

Newhaven Church
Annual Stated Meeting
Monday 28th March 2011

The Moderator, Rev Peter Bluett, welcomed those attending. He then read a passage from Acts, chapter 2, verse 42-47.

Opening Comments

The Moderator said that it was a great joy to be our Minister and he has been greatly encouraged by the many good things he has witnessed within the Congregation at Newhaven. There have been many highlights but often it's in the small things that he has been most encouraged. He said that we have been blessed in Newhaven with a good spirit of friendship and warmth; this is something we should not take for granted. He is also encouraged by the enthusiasm he witnesses in people and it does not go unnoticed.

At a recent Session Meeting the topic of Vision and having a Vision for our Church was raised, and this is why he picked the reading from Acts. In this passage we see that there is a new spirit in the people as they came to know Christ, through the apostles' teaching. The people put aside their feelings of self and worked hard to ensure that people were cared for and no one was left behind on purpose. They shared fellowship together, they broke bread in their homes and gave generously not only of their possessions but of themselves and they also spent time praising God.

While we cannot replicate what we have read about in Acts as life is quite different, in many respects, to how it was then, we can however seek to practise a form of the fellowship we have read about.

This means that we take it upon ourselves, with the help and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, as individuals within the body of the Church to put into practice the values of God's Kingdom and the fruits of God's Spirit. As individuals, that we take the time to concentrate our hearts, minds and souls on being kind, good and generous. By doing this in a proactive way despite how others might behave towards us.

When we consider the life and teachings of Jesus we can't help notice that what Jesus wanted to see in those who followed him were hearts that reflected his love. He wanted to see change in those who called him Lord and Master and that it was no use paying lip service to such things, it had to be practised.

When we are obedient and seek to do as Jesus told us then we are able to build relationships that are meaningful and incredibly strong. We create an atmosphere where people can be themselves and where, by God's Grace, growth can take place.

At the last evening service the congregation considered the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus told the people to be perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect. Normally people think this is impossible but they learned that Jesus meant that we should be godlike, not to be confused with seeking to be God. This is not possible on our own, but it is when the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, dwells within us and we ask Christ to live in us and ask God to mould us and shape us. This isn't something that is to be dormant, it is something that is meant to be put into practice and the more we practise the presence of Christ, the more we become like him, not in order to be holier than thou but to be useful in God's Kingdom. This is our challenge, our calling, and it is out of these things that good relationships are built and that good things flow.

On Sunday mornings Peter is always lifted by the chatter he hears as he prays with the Session Clerk. He comes out to see everyone and thinks that what everyone deserves to experience in the service and to leave with is something good. It isn't just up to Peter but for all of us to be the sources of goodness, the things of God's Kingdom. Peter has no doubt that we can do this if we cling to Jesus. The onus is on all of us, however, to let God work in us and to work hard with what we have been given.

Finally he noted that by reading the Annual Report it shows that much happens in the Church and in the lives of its people and it is good. He thanked all who work so hard to make things happen and asked God to be with us as we continue to venture into the future together, seeking to do God's will.

He then closed his remarks with prayer.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Colin MacNeill, Robert Dunlop, Colin Robertson, Elaine Greig & Eileen Tait.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Stated Meeting on 22nd April 2010 were approved.

Treasurers Report

Nick Timmins presented the financial figures for 2010 and gave a presentation entitled 'A Slightly Irreverent Guide to the Mysteries of Newhaven Church Finances'.

Nick went through the process of how the Accounts are worked on by himself and the accountant, and then they are presented to the Kirk Session for their approval. They are then forwarded to the Church of Scotland Offices and the Charities regulator for their scrutiny.

Nick advised that in 2009 we made a loss although most of the expenditure was from the Development fund. This year we have more income than our expenditure. The Café has made an increase in income and have also reduced their expenditure but this increase in income is primarily down to the Congregation as individuals.

The income is made up from Voluntary giving, the Café, premises hire and Investments among other things. In 2011 the Finance and Stewardship Working Group will be considering a new investment strategy partly because our Investment income has gone down. In 2010 Nick asked if people could consider giving on a more regular basis and also sign up for Gift Aid, and there was a good response to this.

The expenditure for the Church is split into two types, unavoidable and desirable. The unavoidable are things like the Ministry & Mission contribution to the Church of Scotland, which pays ministers' salaries for all of the Church of Scotland and supports the spread of the Gospel across the globe. Then there are our own salaries to pay for cleaning and hall convener, also heat and light, communication, performance licences, accountant, Presbytery dues, council tax on the Manse, insurance, hygiene and security.

The desirable things are things like Flowers, prizes for Sunday Schools, gifts for Pastoral purposes, beverages after each Sunday morning service, education material, congregational special days, sound equipments and musical instruments. Fortunately social events are funded by a bequest designated for that purpose.

There was a surplus this year of £10,892.00 including monies attributed to the Café.

He advised that Charities are now required to assess the risks in running their charity i.e. Financial, Reputational and Operational risks. This has been discussed with the Session Clerk and it was agreed that we could put a statement in the accounts to say

that we have looked at the risks for our Church and that appropriate systems and procedures have been put in place to mitigate those risks.

Nick thanked the Congregation for being a 'Giving Church' and thanks everyone for giving.

The floor was then opened for Questions.

Q. Should some of the Surplus be given away?

A. Yes this is possible but the surplus of £10,892 does include Café money so it is a small proportion of overall turnover. Some of the money we have is restricted in its purpose due to the way some bequests are worded, and also some money has been collected for specific uses so we could be restricted in what we can do with it. However this is a question that should be considered by the Kirk Session. ACTION - SESSION

Q. The Toddler group have thought about investigating having a Family Liaison Officer. They would bring someone in to work with the Toddlers on the day they are on and also work with the Church and other Groups. It was agreed that this would be taken to the Kirk Session as part of the previous question. ACTION – SESSION

Q. It was suggested that the Accounts had to be approved and accepted at this meeting.

A. Nick said that the process changed 3 years ago and that it was now the Kirk Session who approved and accepted the Accounts. This had been done at the last meeting. Peter thanked Nick for his presentation and for making it interesting and funny.

Annual Report

The floor was opened for comments and questions on the Annual Report and there were none.

Any Other Competent Business

The floor was opened for any other questions.

Q. It was asked if the entrance to the Church from the street i.e. at the gate could be lowered to allow a wheelchair to come in. There was a slight step which was causing problems.

A. this will be investigated. ACTION – FABRIC GROUP

Vote Of Thanks

Edna Davie said that it was a pleasure to say thank you to Peter. He has given us great enjoyment this year. He inspires us and people actually remember what he says, which, is not always the case for other Ministers. She said that if we don't love each other now we never will. Love conquers all but is the hardest thing to do and we need Peter to keep encouraging us. Peter has been with us now for 3 years and he is really in with the bricks now, even supporting Scotland at the rugby. We wish Leandra and Peter every blessing in their home and on their forthcoming Holiday. She asked that he takes greetings from all in Newhaven to his home Church and his Mother. Edna also thanked everyone who provided the food for the evening meal before the meeting and to everyone who helped arrange everything. She then thanked Susan Edwards for

doing the minutes and for producing the Annual report and also providing the Kirk Session with the Working Group reports for their meetings.
Edna said that she loved the laughter and humour in Nick's report and thanked him for his hard work.
The meeting then closed with prayer.