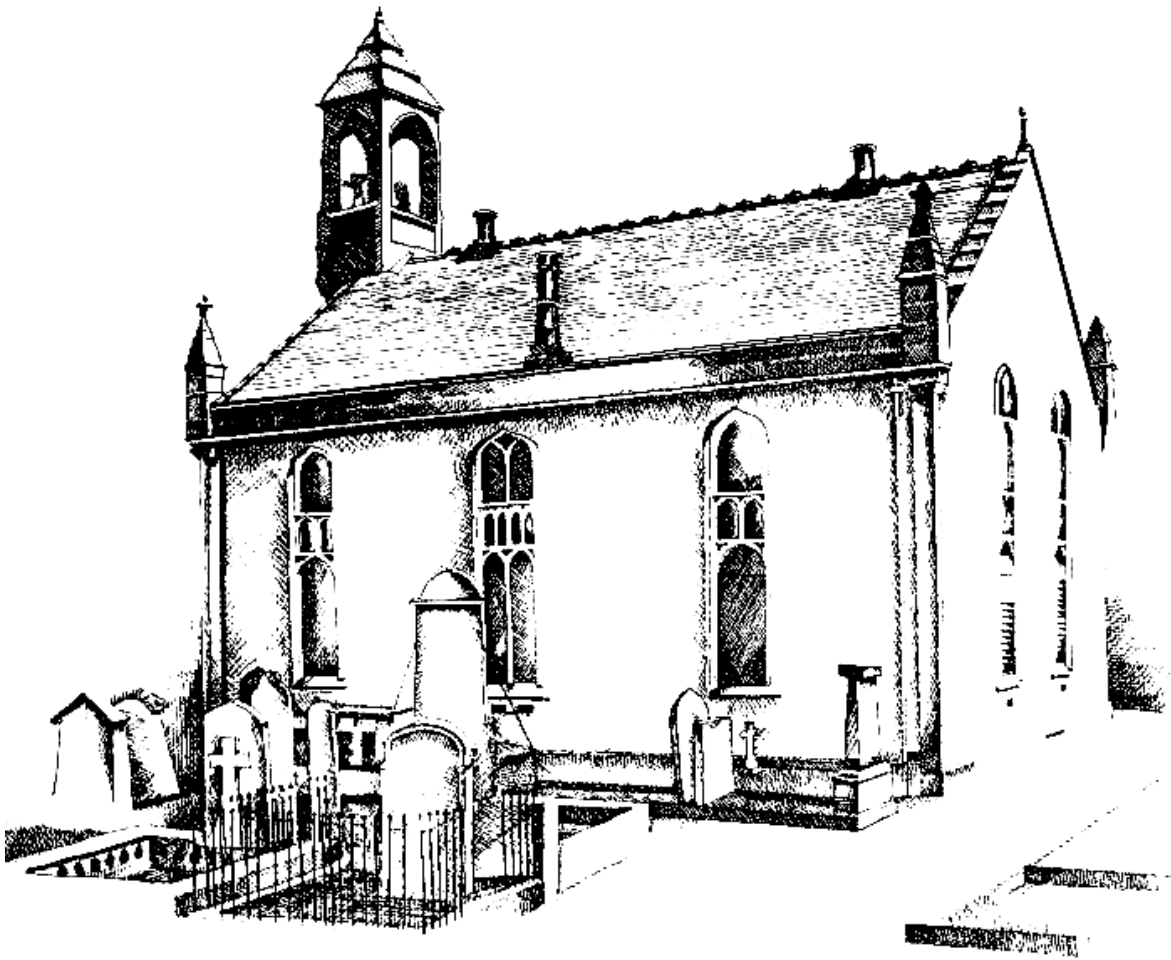


Troqueer Parish Church



Newsletter

March 2007

Whosoever thou art that interest this church,
Remember it is the House of God;
Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful,
And leave it not without a prayer to God,
For thyself, and those who minister,
And those who worship here.

Bible Readings

for Morning Services

<i>Date</i>	<i>Passage</i>
4rd March.....	Jonah 1:1–17
11th March.....	Jonah 3:10 – 4:11
18th March.....	Ruth 1:6–22
25th March.....	Ruth 2:1–12
1st April.....	Matthew 21:1–17
8th April.....	Matthew 28:1–10
15th April.....	Matthew 28:16–20
22nd April.....	Daniel 1:1–21
29th April.....	Daniel 2:1–13
6th May.....	Daniel 3:19–30
13th May	10am..... Family Service
	11am..... <i>Daniel 6:11–24</i>
20th May.....	Acts 1:1–11
27th May.....	Acts 2:1–13

Minister's Letter

My letter this time may be quite predictable to many as I mention the great blessing we have had as a family through the birth of our granddaughter, Millie Joy Speirs. It was wonderful to have Caroline, Andy and Millie visit us from Australia. That which had just been photos in e-mails became for us a real little baby to see and hold. Many of you know that I get emotional at the best of times but I wasn't prepared for the spectrum of emotions which this visit brought to us. The elation of the arrival and continued joy of spending time with them eventually led to having to bid them farewell as they made their way back to Australia and we had to come to terms with that.

It made me think of what it was like for the followers of Jesus before and after the resurrection. Jesus' followers got to know him and love him and were bereft when they witnessed him die on the cross. However, their sadness was to turn to joy after they discovered the resurrected Jesus who once again walked with them and talked with them. When I held my wee granddaughter I was reminded of how much God loves us and cares for us and protects us in our vulnerability. He dotes on us more than we could ever love our nearest and dearest and as someone said, if God had a purse or a wallet your photo would be in it for Him to show to all the angels.

Let us take time over the Easter period to allow ourselves to experience the different emotions which the Easter story brings. Let us try to avoid the urge to rush on to the Easter morning before we have stopped to consider the pain, the suffering and the anguish which our Lord endured for us. When we deny ourselves of that we are poorer spiritually for so doing.

The disciples had then to come to terms with Jesus leaving them once again to return to heaven but He left them and us with the wonderful promise that He will return again and gather all His people to Him and that is the Good News of Easter and the hope for us that the best is yet to come.

May you know God's richest blessings this Easter as we give God thanks for all his love and faithfulness.

Sincerely in Christ,
Billy Kelly

From the Session Clerk

Here is the Statistical Return for Troqueer Church as at 31st December 2006:

1. Members on Communion Roll at 31st December 2006: **426**

Communicants admitted during the year to 31st December 2006:

- a) By Profession: **1**
- b) By Certificate: **3**
- c) By Resolution of Kirk Session: **1**

Communicants removed during the year to 31st December 2006:

- a) By Death: **11**
- b) By Certificate: **9**
- c) Otherwise: **10**

Members on Communion Roll at 31st December 2007: **401**

2. Number of persons on Supplementary Roll: **127**

3. Involved in life of Congregation:

- a) Children 17 or under: **43**
- b) 18 or over, not on Roll: **9**
- c) Children receiving Communion: **20**

4. Office Bearers:

- a) Elders: (16 men, 12 women) **28**
- b) Board members: (four men, 13 women) **17**

5. Number of baptisms during the year: **0**

6. Number of weddings: **8**

7. Number of funerals: **12**

YF

Friday nights are 'deep' nights! We're in the middle of a six-week programme using a DVD which features the Blush girls, Lindz West from LZ7 and Andy Hawthorne. Using the accompanying booklet, we are exploring what Jesus is all about...who He is, what He did and why His life, death and resurrection are so relevant to all of us today. We are encouraged by the youngsters' responses and we pray that God meets with them and gives them a vision for their lives.

Alpha Update

Following on from the Course last year, we have been blessed by being able to set up an Alpha Course in Dumfries Prison. Alan Trinder, who is part of our congregation, has a prison background (an administration one, not a criminal one!) and is fronting the Course, along with leaders from the Dumfries Alpha Team (which is made up of members from St George's, St John's, River of Life, Southwick and Troqueer). We form part of a Prison Steering Group with Alpha Scotland and at one of the meetings we were encouraged and advised about how to get things moving.

There are eight prisoners attending and we are just about to have our Holy Spirit Day (the guests are disappointed that it is not an away day!). We have been extremely well accommodated by the Prison Authority and are very encouraged by the enthusiasm of the lads. We hope and pray that this work may be ongoing. Please add it to your prayer list.

A date for your calendar: we are holding an 'Equip and Refresh Day' on 12th May for all those involved with the Alpha Course across the region. This will take place in our Church Hall – details soon.

INTIMATION SHEETS

Note that the intimation sheets are available in large-print format. Please ask for one of these as you come in if you would prefer the large-print version

Ladies Day

On Saturday 24th February, 40 women came together for the Myers Briggs Ladies Day. We were skillfully and gently led by Stella Doggett, helped by her husband Mark (friends of the Trinders). We looked at where we direct our energy, and how we gather information, make decisions and organise our lives. The results were amazingly accurate, and then Stella encouraged us to examine our personalities and identify our strengths and weaknesses.

Having spent time looking at ourselves, we then looked at what the church is like. Using an assortment of paper, card and toilets rolls, each group was given the task of demonstrating this creatively. The results were highly original but the one that sticks in my mind is how many ways the church is like a pizza. Intrigued? Then speak to Iris!

We also enjoyed an assortment of delicious home-baking throughout the day, as well as lunch and dinner, all ably prepared by the 'boys' in the kitchen. Thanks to everyone who contributed towards the success of the day.

...Now, what does it mean again if you are an ESFP...?

Joy Kelly

Troqueer Church Guild

Our first meeting of the year was held on January 9th, and the speakers were Sheila Fraser and Anne Dougan, who gave a most interesting and professional talk about their work as Church Recorders in our own church. Aided by Tom Bonnar, we also had a visual description of items in the church. The history of these is an important part of our church heritage.

On February 6th we held our fundraising event for the Guild projects, a simply wonderful evening thanks to those who entertained us, baked, helped and came along to support. It was an lovely evening of friendship and fellowship, and we raised £178, so thank you to everyone!

On March 6th our speaker will be from Blythswood Care. Our next fundraising event is being held on March 10th, a coffee morning in the Church Centre from 10am to 12noon – all are welcome. The Presbyterial Council AGM is to be on March 14th in Maxwelltown West Church at 7pm. And finally, our own Guild AGM and Communion will be held on April 10th.

Blessings to everyone from your Church Guild.

Jan Patterson

1st Troqueer Boys' Brigade

During the latter part of last year, the 1st Troqueer Boys' Brigade went on a sponsored hill climb and Criffel was the target. Criffel is the highest hill at the western end of the Scottish side of the Solway. The hill is 569 metres high and on reaching the summit they had completed their mission. The BBs raised a startling £400, which was divided evenly between two charities: £200 went to the Boys' Brigade World Mission Fund to be used for the blind and visually impaired in Palestine; the remaining £200 was donated locally to the Cresswell Neonatal Unit.



The £200 cheque being presented to Margaret Kerr from the Neonatal Unit (left to right: Euan McLeod (Captain 1st Troqueer), Margaret Kerr, Rev Billy Kelly, and Billy Irving (1st Troqueer Company)).



Made it!

My Favourite Hymns

The Banner Group have met now for close on 20 years, and during that time have designed and produced more than 30 banners. Some adorn our church while others have been distributed to organisations far and wide.

Said Janet Ronnie, one of the three original members, 'Our challenge recently was to give very precise details of our group and banners for a survey of our church, the records of which are to be kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. We never imagined for one moment such a challenge would be set!' It reminded us how we started from small numbers, three of us attending a



The Chrismon Tree

residential course at Carberry, and grew to eight around the kitchen table. 'Hymns have always been important in our group and talk of favourite hymns often led to a new banner. One of the first pair of banners we made was based on the chorus of There is a Redeemer. Margaret McKenzie shared her expertise on the sewing machine as we all wanted to share our experience of God.

*Thank you O my Father
For giving us your son,
And leaving your Spirit
Till the work on earth is done.*

'Although we haven't met regularly over the past few years, we have continued the ministry of the Chrismon tree. Every year a new symbol is added to show the growth of the congregation at Troqueer Church.

'The hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel* is a great challenge and reminds us that Christ is the Banner we raise. He is the Cause, the Content, the Inspirer and the giver of skills. Lifted up, he draws all men to Himself.



An early meeting of the Banner Group. Pictured round the table (left to right) are Alex Cowan, Amanda Armstrong, Joy Kelly, Josie Cowan, Shona Richmond and Janet Ronnie.

'Dolly McGhie used her talent as an embroiderer for the Christmas scenes that hang along the church balcony. She really loved the fellowship and was a great encourager with a grand sense of humour. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine reminds me of her great faith and example.

'*Be thou my vision* was a favourite hymn of Ina Ritson who worked with us for several years. She chose to design and make a banner based on this hymn and it is still used—a fitting challenge to everyone and a reminder of ma's faithful service.

'Over the years we have made many banners to be used out in the streets for Easter Praise Jesus, the television broadcast, and one is now in Sweden with a choir that visited Dumfries — young people who shared their faith and vision at the Midsteeple. We pray that particular banner has helped them touch those seeking Christ.

Josie and Alex Cowan share that view and added, 'Helping to make banners was a wonderful uplifting experience. One of the first projects we undertook as a large group was the pair of banners which depicted Christ's journey from Palm Sunday right through to Pentecost. Each one of us worked on the small squares which, when assembled, tell the story of Matthew's gospel, and we finally completed them for Palm Sunday, 1995.

*'Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord, and
There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.*

The latter was Josie's favourite childhood hymn which, she says, always springs to mind when the banners are hung in the church for Easter. *Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy one is here* is held very dear to both of them and they recall starting and ending every Banner Group meeting with a prayer to ask

God for his guidance. Added Josie and Alex, 'Later on when Ina Ritson and Dolly McGhie joined the group we had the privilege of their expertise and sense of humour. Mary Williams, Margaret McIntyre and Margaret Russell also shared their talents with us.

'There was good fellowship, laughter and fun enjoyed while we sat and sewed—this was often interspersed by Shona Richmond and John Ronnie trading jokes over a welcome cup of coffee.'

Shona writes:

The Banner group began to start We cut our cloth and cord

We prayed for guidance from the heart

So we could praise the Lord

Now Alex was the only boy

To come and join the crowd

With Janet, Josie, Shona and Joy

We began to pray out loud

From the template we made a dove

Put it in place with all God's love

There were nails, a cockerel and gavel too

Being sewn on for all to view

Her personal favourite hymn was one we all know and love.



Alex Cowan displays one of the many banners

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art,
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

And Janet herself concludes, 'The Banner Group believe their call is to present pictorially, symbolically and verbally the word of God. To share with others Christ's splendour, teaching, humility and love. It is our prayer that, as we raise his standard many will be drawn to him, Jesus our saviour and Lord.

'We want to see Jesus lifted high — a banner that flies across this land that all men might see the truth, and know He is the way to heaven'.

The Church Windows

As many of you will be aware, we have recently had the benefit of many months' work by a NADFAS Church Recorders team, who have been painstakingly recording all the artefacts in Troqueer Church. The following article has been reproduced from the *Church Recorders News and Views 2006* magazine. The magazine included illustrations of our windows and two copies will be available in the Church.

'When recording the windows in Troqueer Church, we were somewhat puzzled by the iconography of the windows. We knew the windows came from another church; what we did not appreciate at the time was that originally there were only two windows, which, on transfer to Troqueer, were adapted to four. This transfer reflects the problems of trying to keep the iconography and design of the original after a move.

The windows were designed by Douglas Hamilton, dedicated in 1950, and transferred to Troqueer in 1980. A 1950 newspaper description states that the first, "...forming the actual war memorial, has as its central figure St Andrew standing with his feet in the sea. Beneath the figure are the names of the fallen, surmounted by the crowns of victory. In the centre of the inscription is the figure of a pelican, symbolic of sacrifice." The second window "...portrays the risen Lord bearing the symbolic cross with the banner of victory. Above is the Lamb of God, signifying the Good Shepherd. At the foot of the window there is the mythical phoenix, symbolic of resurrection."

In Troqueer the four windows depict:

- St Andrew
- A banner giving the name 'St Andrew' over a phoenix arising from flames above three names
- Christ with stigmata, holding a banner of victory
- A 'soft toy' lamb holding a banner of victory above the text, "I am the Good Shepherd." Below this is a memorial inscription, written around a pelican, and above a group of six names.

In being divided to fit the space available, the designs have lost some of the symbolism portrayed by Hamilton. The portrayal of Christ with stigmata is unusual in a Presbyterian church, and the 'soft toy' lamb perhaps looks inappropriate with a war memorial, but at least the windows have been preserved. It is clear that, if the 1950 newspaper report was correct, the portions containing the symbolic birds have been reversed; the phoenix is now below the name of St Andrew and the pelican below the Lamb of God.

Bobbie Smith, Group Leader, Southwest Scotland Church Recorders

Lent Lunches continue every Friday, in St John's Church Hall until 30th March. This Dumfries institution provides a home-made soup and roll lunch (cost £2.50) with the opportunity to fellowship with folks from other congregations. Last year £3716 was raised for Christian Aid. Troqueer will be providing the sales table this year on 23rd March. Gifts of baking, preserves, craft and other sale items are requested, as well as help on the day. Contact Arona Allan

Christian Aid 'count your blessing' sheets for Lent 2007 were handed out recently. In recent years, many of us have found that these are a helpful way to reflect and give during Lent. For every day in Lent there is a fact about our world and an action to collect a small amount of money based on the blessings we enjoy: for example, for Ash Wednesday, 'Every year 1.6 million of the world's poorest people die from respiratory infections aggravated by smoke from open fires in their homes; give 5p for every radiator in your home.' Extra sheets are available on either side of the Church. Money collected using the sheets can be given to Alison Wright or sent direct to Christian Aid.

Christian Aid dates:

Lent Lunches: every Friday, in St John's Hall, until 30th March.

Environment Fair: Saturday March 10th, Loreburn Hall, 10am–3.30pm (Christian Aid, Traidcraft and other Christian organisations will be taking part)

Christian Aid Week 13th–19th May (This year is the 50th anniversary of Christian Aid Week)

The modern-day slave trade

This 23rd August marks the International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. You might think that slavery is a thing of the past, but you'd be wrong. Modern-day slavery exists – people are forced to work for little or no money, and around the world people are trafficked for profit.

No land, no rights

Emmanuel Mbele is a South African farmer who has repeatedly faced the prospect of eviction from his homestead. For years white landowners threatened Emmanuel and his neighbours with relocation to a 'black area'. 'We had a very bad relationship. They stopped us from accessing resources and they impounded our livestock. 'We had to pay to get the animals back, about 100 rand per cow per day, and if you couldn't afford it they just kept them.' Emmanuel explains. Emmanuel's story is not unique. Years after the end of apartheid rule, most land still remains in the hands of a white minority.

There are huge wealth, power and education gaps between landowners and tenants and poor families are particularly vulnerable to abuse and eviction if the landowner is ruthless. Although some landowners treat their tenants well, many endure appalling living and working conditions. They work very long hours for

very low wages, with no say over their own lives. Mistreatment of farm dwellers ranges from widespread economic exploitation to violent abuse. In 2005, one farmer was found guilty of beating a farm worker and then throwing him to the lions to be eaten alive.

Since 1994, families have been able to make claims to have land returned to them but this is a long and complicated legal process. Christian Aid partner AFRA helps poor families to negotiate these proceedings and it has helped Emmanuel claim land of his own, so he and his family will never face eviction again.

No freedom of choice

Emmanuel is one example of someone who has been forced to live in conditions one might consider tantamount to slavery. But Tanu Khantin from India is a slave in every sense of the word. She was abducted when she was 11 years old and taken to the red light district of Mumbai. She was moved from brothel to brothel as she refused to be drawn into being abused. She tried to run away many times, but was always brought back and tortured. She was finally rescued and held in a remand centre by the authorities and was referred on to Christian Aid's partner, Sanlaap, a women's rights centre helping young female sex workers to escape from the sex trade. Tanu has found out that she is HIV positive and now receives counselling to cope with her ordeal and the knowledge of her HIV status.

What Emmanuel and Tanu have in common above all is their lack of choice. They have both been forced into exploitative situations that, without the help of outside agencies, they could not escape. Supporting organisations like AFRA and Sanlaap is to help combat modern forms of slavery and enables individuals can choose to live with the dignity that is due to them.

While remembering the abolition of the slave trade should encourage us to celebrate liberty, it should also encourage us to commit to bringing that liberty to men, women and children across the world today.

Fight doubt with God's Word

Just before the bells on New Year's Eve I flicked between two Christian TV channels, one in the UK and one in Asia, one with a few hundred and the other with several thousands of a congregation. All were desperate to hear what God's word was for 2007. I thought how wonderful it would be if both preachers gave the same prophecy...and to my amazement, they did! It was Romans 4:17, 'Who gives life to the dead and speaks of the non-existent things that [He has foretold and promised] as if they already existed.'

We have to pray into being those things, according to God's Word, that as yet do not exist. We have to confess God's Word into being. We have to profess God's Word already accomplished.

Then I came across this story which shows the necessity of confessing God's Word. There was a man who had a financial need and was confessing God's Word over his life, quoting scriptures and believing that God had already provided a way for him. After he had suffered a difficult time and was beginning to be discouraged, God opened his eyes to see the spiritual world. This what he saw: a demon speaking lies to him, telling him he was not going to get the help he needed and that confessing God's Word was not going to work. But he also saw that each time he confessed the Word, light would come out of his mouth like a sword, and the demon would cower and fall backwards. As God showed him this vision the man then understood why it is so important to keep speaking God's Word. He saw that he did have faith, which was why the evil spirit was attacking him with doubt.

So...

Fight doubt
With a SHOUT
Of God's Word!

Janet Bell

Shallow thinking

A science teacher asked a class of schoolchildren if any of them believed in miracles. One of the children put up his hand and said, 'Yes, he did.'

'Right, tell me of something you consider a miracle,' demanded the teacher.

'The crossing of the Red Sea by the Israilites,' answered the boy.

The teacher rejoined, 'The Red Sea was crossed because strong winds separated what was only very shallow water to start with, so there was no miracle there.'

'But there must have been,' insisted the boy.

'How do you make that out?' questioned the teacher.

'Well, sir, because, according to your explanation, the whole Egyptian army must have drowned in 3 inches of water!'

I Corinthians 1:19–21

Bill Murphy

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Tuesday 6th March.....Guild Meeting, Centre, 7.30pm
- Saturday 10th March.....Guild Coffee Morning, Centre, 10am–12noon
- Wednesday 14th March.....Kirk Session Meeting, Centre, 7pm
- Wednesday 21st March.....Annual General Meeting, Centre, 7.30pm
- Sunday 25th March.....Commissioning of Board Members, Church, 11am
- Tuesday 27th March.....Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm
- Sunday 8th April.....Sunrise Service, Mill Green, 8am
- Sunday 8th April.....Easter Family Service, Church, 11am
- Tuesday 10th April.....Guild Communion and AGM, Centre, 7.30pm
- Wednesday 18th April.....Kirk Session Fellowship Meeting, Centre, 7pm
- Tuesday 24th April.....Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm
- Sunday 29th April.....Communion, Church, 11am (Retiring Offering for Church
Fabric Fund)
- Wednesday 9th May.....Kirk Session Meeting, Centre, 7pm
- Wednesday 16th May.....Congregational Board Meeting, Centre, 7pm
- Tuesday 29th May.....Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm