

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Welcome to this the fourth edition of The Journal
- New for Thursdays Discipleship Explored
- New! SoundBite (third Mondays)
- A personal response to last edition's book review "The Shack"

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Back to church 2  
Sunday
- Introducing the 2  
Bryan Family
- Spotlight on 3  
Ellen Baird
- The Book 3  
Review - God's  
Big Picture
- SoundBite 4
- Discussion 4  
Group
- Services 4

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

SEPT/OCT/NOV 2009

## From the Manse



The other week Lewis Hamilton amongst others crashed out of the Belgian Grand Prix in the very first lap. He was interviewed later on and said, "It's not the same being on the sidelines." And his words are so true, not only of his participation in Formula One, but they are also true of our faith and Christian life.



A Formula One driver cannot be just half-heartedly committed to driving his car; he has to be 100% focussed on his task in hand. Jesus does not call people to follow him part-time. It is a full-time, 100% commitment that he looks for from each of us, who responds to his call, "Follow me!" It's not the same being only on the sidelines in terms of our faith.

Jesus told of men, who when called to follow him made all

sorts of excuses as to why they couldn't just get up at that moment and follow; one had to go and bury his father (who at that time probably hadn't even died yet!) and another wanted to go off and spend time with his family first. These men were half-hearted, remaining on the sidelines they missed out on the thrill of following Jesus, missed out on being in the thick of mission and discipleship.

As a new session begins in Saint John's you are invited to get involved and express your faith as you take part in the activities that are on offer in the Church. You are invited to move away from the sidelines and move to the frontline of where it is all happening – to come in and experience the challenge and the thrill of whole-hearted commitment to Jesus, His Church and His mission.

Why not make the decision to

come along to something you have not tried before at St John's – the Thursday night courses Discipleship Explored, SoundBite on Monday afternoons, our evening services (there are many of you who could be there, but are not), coffee and tea after morning service, fellowship lunches and the prayer times? There really is something for everyone. It's never the same being on the sidelines – it always far better to be in the frontline.

Together we will be seeking to grow in our faith and to introduce others to Jesus. Getting involved is one of the ways we grow in faith and experience our commitment to Jesus becoming more whole-hearted. Let's become focussed this session on the task in hand and give ourselves to it 100% for the sake of Jesus and His Kingdom!

## Discipleship Explored



Thursday evenings in the autumn at St John's are the time when we meet to think about and discuss issues relating to our faith. Starting in October we will be following the Discipleship Explored programme, which takes us on a journey through Paul's letter to the Philippians and covers issues such as: Being confident in

Christ, Knowing Christ & Being content in Christ

This course is a natural follow on from Discipleship Explored which was run in St John's a few years ago and was the basis of our summer discussion group this year. As well as learning more about our faith, participating in the Thursday evenings

gives a chance to get to know one another better and to make friends. You might even end up going on holiday together like two ladies who met at last year's course did! We meet on Thursdays from 7.30pm – 9.00pm. Starting date – Thursday 1st October.






**Back to Church Sunday**

If you listen to the news the Church is in big trouble: Church congregations declining, relevance of Christianity diminishing. About 50-60% of our society now have no Christian story. In the face of media figures it would be easy to become despondent... But we don't want to do that!

Across Galashiels, and indeed Britain, Churches are gearing up for Sunday 27th September - Back to Church Sunday. What's this about? It's a day when those who have not been to Church for a long time, for whatever reason, have a special opportunity to come back, or where those who may never have had a connection with Church may come for the first time. It's a day when the whole Church comes together to provide a welcome with everybody doing the same thing on the same day.

And it works through each of us using the oldest and simplest invite of all, asking "Would you like to come to Church with me?" Think carefully about whom you will specially invite to come to something you love. A friend, a neighbour, a family member?

Back to Church Sunday – Sunday 27th September 10.15 am at St John's.

**come as you are**

When Patrick and Deb were visiting us at the end of August, we heard that due to a gap in their funding, plans for their departure have had to be put on hold. As with many mission partners, their finances are raised through team support Christian friends and Churches giving to enable them to undertake this key ministry. It will cost appx. £36000 a year for the Bryans to be able to do this strategic work in Asia and we very much hope that many of you will choose to support them not only in prayer, but financially too. Information on how to do this is available on the Church notice-board, or from the Treasurer.

## Introducing the Bryan Family

Where to start? Well, I, Patrick was at University in Aberdeen with Jane, where I read history and then met Deb whilst on teacher training in Leicester. Both of us felt a sense that God was calling us to work overseas. After we married and spent a couple of years teaching, we then went on to study at All Nations Christian College and felt called to serve God in a predominantly Muslim area of East Asia, working with the mission organisation Interserve. There we had to learn two Asian languages, first the main language of our host country, and then the completely different language of the region where we were working. We served in East Asia for about eight years, taking a number of roles

including being students, teaching and working for a small export company. Our first two children Esther and Peter were with us and even went to Chinese kindergarten. In 2008 we returned to the UK and Hannah was born in August that year. I have been working as a teacher in Northamptonshire, up till July 2009, whilst Deb has been holding the fort at home. Our home fellowship in the UK is Knighton Evangelical Free Church in Leicester.

This year we felt that God was calling us back to Asia. The whole family will be leaving for Thailand in October, where I have been asked to be the Country Team Leader for Interserve Partners in East Asia as well

as taking on the role of Operations Manager for an NGO. Deb will continue to be involved with a Bible translation project. In our last situation Esther and Peter had to be home-schooled. They are now at secondary level and there is an International School available to cater for their schooling needs. We are really looking forward to this latest challenge and hope to keep you up-to-date with how things are going.



# Spotlight On - Ellen Baird



Please tell us something about yourself and family.

I grew up in Larkhall, Lanarkshire and lived there until about 8 years ago, when I moved to the Borders. I'm a Speech and Language therapist and work

mainly with babies and children who have additional needs.

*When did you become a Christian?*

I was brought up by Christian parents so I've always known about Jesus. However, I made my own decision to follow Jesus when I was a 9 year old on holiday in Cornwall.

*Describe a moment when you have been aware of God's presence close to you.*

After I returned from the church visit to Latvia in March, and while reflecting on everything

experienced and learned during that weekend.

*When did you first become involved with St John's Church?*

I started coming along to St John's when I moved to the Borders. I've enjoyed helping out at KAOS and at Rock Solid over the past 2 or 3 years.

*What other interests do you have?*

I spend a lot of time walking my dog. I also enjoy reading and meeting up with my friends and family.

## Birthdays



### September

- 15th Louise Gething
- 19th Rev Jane Howitt
- 19th Davina Hendrie
- 22nd Helen Allan
- 24th Peggy Brown (90)

### October

- 3rd Dorothy Ramage
- 3rd Nadine Tait
- 12th John Farquhar
- 17th Gina Howlieson
- 17th Frances McDonald
- 23rd Susan Riddell
- 23rd Danny Pulman
- 25th Duncan Brown
- 26th Marion Scott
- 26th Karen Kirk

### November

- 3rd Jennifer Bramhall (60)
- 3rd Barclay Mathers
- 5th Anne Culling
- 6th Kathleen MacFarlane
- 6th John Mann
- 7th Betty Grant
- 7th Duncan Cameron
- 8th Jeanette Borthwick
- 10th Andrew Bramhall
- 11th Lesley Robertson
- 15th Robert Stewart
- 17th Nettie Hardie
- 24th Christine McEwen
- 26th Pat Young
- 26th Erica Reid

*If we have missed your birthday then we are sorry, it's just that we did not know about it. Please let Elizabeth Hogg know and we will congratulate you next time.*

Some personal reviews of last editions book feature **The Shack**



*"This was a book that I didn't so much read as cried my way through. I found this an emotional but challenging book, making me look at my attitude towards forgiveness."*

*"I cannot, in all honesty, say that I 'enjoyed' this book. However I did find that I was compelled to read on. The emotions and reactions triggered by this book were extremely thought provoking."*

*"The Shack is a well written novel with a thought-provoking attitude. It portrays God in a totally different way which certainly gets you thinking. If you are ready for the unexpected, then read on!"*

## God's Big Picture

Tracing the Story-Line of the Bible: Vaughan Roberts

As a young person I remember dipping into the Bible to read passages at random and out of context, somehow seeking and hoping to find God's guidance in the midst of my biblical illiteracy and confusion. I suppose you could say I was using God's word as some would a horoscope.

I didn't know that it contained sixty six books written by about forty people over a 2000 year time period, and that fundamentally, it is just one book written by one author.

This leads me to my review of God's Big Picture by the author and Rector, Vaughan Roberts. Now perhaps for some the ideas presented within 'God's Big Picture' will be familiar. However in Roberts well received biblical overview he seeks to show how the different parts of the Bible fit together under the theme of the kingdom of God.

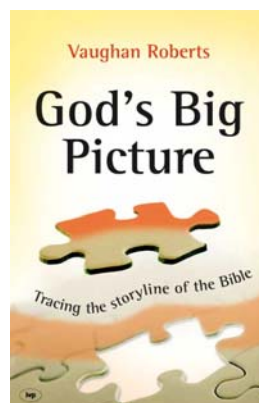
Roberts carefully presents his overview of the Kingdom of God under eight headings. Within this

structure he successfully conveys to the reader the outworking and sequence of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The chapters of the book take you right through the whole Bible story from the garden of Eden to the second coming of Christ.

Each chapter concludes with a short but helpful bible study, designed to help the reader reinforce the truths which have been presented.

Vaughan Roberts is Rector of St Ebbe's Church, Oxford. He is also a popular speaker at Spring Harvest.





## St John's Galashiels

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St John's Church of Scotland: Galashiels is a registered charity Number SC000281

**More online** For up to date details of events and other happenings or to listen again to any of the Sunday morning sermons log on to the website at: [www.stjohnsgalashiels.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsgalashiels.co.uk)

### Sunday Services

10.15am Morning Service

6.30pm Evening Service

### Regular Weekly Events

Mondays 6-8.30pm Girls' Brigade

Tuesdays 7pm Prayer Meeting

Thursdays 7am Prayer Breakfast

Thursdays 7.30pm - 9pm Discipleship Explored (From 1st October)

Fridays 6-10pm Boys' Brigade

## Discussion Group

Over the summer a group met to explore the Christian faith together. Some were interested in joining the Church and others, just wanted a refresher course to remind them of some of the building blocks of their faith. We were a mixed group and we hope that some of the comments from participants below may encourage you to come along to something similar.



In this group, using the study guide Christianity Explored and with the aid of an excellent DVD Jane led us on a spiritual journey through Mark's Gospel. Over the weeks we looked at who

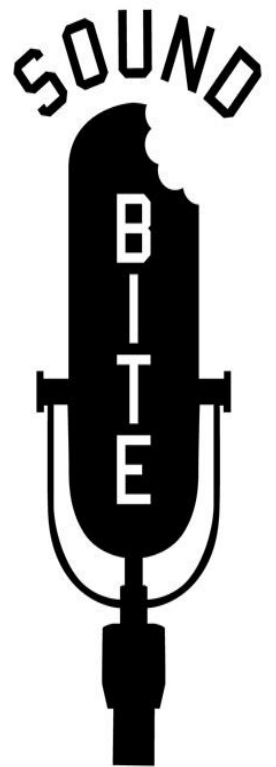
Jesus was, why He came, His ministry, His death and resurrection. We explored the Christian life: what is a Christian and how one continues in the Christian life. We finished by looking at the spiritual choices we make and the repercussions of such choices.

We started off the course as a group of people who knew each other by name, over the weeks as we studied, discussed, questioned and prayed together, sharing our hopes and fears we developed a close fellowship becoming brothers and sisters in Christ. We learned much, felt blessed and lastly, but not least, were well fed.

It was good fellowship and enjoyable learning about Jesus. I really loved the story from Mark 4, 35-41 when Jesus hushed the sea. It's amazing that he could just say 'Quiet, be still!' and that was the end of the storm. The miracles Jesus did are incredible.

There are many ways to feel part of the family at St John's and to enjoy the friendship and fellowship of being together as a Church. Over the autumn those of you who are free on Monday afternoons are invited to come along to **SoundBite**. Every second Monday there will be the chance to catch up with one another over a cup of tea and to listen to a speaker. A great programme has been put together for you from October through to December and plans are already afoot for 2010 including an excursion – so don't miss out. Anyone at all is invited to come along and you are especially encouraged to bring along a friend who maybe doesn't usually come to St John's. There are folk willing to provide transport to and from **SoundBite** so everyone who would like to really will be able to come along. Dates and topics are in the calendar issued with this edition of the Journal.

**SoundBite** replaces Third Monday – gone too is the age restriction, so it is open to all! First meeting is on Monday 5th October at 2pm.



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