

Stow St Mary of Wedale and Heriot Parish Church



Heriot Church



Stow Church

Autumn 2017 Newsletter



“The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was fruit for all.”

(Daniel 4.11-12)

Minister's Letter

“Let the wise listen and add to their learning” (Proverbs 1.5)



It's that time of year, when the new term has begun, or will soon begin, for school pupils, college and university students, apprentices and trainees. For some, there is a completely new school or place of learning. The "Back to School" time of year can be daunting, but we hope that all who are learning and studying will also find their courses interesting and rewarding.

Here in Stow and Heriot Church, we have in a sense gone "Back to School" too as part of our Year of Faith 2017. We have been learning more about our faith as Christians, with Jesus as our teacher. And just as the early disciples did, we have been learning in different ways - by reading, talking, listening, and by practising our faith, in action. No matter whether we're new to the faith, or have been Christians for a long time, we never stop learning from the master, Jesus Christ.

We're now over half way through our Year of Faith, and what a lot we have been learning and doing! We've studied the book of Daniel and the Apostles Creed, and now we're going through Mark's gospel to see what Jesus teaches his people about daily life as his follower. We've welcomed new members and elders, and we'll be trying something new for Harvest Thanksgiving. We've been worshipping in our churches every weekday as well as Sundays, and praying for our parish every day. We've also been changing our church constitution and structure, and we're in the process of moving the manse. We hope all these things will help us grow in the Christian faith and life.

If you would like to learn more about Christianity, do come to our Autumn evenings, "Conversations on Christianity", taking place in Stow Town Hall in September and October (see p5 for details), or contact me or an elder at any time with your questions about the Christian faith and the life of the church.

Wishing you every blessing.
Victoria, Tim and boys

Come and Worship....

Our Sunday services

Heriot Church – 9.45am

Stow Church – 11.15am

Children are always welcome at both churches. Junior Church meets at Stow Church in the service during school term time.

Sharing the Harvest, Sharing the Table

Shortly, our Harvest Thanksgiving services will be upon us, a time when farmers and we all give thanks to God for a successful gathering of the crops. These services bring people together to celebrate God's goodness in creation, and to remember our responsibility to care for those who do not have as much as we do.



As more people seek safety in Scotland, it also seems important for us to get to know each other as neighbours, and to recognise that all our unique experiences and contributions combine to make the Scottish Borders a vibrant place in which to live.

This year, we have invited some Syrian families living in Galashiels to join us at our Harvest Sunday service in Stow Church (1 October 2017 at 11.15am). It will be a time to share something of our Christian story with those who may not know it, and an opportunity to hear first-hand from Syrian refugees why they are here and how they have been helped in their search for sanctuary.

After the service we plan to hold a potluck lunch. Sharing a meal is a great way to get to know each other, and we will also have the chance to try some delicious recipes from Syria.

Year of Faith 2017

“Faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11.1)

The Christian life, from beginning to end, is a life of faith. St Paul wrote to one church: “I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me”. To another church, he said: “We live by faith and not by sight”.

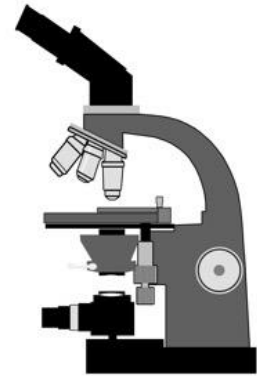
That living by faith is the distinguishing mark of a Christian believer, does not mean that we engage in a wishful-thinking kind of living. Rather, living by faith means that intentionally our lives are shaped not by what we can see with our own eyes, but by what we believe (on very good evidence) concerning what God has said and done. Faith is not mindless optimism; rather faith is what believes God who has revealed himself to us in the Bible, as God “who so loved the world, he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him, might not perish but have eternal life”.

Faith sees in Jesus Christ, the despised, rejected and crucified man of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world, the Son of the living God, the King of God’s kingdom.

Faith means therefore that we see behind the ordinariness and pain of this world, to the time promised when God’s glory will be seen in every corner of the earth. Like the mustard seed, sometimes God’s kingdom – represented on earth by the church of Jesus Christ – can seem small and insignificant. God has put eternity into all our hearts, but that sense of the spiritual and unseen can be overtaken by the busy-ness and distractions and challenges of our lives, so that rarely we have the chance to stand back, and see God at work in our world, and to remember his promises for all eternity. For we are promised that, like the tiny mustard seed, God’s kingdom, already here, will grow and one day fill the whole earth and multitudes will take shelter in God’s love in Jesus. Our Year of Faith is about remembering our faith, taking the time to open our hearts to the things of eternity and the world beyond the seen, all of which shapes how we live day by day.

You are warmly invited to four Autumn evenings....

Conversations on Christianity



It might be said that in recent years we have forgotten much of the great intellectual, moral, spiritual and practical strengths of Christian faith. Nowadays, it is often thought of as irrational and delusional, without evidence to support it or logic to sustain it. The huge edifice of Christian scholarship, the scientific creativity and imagination which it has provoked and the public and private virtue which it has produced over centuries, profoundly contradict this negative estimation. This series of four conversations is an attempt to put the record straight and recover the intellectual strength of the Christian argument.

Each evening there will be:

- Interesting input with scientific and other demonstrations
- A panel of wise and experienced Christian contributors
- Opportunities for questions
- Relaxed conversation in an amiable environment
- Food and refreshments
- Start at 7:30pm and finish by 9:30pm in Stow Town Hall.
- Suitable for Christians, non-Christians, adults and young people 12 years and older

Four questions about Jesus, Science and Everything:

Wednesday 6th September 2017 *How do we make discoveries?*

Wednesday 20th September 2017 *How do we believe the results?*

Wednesday 4th October 2017 *How do we surmount the obstacles?*

Wednesday 18th October 2017 *How do we get the reward?*

Join us at 7:30pm in Stow Town Hall - you'll be glad you did!

Weekday Worship in our Year of Faith

All are welcome to a short act of worship:
In Stow Church, Mondays – Fridays at 9.30am.
In Heriot Church, Wednesday Worship at 10.30am.

More News and Events...

HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2017

We are taking part in this year's Scottish Borders Heritage Festival, with both our churches open for a weekend each in September, including light refreshments and an exhibition about the church. If you called into Heriot Church at the beginning of the month, we hope you enjoyed your visit. Still to come, Stow Church will be open on Saturday 23 September 10am – 3.30pm and Sunday 24 September, 1pm – 3.30pm. All welcome (free entry of course).

MANSE ON THE MOVE

The Congregational Board and Kirk Session recently took the decision to purchase a new house to be the manse for Stow and Heriot Church, and to sell the existing manse. This will hopefully reduce the costs of maintaining a larger older manse. We are looking forward to meeting our new neighbours, although we will miss where we are too. We will let you know our new address once everything is completed. (Victoria)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO UPDATE YOUR AUTUMN/WINTER WARDROBE?

Grace Murray is hosting a Boden party to raise funds for the church!

When? On Wednesday 13 September and Thursday 14 September 2017, between 6.30pm and 9pm each evening.

Where? At Grace's home, 2 Haypark Woods, Stow TD1 2SF. Come along, try the new season's range, and receive 20% off all purchases (with free delivery and returns!). Stow and Heriot Church will receive a small percentage based on the total of orders placed. All welcome, and why not bring a friend or two? There will be good company, great clothes and plenty of drinks and nibbles. Get there early for a FREE gift. If you bring along a friend who's new to Boden, you'll get £25 account credit.

The new session of **BOYS BRIGADE** starts again soon – see separate flier for details.

**DAVID AND MARGARET
GURNEY – UPDATE ON
MEMORIAL TAPESTRIES**

The tapestries are nearing completion with virtually all the stitching done, and they will now be handed over to Helen Houston for her expertise on stretching and mounting.

After that, it is planned to have an unveiling event in Stow Church, an informal get-together to which all stitchers will be invited to see the completed tapestries. The tapestries will be dedicated at a service in the church, after arrangements have been made with the family.

You will receive further information once arrangements have been finalised. In the meantime, thank you to everyone involved.

GALASHIELS AREA FOOD BANK

There is a box in each church for donations of non-perishable food. Thank you for all donations.

**NEW CONSTITUTION –
THANK YOU TO THE
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD**

The congregation of Stow and Heriot Church voted recently to change to a new constitution. This means that the Kirk Session (the elders) will be responsible for all aspects of the church's life (except for worship, which is the responsibility of the minister), without the assistance of the Congregational Board.

There are a number of reasons for the change, including the desire to simplify the running of the church, to involve the gifts of the whole church fellowship on a more flexible basis, and to comply with best practice under charities legislation.

We are extremely grateful for all who have served as Board members, in the past and more recently. We do hope that our Board members, and all others in our church family, will continue to be involved in the life of the church according to their gifts and circumstances and as God calls.

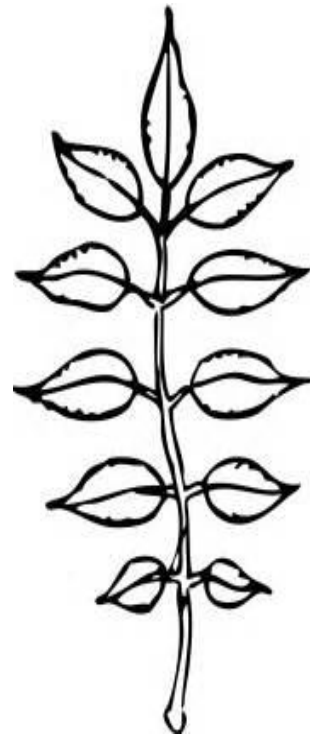
A SONG OF THANKSGIVING (PSALM 67)

*May God be merciful and bless us
May his face shine with favour upon us.*

May your ways be known throughout the earth,
Your saving power among people everywhere.
May the nations praise you, O God.
Yes, may all the nations praise you.
How glad the nations will be,
Singing for joy,
Because you govern them with justice,
And direct the actions of the whole world.
May the nations praise you, O God.
Yes, may all the nations praise you.

*Then the earth will yield its harvests,
And God, our God, will richly bless us.
Yes, God will bless us,
And people all over the world will honour him.*

AMEN



For any enquiries about Stow and Heriot Church – including on baptisms and blessings, weddings, community use of the church buildings, pastoral care, prayer or any other aspects of church life - please contact:

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Church website: www.stowandheriotchurch.org.uk