

BELHAVEN AND SPOTT CHURCHES

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

Minister's Annual Report:

In many ways it has been an astonishing year – journeys made to places never dreamt of...plans re-jigged in the light of changed circumstances, - and always the amazing reality of the courage, resilience and grandeur of the human spirit as evidenced by so many brave and loving people. Yes, quite a year!

A year of surprises – as unexpected individuals came into the story of our congregation...old friends like former Assistant Seth Weeldreyer came back for a brief but wonderful visit and led our worship with graciousness and wisdom. David Gray came among us and brought his warmth, his faith and his energy. We saw former Assistant Minister Geoff Berry settled as minister at St Mungo's in Penicuik, and Suzie Fletcher and her children were able to join with me...and with Geoff...on this year's ski holiday...a real raft of ministers at the breakfast table there!

There were dramatic and significant changes among my clergy colleagues in and around the town with Sheila Cameron replacing Paddy Allen at St Anne's, and Gordon Stevenson taking up post at Dunbar Parish Church. And just along the road, Joanne Evans Boiten at Athelstaneford and Whitekirk arrived to relieve me of that responsibility. You might not know it, but good colleagues with whom one can relate and share ministry are really precious in the often isolated role of parish minister, so it is wonderful to be able to anticipate good connections and warm fellowship in the coming years. This can only be good for the sense of shared purpose among the churches – that we are all pulling in the same direction...or as they say...singing from the same hymn sheet!

Two new head teachers – at Belhaven Hill, and at West Barns Primary – mean new trusting relationships are to be developed and the work in these places carried on with sensitivity and appreciation.

Recent changes to the role of Hospital Chaplains means that having served at Belhaven Hospital for 32 years, I now do so under the banner of the

NHS – and this has meant intensive induction processes . These have been interesting...finding out just how much I didn't know before has been salutary!

The biggest feature of the last year has of course been the dramatic developments in our personal circumstances – with health issues being to the fore. Things have turned out better than we dared hope – and we have been immensely touched and thrilled by all the kindnesses, prayers, support and love shown during a difficult and anxious time. Both congregations have been wonderful, as have so many folk all across Dunbar, and we could not have asked for greater underpinning and care. Add to that the vast army of the Guild nationwide and internationally, and you can understand how upheld we have felt.

Other wider family issues of health and age pressed hard on us this year – and we are grateful to all the medical and social care professionals who brought their expertise to a whole range of difficult situations and made them better.

The combination of those circumstances meant drastically altered plans for Study Leave and travel...indeed, all of those were put on hold for the foreseeable future. This allowed us to spend the whole summer and autumn in Dunbar and share in the life of the community at that special time....when Fetes and events cram the calendar. It was different, and it was good.

One important feature of ministry throughout the year – and I think the Church should never underestimate the significance of this...was the role the Church has played in crucial life events – for so many people over the last twelve months. Funerals, weddings and baptisms are central events in the lives of those involved – and week in, week out the Church provides someone to minister to the joyful or the broken hearted. I think there will be few people in our town who have not attended a funeral conducted by a local minister, in a local church...and there have been many bereaved families who have valued

the spiritual care of a loving pastor, there with them and for them in their crisis. Just as there are many who have shared in the delight of a wedding, or a baptism, in all the affirmation and celebration of those important life events.

It is the Church which makes this kind of experience possible...and the members of the church who maintain and sustain ministries that provide that unconditional Christian care.

One of the great mysteries and wonders of church life, is the amount of work that gets done! So many people who roll up their sleeves and make things happen in creative imaginative and wonderful ways. The list of those involved in leadership and service is long and distinguished, and it would be a foolish minister indeed who did not affirm and celebrate these champions. Those we see, and those we don't see – they all make their crucial contribution – and continue to do over many years of faithful service. Folks will be fed up with me stating that one of the greatest graces and gifts anyone in the church can demonstrate, in my view, is commitment and faithfulness – turning up, being there, making their presence count. And I want to applaud and express the deepest appreciation for all those who keep the Church functioning effectively and in the true spirit of Christian love. And all without temperament or fractiousness. It is a true delight and a blessed gift of the Spirit.

The need to keep renewing that leadership is always pressing – and the different ways in which society is organised and the different pressures on people's lives make that renewal especially challenging. There is a post-modern resistance to being at a set place at a set time every week. There is a reluctance to "take things on" for fear the obligations become oppressive and cramping. And the random and occasional nature of so many aspects of people's lives makes it hard to pin down the kinds of commitment that allow groups and organisations to function in a meaningful way.

The Kirk Session is thinking hard about how to find ways to develop leadership patterns within the life of the church and bring new ideas, new energies and new talents into the core thinking and practice of the Church. Succession management is a spiritual matter as well as an organisational

challenge. And we believe that there will be people to step up to the plate and take their part in shaping the future life and role of the Churches here in Dunbar.

And it might be you!

Part of that debate and deliberation focuses around the question of membership and what it means to be “a member” of Belhaven or Spott Churches. We have a significant number of committed caring and hard working people within our congregational life, most of whom come from other denominational backgrounds – and who are faithful in worship, active in the life of the Church, and support its work by their generous giving. We look forward to the time when they feel ready to add their name to the congregational roll, and can use that statement of commitment to move to even more significant degrees of involvement in leadership and policy making.

And that is because we are keen to avoid ever thinking that being here is enough. That being open on a Sunday is enough. We are well aware that there are many un-churched folks within our town, many who have still to understand the gospel and be offered the opportunity to follow Christ. That is a task unfinished, and we are all called to share in the witness and outreach of the church. Not in order to make the church “more successful”...but because the whole rationale for the life of the church is that it should be **missionary**...taking the love of God and the good news of Christ to all the people, and inviting them, challenging them, to the way of faith.

So, the more of us who can be called upon to do that work, and to enable the Church to be the community of faith and love it is called into being so to be...the better – and the more people with vision and faith who serve at the very heart of the Church’s life, the better.

Others will comment on various aspects of the congregational year – the quiet achievements and the tasks unfinished that make up any programme or timetable. I would like to mention just a few in particular.

Youth Work

Dunbar is a town uniquely blessed in the large numbers of young people there are in our town. For all the urban mythologies about *crowds of kids hanging around street corners or sitting in drinking dens in the woods*, most kids are happy to go about their lives – do their school work, enjoy their leisure and meet with their friends. It is simply untrue and unfair to categorise all young people as potential trouble or somehow locked into feckless lifestyles.

The real challenge to the church is to address all sorts of kids with the message and call of Christ – and the wonderful truth is that over the last year there have been extraordinary opportunities to do just that...and to correct any misconceptions they might have about the legitimacy of the life of faith and the attractions of the Christian life.

The achievement of that re-focusing lies in no small measure with Richard Taylor the Dunbar Youth Worker Project Youth Worker, whose astonishing work has begun to shape new generations in their thinking about faith and Church. Of course, parents, clergy, church youth leaders work on this calling every week and in countless ways, but there has been something truly remarkable about the respect, effectiveness and reach of Richard's ministry, and we should affirm, support and celebrate his work. It is good that all the Churches are growing more and more enthusiastic about the venture, and support is increasing. When we look back over the years to the inception of this vital project, we see many reasons to rejoice. And we continue to pledge prayerful and practical support to this extraordinary outreach of the Churches.

Other aspects of work among young people continues to challenge and demand – and all those leaders through Toddlers, Creche, Launchpad, Lazars and Jam Club deserve our encouragement and support:

encouragement and support which might well require us to wonder if there is something we might be able to do to help in a practical way.

It's been my delight to work with the senior pupils in TNT our Sunday evening group – and the enjoyment, the insights and the stimulus they provide makes me a jealous guardian of that time...while the help of Martin Cox and Chris MacArthur, is very precious.

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I mentioned earlier that being a parish minister can be quite an isolated life...no chats by the water-cooler, or lunch-time banter in the staff canteen. Time spent with people – but not so much with colleagues. This makes the pleasure of having David Gray sharing in ministry here all the more special, for there are opportunities for team talks and kicking ideas about and debating strategies, that will be sorely missed once he is launched on his own ministry. In the meantime, I appreciate the chance to share with him in the work we do, and to appreciate his undoubted gifts of caring and wisdom.

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Because so many churches around the area have been vacant over the last year, it was an extraordinary time for funerals...with record numbers taken by me over the last 12 months or so. People from neighbouring parishes, which were without a minister, preferring a kent face to share the dark road of bereavement with them, rather than a stranger, seemed to call upon my services at a disturbing rate and caring for those situations took up an unusually large part of my ministry, and that accumulation of emotional involvement was more draining than I would have imagined. Something like normality has returned as new ministries are in place. It was not a happy, nor a healthy model and I would hope to avoid it happening again.

In the annual report, I usually highlight certain particular individuals whose help, support and love have been especially precious over the year and I would like to do that now.

David Wight does an extraordinary job in so many ways, and when he was off for a little while, we all suddenly began to see just how wide his influence is and just how crucial the work he does...all so willingly, graciously and efficiently. Amazing.

The able band of musicians who help lead worship deserves our appreciation; for, I don't know about you but, coming back to Belhaven and to Spott from any time away is to return to robust singing, from the heart moved along at a good pace by musicians who love to give the lead we want them to give.

Victor and Barbara, the two Session Clerks continue to be patient, gracious, immensely supportive and loving, and make my job so much easier. My debt to them is deep and real.

Rodney and Peter, the two Treasurers deal with all the impossibilities of OSCAR and Church Admin with real dedication and skill and keep us reminded of the constant requirement to review our giving and to understand our responsibilities as Christian stewards of our resources and the Church's.

And God Bless, Wendy Osborne who looks after our Baptismal Register and somehow carves some sense out of the occasional chaos of my bad writing and odd bits of paper that never seem to have quite the right information on them. A very patient and forgiving lady.

As is Annette Stretch – Church Secretary for more years than either of us cares to consider – and who has adjusted and accommodated in order to fit in with hospital appointments and upheavals various. A gem as always.

I don't want to duplicate what others will say elsewhere – but a mention for Margaret Cannon who sees us through the maze of bureaucracy that goes with Child Protection and makes sure we do our utmost to fulfil all obligations in that area. It is detailed and demanding work, and none of us, I suspect, would choose it! We thank her for it.

The year has also seen a larger than usual number of events that have required catering – and those who have done such wonderful and gracious work and done it so many times, are due a special note of thanks.

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And what lessons learned from the weeks, months and year just gone by?

- **That we are blessed indeed, who are part for something so richly human and wonderfully driven by love as the Church – and that the reality of our faith is not theory, but life-shaping reality.**
- **That there are loose-ends, and perhaps there always will be.**
- **That the life of the Church in Dunbar at this time is particularly plump with possibilities, as we sense a real and growing togetherness of purpose and spirit. This is precious.**
- **That the challenges don't go away.... “the fields are white to the harvest and the labourers are few”Few,- but still enough of us to sing, to pray, to serve and go out looking...**
- **And the lesson I have learned over this last year is that I must be without doubt one of the most blessed and fortunate ministers in the land, to be among a people whose hearts are big....and who have taken me, my wife and my family right into those hearts., and held us close. Thank you all.**

Love as always

Laurence Twaddle

Belhaven Session Clerk's Report:

It won't have escaped anyone's notice that we have started not only a new year but also a new decade - where will this lead us, or where will we be led? We're quite good at looking back - sometimes with generous, comforting pats on the back. It's not so easy to look ahead, but necessary all the same to consider direction, possible improvement, the fulfilment of promises and plans made, even changes, and to step forward in faith, perhaps with some anticipation of the unexpected.

Thinking back over 2009, the Kirk Session has done a fair bit of pulling together over illness, loss, and other unexpected eventualities - we're a friendly bunch, and that's what friends are for. Folk have stepped in willingly to help and support where needed, in all sorts of ways, and many of us have reason to be grateful for this. Some things may have fallen by the wayside - as it seems they always have a tendency to do - but otherwise it was 'business as usual'.

At the start of the year we saw some tentative steps taken with the India twinning initiative - since then there have been further small steps, rather than a great rush forward. The whole idea requires careful pacing.

We welcomed new elders in March - Bronwyn Brodie, Annette Arneil and Carol Hamilton - and are very glad to have them with us. We hope to be able to welcome some more during this coming year: additional elders could reduce the pressure on the current district visiting system, but we have also been considering having elders without districts, but who could contribute with fresh insight to our discussions and debates - the careful input and talents of new folk revitalise in a special way and prevent us from becoming complacent or stuck in a rut. Which doesn't mean there aren't any ruts - we do need a few, and return time and again to perennial subjects and concerns, with the common desire to do the best we can.

Particular concerns include what happens to the various Youth Groups and their leadership, how to support Richard Taylor in his work, and outreach in the new housing areas, all of these requiring joined-up thinking in relation to the wider community and our part in Dunbar Churches Together.

But to balance the concerns are the rejoicings - for example at Geoff Berry's ordination, Seth Weeldreyer's brief visit, our happy continued relationship

with Spott, the revival of the Belhaven News in the capable hands of Darren Kilfara, and David

Gray's arrival, with all his warmth and willingness to roll up his sleeves and lead us forward into the new decade with several new initiatives.

Concerns and rejoicings can, and should, cause us to look at things from new angles.

The year 2010 and the decade are yet young - if the Session had made any New Year's Resolutions they might be to follow up new ideas with care, courage and enthusiasm, to catch up on endeavours that got lost somewhere, to search out and encourage new leaders, to try harder to take care of our congregation, parish and community - in other words to renew our commitment as elders.

For some of us 2009 was a very tough year. Facing extreme difficulties or changed circumstances - or seeing others go through the mill – can bring a new sense of proportion and commitment, renewed togetherness, and fresh realisations of where we want to be and to go. We can be fired anew. And as we thank Laurence and Alison for another year of devoted and unstinting commitment to us all at Belhaven, we can acknowledge with deep feeling that we have been set a fine example by them both, for which we are profoundly grateful. Let us too be fired anew - in Jesus' name.

Barbara Richerby

BELHAVEN PARISH CHURCH – TREASURER’S REPORT 2009

Again this year we have continued to maintain our funds considering the current financial credit situation. Our main project for the year was the replacement of the Hall windows. This was completed successfully and we are beginning to see the savings on the gas consumption for the hall.

The Mother & Toddler group has continued their success and continue to gain new member and they have a healthy account balance.

We continue to have funds held with the Church of Scotland Investment trust of £64000 an increase from 2008 of £48000. We received a further sum from the Trustee’s of the Mr S Hunter of £57000 during the year. We greatly appreciate this Bequest.

I again would like to thank Barbara & Neil Richerby with the supply of Christmas Items for us all and also the Fair-Trade goods we all can purchase. We receive a health commission from the Fair-Trade sales which helps us in our work.

I would also like to thank the Guild for all their help and donations to the church during 2009 without their help we would suffer greatly.

I would also like to thank David Wight our Church Officer for all the time help and support he gives to all the groups and to members of the congregation through out the year. We could not be able to run so efficiently. The work he does behind the scenes is unforgettable and fantastic.

I would like to thank the whole congregation for the contributions received and the help to keep us working in all the areas of church work. Finally I would like to thank the Finance & Fabric Committee’s for all the assistance during the year.

	2008	2009
Income	£97828	£134141
Expenditure	£93675	£86996
Surplus / (Deficit)	£4153	£47145

Summary of Funds held

Bank of Scotland	Church of Scotland	Cash
£14975	£64000	£800
Total	£79775	

SPOTT PARISH CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT 2010

It was certainly an eventful year for all of us involved in and around Spott Congregation. One of the highlights for sure was the ordination in April of three new Elders (Vivian McNeill, Nicola Brown and Gordon Tweedie). I don't think the vestry has had such a rush of new blood since – well, since when?! But it has been great to have some new faces at Session meetings and to be serving with more super people.

Having said goodbye to Geoff Berry the previous year, we welcomed David Gray as a probationer on 1st September. His warmth and easy manner have won him many friends and he is now taking forward a number of exciting new parish initiatives, not least the new Bible Study Group, recently assembled for the first time.

It was good to continue to have the enriching contributions of the singing group to our services; we were very sorry to lose our leader, Ruth, who has 'emigrated' to North Uist! But the great thing about Spott is how many able people there are, ready and willing to step in when needs be. Nikki who has taken over responsibility for leading us is one of them. As a group we try hard even if our results are occasionally less than perfect; our new leader's graciousness and gentle charm have kept us at least half on the musical rails. We are about to reassemble for a new session.

The singing group had a great expedition to North Uist in May on which Laurence joined us and preached in Clachan Church. Our friends treated us with lavish hospitality and we enjoyed a most memorable visit to Rodel Church at the south end of Harris where we all spent a day together.

Spott has again played its part in Presbytery's proceedings and Fiona Jones has been our Presbytery Elder as she will be in 2010. She told us, diplomatically, that Presbytery meetings have their ups as well as downs. Fiona is also going to represent us at the General Assembly in May this year.

As regards the bare statistics, the current number of members stands at 109. Inevitably we lost some friends during the year through change of residence including Ruth and Edmund, and Margaret and Eric Laird, and others such as Willie Young, Annie Gray, and Robert Wilson also much

loved members over many years, who died. Norah, Colin, Molly and Angela, and their respective families know how much we are missing them.

Our finances seem in reasonable shape. Peter will talk more about this at the Congregational meeting. It is perhaps worth noting the requirements of the new Scottish charity supervisor ('OSCA') which have become so demanding that only the eagle eye of our auditor, Ian Marrian, and his professional skills have so far kept the Session free of regulatory trouble. We owe Ian a great debt of thanks. How absurd, after hundreds of years, for an institutional regulator to be questioning the Church about its motives and objectives. A case of the many suffering for the sake of a few, very rare, delinquents.

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As ever, we acknowledge the blessing we have in our Minister and record our most sincere thanks for all that he does for us. We remember that, in addition to serving Spott and Belhaven, he has been interim Moderator at Whitekirk and Tynninghame during the past year – a big job. He has also been hugely involved in a lot of local work, particularly during the Dunbar PC vacancy, and has had to shoulder the extra burdens that placed upon him all at a time when Alison has required special care too. We also note with great pleasure the production of the 'Echoes' booklet based on Laurence's sermons which has gained a very wide circulation including, I might say, the Outer Isles of Scotland! How he gets through such a workload one can't imagine.

So we are indeed grateful for the contribution of all faithful men and women who help sustain Christian witness in this lovely place. They are a joy to be working with.

Victor Wood
Session Clerk
4.3.2010

SPOTT PARISH CHURCH – TREASURER’S REPORT 2009

The Congregational Funds has continued to maintain a steady surplus in 2009.

Significant events on the expenditure front have been the repainting of the interior of the church, and purchase of new pew cushions. All of which has served to enhance even more Spott’s appeal to the congregation, and visitors, alike.

Again, the combined venture between Spott Kirk and Spott Association proved very successful, and made a welcome contribution to funds.

Summary of Account for 2009

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Income:	£11,518.29	£11,157.09
Expenditure:	£7,708.43	£8,821.67
Surplus (Deficit)	£3,809.86	£2,335.42

Summary of Spott Church Funds

	<u>Held by Kirk Session</u>	<u>Held by Church of Scotland Trustees</u>	<u>Total</u>
General Fund:	£15,827.19		£15,827.19
Fabric Fund:	£7,033.92	£10,147.46	£17,181.38
			Total: £33,008.57

The next page puts our congregations’ role in the bigger picture....

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
MINISTRIES AND MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS 2010**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you for supporting the worship, mission and service of the Church through the money you give in your offering. It is important that you know what happens to this money. This letter tells you about your congregation's Ministries and Mission Contribution - the money your Congregational Treasurer sends to the Church Offices in Edinburgh. How does it enable the worship, mission and service of the Church?

The information below shows how the contributions from your linked congregations are used to support Parish Ministries, Mission and Renewal, and general support and services provided for congregations and the councils of the General Assembly. Please note that the cost of your minister is not what he/she is paid. This cost is the total for stipend and employer's national insurance and pension contributions, and is based on a minister with ten years' service.

Congregations:	Contribution
BELHAVEN	£39,986
SPOTT	£6,043
	£46,029
 Parish Ministries (87%)	 £40,045
The cost of ministry in your parishes is:	£39,100
Your contribution to the cost of ministries in other parishes and training for ministries:	£945
 Mission and Renewal (5.5%)	 £2,532
This supports the Church's work in resourcing congregations for Christian education and outreach, in caring for the vulnerable in society, in partnership with Churches in some of the poorest parts of the world, and in providing a Christian perspective on the social, political and moral issues of today.	
 Support and Services for Councils and Congregations (7.5%)	 £3,452
This provides financial, legal, procedural, safeguarding and other services, and meets the cost of the General Assembly and the Moderator.	

Please note that Ministries and Mission Contributions only provide part of the total funding required for the work of the Church listed above. A fuller picture is given in the leaflet *Funding our Faith*, which is available free to all congregations.

I hope that this helps you to understand Ministries and Mission Contributions and shows you are enabling the sharing of the gospel through the money your congregation sends *through* the Church Offices to all parts of Scotland and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Gordon D Jamieson

Head of Stewardship

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