sin which greases up the window of our lives. Jesus spoke to the people at one time (see Matthew chapter 15), particularly

## God's Window

in the hearing of the Pharisees, about what made a person unclean. He stressed that it is what comes out from the heart that makes a person unclean. Unless our hearts are touched by the regenerating grace of God whatever we apply outwardly will not make us clean. But with the heart made clean the effects of that cleansing reaches every corner of life.

In the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs chapter 4 verse 23 we read, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life", and in verses 20-21 we are told how we set about doing this - "Be attentive to my words, incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart." We keep God's window clean by keeping God word in our hearts. As Psalm 119 verse 11 puts it, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Of course, we find the life lived by Jesus himself to be the cleanest "window" of all through which to see what God is like. He kept the window of his life so clean that not even the wicked people who desperately tried to find fault with him could successfully do so. Neither Herod nor Pontius Pilate could avoid having to confess that they found no fault at all in him. He is the spotless Lamb of God whose purity lies at the foundation of

our salvation. It's not that he was never tested or tempted to let the window of his life as a human being become dirty. We read in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15 that "he was tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sin." This is an aspect of why he is uniquely qualified to be our High Priest and Saviour and why the



next verse urges us to come to God, to "the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

It's still a ploy of some when they come across a really dirty vehicle to draw in the dirt with their finger words like "Please wash me" or "I need a shower." It's very annoying travelling on a bus or train if the windows have been allowed to get into such a filthy state that you can hardly see out of them and what you do see is sometimes distorted. It should never be that way with our lives. Let's think every day as individuals and as a congregation that we are "God's window" and let the sign on the bin in Mpumalanga be to us God's appealing voice - PLEASE KEEP GOD'S WINDOW CLEAN.

## **Knock Free Church Services and Activities**

### **Lord's Day**

10.30am, English service in church hall at Garrabost.

12 noon, Gaelic service in church at Garrabost.

6.00pm, English service in church at Garrabost.

**Sunday School** – Sunday School classes are held at Garrabost each Sunday at 10.30am, during school terms. All Sunday School teachers have Disclosure Certificates in accordance with Child Protection legislation. Please contact Iain Duncan MacIannan on 870411.

**Creche** – A creche is provided for younger children each Sunday at 10.30am during the morning service. All those involved in looking after the children have Disclosure Certificates in accordance with Child Protection legislation. Please contact Donna Maciver on 870207.

**Weekly Meeting** - for prayer and Bible teaching – Wednesdays at 7.30pm, in rota at Aird, Garrabost, Bayble and Knock. This meeting is bi-lingual, with Gaelic and English prayer and praise and an address in English.

**Saturday Prayer Meeting** – every Saturday at 7.30pm in the church hall at Garrabost. This meeting is in English.

**Monthly Prayer Meeting** – on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm, in rota at Aird, Garrabost, Bayble and Knock. This meeting is bi-lingual like the weekly meeting above.

**Early Morning Prayer Meeting** – on the first day of each month at 6.00am, in church hall.

**Parent and Toddler Group** – meets every Thursday in the church hall at Garrabost from 1.30-3.00pm. For more information contact Sandra Fairgrieve on 870710 or Donella Macdonald on 870960.

**Women For Mission** – the WFM group meets most months, usually on the second Tuesday at 7.30pm, in the church hall at Garrabost. The meeting includes mission speakers, demonstrations of crafts, presentations and a Bring-and-Buy stall to raise funds for the Free Church's annual WFM Project. Please contact Donna Maciver on 870207.

**Point-2-Life** – the Point-2-Life group meets at the Aird Community Centre on Sunday evenings at 8.30pm. This meeting is for young people from Secondary 1 age to early twenties. Activities include speakers, testimonies, quiz nights and discussion. Please contact Andy Cumming on 870343.

**Add-on Courses** – a number of courses are run on Sunday evenings after the evening service, ranging from courses for those who are not Christians to courses for Christians who want to grow in their life of faith. Please contact the minister on 870207.

**Congregational Fellowship** – this is an occasional informal meeting held in the church hall immediately after the evening service and includes refreshments.

**Communion** – the Lord's Supper is held on the first Sunday of April and November.

**Evangelistic Services** – an annual series of evangelistic services is held each November, with a guest preacher.

All are very welcome to come to these services and meetings.