

Cushnie & Tough Church

“THE NEWS”



Spring 2010

Number 37

"We aim to be a strong Christian witness to all in this community as a worshipping, caring, welcoming and united church in the strength of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

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Through the Manse Window

The Manse
The Square
Lumsden
AB41 7RS



Dear Friends,

As your Interim Moderator it is good to see that you are in good heart in your vacancy and working together with your Locum. By the time this is printed, I will have conducted services again in Cushnie and Tough and met with folk.

I know the Nomination Committee have been working hard and are making some progress in finding a new Minister for the Parish. Be patient as God has the right person waiting to be called to you.

Looking out of the window as I write this letter it is still white on the hills, in the Park and in the garden. The snow is very pretty when it sparkles in the sunlight. It also makes all gardens equal since all weeds and untidy parts are hidden! It also brought out some community spirit as folk helped others out – literally in some cases from their houses. But we are all thankful the worst is over. The feeling of frustration at cancelled meetings etc. can be put behind us.

When the snow is falling and as it lies at first, unmarked in any way, it is totally flawless and unspotted. However soon animals, birds and humans mark it with tracks, shovels dig in to it and throw lumps on the beautiful, even areas; ploughs plough up dirt with snow. So the snow is no longer spotless and flawless.

Just like us! We start as babies, sinless with white hearts. But soon our hearts are marked and stained. As we go through life the stains increase. When we come to God and repent He cleans our hearts, but we quickly cause more flaws. And so on it goes. May we look at the snow – preferably at a picture of it! – and strive to keep ourselves as pure as possible, daily asking forgiveness for our sins.

As we now look forward to Spring and to celebrating Christ's death for us and the glory of His Resurrection, I pray we may all feel re-energised and re-vitalised.

I am looking forward to getting out and about more again and seeing more of folk.

Yours in His Service.

Brian

From the Locum Minister's Desk

15 Meadowlands Drive
Westhill, Aberdeenshire
AB32 6EJ



Dear Friends,

Those of us who are of a certain vintage will know that we are at that time of the year when the thought of Spring Cleaning enters our mind. Not now, of course, the need to beat rugs, wash blankets in the boiler or call in the chimney sweep. Wall to wall carpeting, washing machines, and central heating systems, all have made the annual ritual less onerous or be missed altogether. My memories of Spring Cleaning include the practice of putting up into the loft things which had fallen out of everyday use but couldn't be thrown out because one day they might be needed or become more valuable!

So here is the question, what have you tucked away out of sight in your loft or attic? Objects which, even now, might be of great value or need only another year or two before becoming a precious antique.

I suspect that if we are able to summon up enough energy to look into our attic or cupboards to see if we are able to contribute anything to an auction for the church or other charity that we do so with much more caution that we would have done in days gone by. Programmes on T.V. about antiques have given us a greater awareness of the value of things which once we would have considered valueless. As you have watched such programmes, there is every chance that you might have fallen asleep and dreamt at being astounded at the value placed on Aunt Agatha's old teapot which has been handed down from previous generations and which you have taken along to the "Road Show". But then the expert will notice a hairline crack, and this will cause the expert to reduce the valuation because the teapot is not in mint condition.

When I hear the 'expert' talk down the value of some ancient article because of a crack or chip or some other fault brought about by years of hard usage, I want to say, "but think of all that it has seen; consider what it might tell of past generations." If antiques, slightly damaged by hard use could speak they would have better tales to recount than whose pieces which have been sitting hidden in 'safe' places.

I am very glad that our God does not demote or degrade or devalue us because we fall short of perfection. We are able to come before our God with our broken

hearts, our threadbare minds and our tarnished souls, and we know that He loves us because as his children we belong to him. One of the lovely facets about Easter is the way in which the Risen Christ is able to go behind the locked doors into the room into which the disciples had retreated, in order to convince them that they were, indeed, still loved despite their running away, their betrayal, their doubts and their denials. He wished them to understand that there was work for them to do in His Name, still. They had value, still, despite the cracks and chips. Value to God, value to others because they had value in themselves. So they came out of that room back into the world to be active and work for their Risen Lord that others should find out just how valuable they were too.

At this Easter time, dust yourself down to work afresh for the Congregation in the knowledge that you are loved and valued by Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew

Sands and Sins

Raised as a child beside the sea,
“Footprints in the Sand,” is vivid to me.
Though walking together, hand in hand,
There are so many single sets in the sand,
Carried, preventing frequent falls,
Guided through life’s many squalls.

The tide flows gently in the bay,
The prints are slowly washed away.

Than I recall another day,
When many sins were washed away,
From a cross on distant Calvary,
A saving grace to set us Free.

Don Patience

From the Editor



Dear Reader,

What a winter we have come through – three months of deep snow cover and ice with no available salt to help clear the path. The 14 ins. of snow came over the top of my highest Wellington boots and it was a thought to go out several times a day to top up the bird feeders. I know there was worse drifting up at Cushnie and on three occasions the Sunday service there had to be cancelled. Tough Church managed to keep going, but most folk in Cushnie were unable to get down to Tough.

The good thing about our predicament was how people pulled together. Neighbours who were able to dig themselves out offered to get shopping for others. Paths through the deep snow were dug for those who were unable to do it themselves. My car looked like an igloo under a thick layer of snow for five weeks until two kind neighbours twice dug it out without being asked. They also dug a path round the front garden so that I could reach the bird feeders safely. On one occasion when the temperature was -17 c, my door froze completely and I was unable to get out. I struggled for 15 minutes and then, afraid of the handle coming off, I phoned a neighbour. In no time he came round, told me to stand well back, and put his shoulder to the door. It flew open to my great relief, but I didn't dare to close it properly for a whole week.

Most of these good neighbours are not churchgoers, but while we are not inherently good in ourselves, God puts in each one of the ability to do good and difficult circumstances can release the best within us to reach out to others.

On 5th November last year I transferred from the ARI to Inverurie Hospital to have my dialysis three days a week. What a difference this has made to my life. The Red Cross ambulances provide a very good service, but I was picked up from home at 7.40-8.00 am and returned home often at 6.30 pm because we toured the countryside collecting other people and there was a great deal of waiting around at the hospital. Thanks to Alford Car Transport Service (ACTS) and their team of volunteer drivers I now leave at 7.45 am and am home by 2 pm! The nurses have been amazed at the service they provide and I haven't missed a single day's treatment throughout all the extreme weather we have had. My thanks to each one of them and to their organiser, Gladys Cruickshank.

As we approach Holy Week and follow the events which led to the Cross, let us be aware of the people who surrounded Jesus on his road to Jerusalem, their

human frailties, for some their determination to get their own way and be rid of this person who forgave sins. Even the disciples for all their experience of life with Jesus didn't understand what was happening and were overcome with fear, betrayed Jesus, denied him and ran away to hide. If there is any solid testimony to the reality of Easter, it is in the about turn they made when they met Jesus after the resurrection. Jesus knew their frailties – as he knows ours – and still he loved and forgave them, as he loves and forgives each one of us. Take heart in the difficult times ahead that we are not alone, but are loved and supported in ways that are more than we can even imagine.

A very Happy Easter to each one of you.

Yours aye,

Ishbel

Parish Register

Funerals In My Father's house.....

24 December 2009 Mr John Gordon Bews
Hamewith Cottages, Alford
in Tough Church.

5 March 2010 Mrs June Burrige
Kirkton Cottage, Tough
in Tough Church.

Our prayers continue day by day for God's loving comfort and strength to surround these families.

Any funeral services that Matthew Rodger has taken elsewhere are not mentioned here.

Around the Parish

The Evergreens: Sadly we have nothing much to report for this issue of the newsletter as we had to cancel our Burns Lunch due to bad weather. We did meet in February and celebrated Valentine's Day with lots of hearts and chocolates and enjoyed a chat and a cup of tea, as so many of our members hadn't been our for weeks, so there was lots of catching up to do. We had a Beetle Drive in March and look forward to Lena Garden coming to entertain on Friday 16th April. We have lost some of our members due to ill health or infirmity, but we have gained new ones, so our numbers remain more or less static. There's room for more though, so if you would like to come along, we would love to see you.

Jean Mortimer (019755 62850)

The Guild: To date our new session of the Guild has not yet started and we haven't met since December. We have considered disbanding as it is difficult to get speakers for such a small number, but after some discussion, we have decided to meet once a month for a short service followed by tea and a chat. Our first meeting is on Thursday 22nd April at 2 pm in Tough Church Vestry.



The World Day of Prayer Service was held on Friday 5th March at Howe Trinity Church. This was poorly attended due to the icy conditions, but it was a very meaningful service none the less and was prepared by the women of Cameroon.

Jean Mortimer

Muirhead Care Home: Mary Penny and I have continued to provide worship services once a month at Muirhead, although due to deep snow and ice and other factors this hasn't always been on the first Sunday of the month. When Communion time arrives, our Locum Minister, the Rev Matthew Rodger conducts that with our backup. (I try to visit a good friend there as often as I can, and for a while, when the staff recognised me, out came the keyboard and the chairs in the lounge were organised into a circle in expectation of a service which wasn't due until the following Sunday!) After the service, we have tea together with the residents.

Ishbel Maclellan

Social Committee: Forthcoming events: Saturday 22nd May, Car Boot Sale at Tough Church Car Park. Saturday 19th June, Strawberry Tea at Tough Church. (The date for this could be changed depending on the date of Cushnie Games.) Saturday 11th September, "Mr. & Mrs." with stovies and a raffle at Cushnie Hall. Times to be notified later.

Anne Parfitt

2010 World Mission Stamp Appeal

The Girls' Hostel at St Columba's in Sialkot accommodates up to 400 girls while they study. As well as accommodation, girls receive supervised study, Christian education, and access to a computer lab. The girls come from poor Christian communities in rural Punjab where there are limited opportunities for education. Recently, food and utility costs have increased, putting additional strain on the hostel's budget.



You can help our partner church in Pakistan to provide safe accommodation for girls while they study simply by collecting your used stamps which are sold on to raise money. I'm sure many of you will have many stamps from your mail at Christmastime. Please trim them, leaving a good border around the stamp (damaged stamps have to be discarded which is a great disappointment to Don Patience and his team of sorters) and put them in the red boxes in our two churches. Thank you.

Ishbel

Opening Windows - Rev George Shand, St Andrew's, Jerusalem

A group of young people met in a Swedish church in early 2009 for a Bible study group entitled 'fear builds walls, hope builds bridges.' In the discussion, one person suggested that hope constantly seeks opportunities for reconciliation, and shared their vision of the 'separation wall' here in Israel/Palestine. The concept created 'windows' within the wall as openings for hope and opportunity.



Easter is the time of the Christian Hope – when the resurrection of Christ opens a 'window' into reality and reveals for us the true nature of our God and the path of peace and reconciliation we must all walk. The Church of Scotland in Israel/Palestine seeks in all its activities to open windows of opportunity to peace and reconciliation. It does this through Tabeetha School, through its staff teams in the Guesthouse and Hotel, where Christians, Jews and Muslims work together in welcoming thousands of visitors from all over the world, and through its ministers and congregations, building partnerships with local churches, supporting organisations and individuals – speaking words of hope. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers, so that we also can have a 'window' and an opening to all our friends in Scotland.

(From WM34 – copies available in Cushnie and Tough churches).

Isn't this just about the
silliest thing we will ever
do?!

Who in their right mind is
going to back a loser?

Who wants to be seen with
the man on the cross?

Who wants to put themselves
in last place, surely we have
to look after number one?

What is the point of caring about other people, they just let you
down, don't they?

What is the point of talking about justice, corruption will just
outdo our efforts, won't it?

What is the point of forgiving people, we'll only be seen as
weak, won't we?

What is the point of living with hope, we'll just be disappointed
won't we?

What is the point.....?

So full of questions this
Easter cross. Here's two
more.

What happened to those
first disciples to bring them
out of their locked room
and onto the streets
proclaiming Christ with
them?

What was it that made
Jesus mother stay with him
right to the end?

Perhaps it was the kind of
undying love God seeks to
offer to each of us and in
turn, draw from us.



THE BOOKSHELF

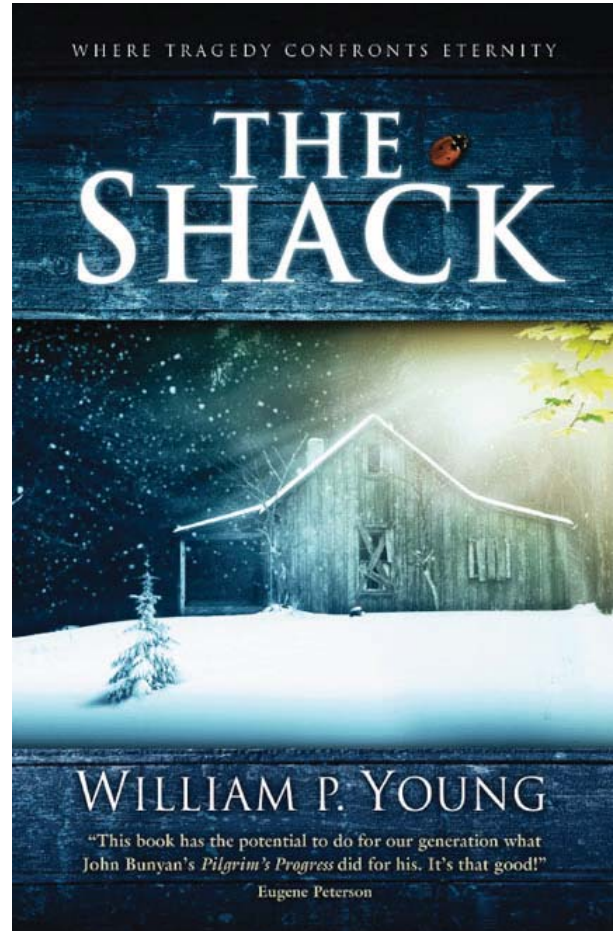
Mackenzie Allen Philip's youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the wilderness. Four years later, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to the shack for a weekend.

Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change his world forever.

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant THE SHACK wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The answers Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him.

Although this is a work of fiction, I am sure you will find this absorbing, heart-warming, inspirational and faith-enhancing. I could not put this book down, and I am sure you will feel the same way too.

Julie Diab



Life and Work

In the March edition of Life and Work, in addition to all the usual 'regulars' there are a number of very interesting articles, and there are three in particular that I think would be of great interest to our farming community. The first is Down on the Farm: Jackie Macadam offers a special focus on Care Farming and highlights its important contribution to everyday life. Care Farming has been defined as the use of commercial farms and agricultural landscapes as a base for promoting mental and physical health, through normal farming activity.

Evidence from studies shows that there are benefits from being outdoors and doing regular exercise, physical, mental and social benefits for participants include health, physical skills, self esteem, mood improvement, social skills and responsibility.

There is evidence from the Netherlands that there are proven economic benefits as a form of diversification. In a 2005 study from there, the average annual revenue from Care Farming activities was over £52,000. If the Dutch system were embraced here, projections state that in 10 years, there could be almost 500 care farms in Scotland, generating an income of over £24 million per year for the agricultural sector. There are over 1000 registered Care Farms in the Netherlands where the movement has been running for ten years.

The second article, Working the Church's Land looks at how we use the 'glebe' land that was given to the church. For many rural churches, that land is not being used, or if it is, usually a farmer is grazing it for a nominal rent which offsets the stipend a little, but it could be put to better use.

In the third article, All God's Creation, Jackie Macadam meets the Rev Martin Robb, the leader of Care Farming Scotland. Martin is retired Ghurkha officer who has been a hill farmer for 30 years at his 1500 acre Carroglen Farm and believes very strongly in the benefits that Care Farming offers. All three articles are very well worth reading and are very thought-provoking.



The April edition of Life and Work, as one would expect, has a lot to say about Easter from different perspectives. The Moderator, the Rt Rev William Hewitt examines the promise of Easter. Ron Ferguson delves deeper into the Easter journey. The Very Rev Dr James Simpson looks at the deeper meaning of Easter and The Rev Laurence Whitley takes a fresh look at the meaning of Easter. There is a major feature on Oberammergau 2010 – the world’s most famous (and biggest) Passion play, which takes place every ten years. In a second feature, Thomas Baldwin meets the director of the world-famous five-hour Passion play at Oberammergau in Germany.

With all the usual contributors and lots more, at £1.60 and cheaper if ordered through Ernie, where could you get all this for less than the price of a cup of coffee?

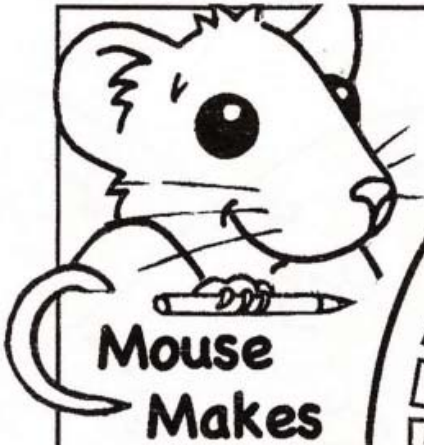
Ishbel Maclellan



Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death;
Victory is ours
Through Him who loves us.

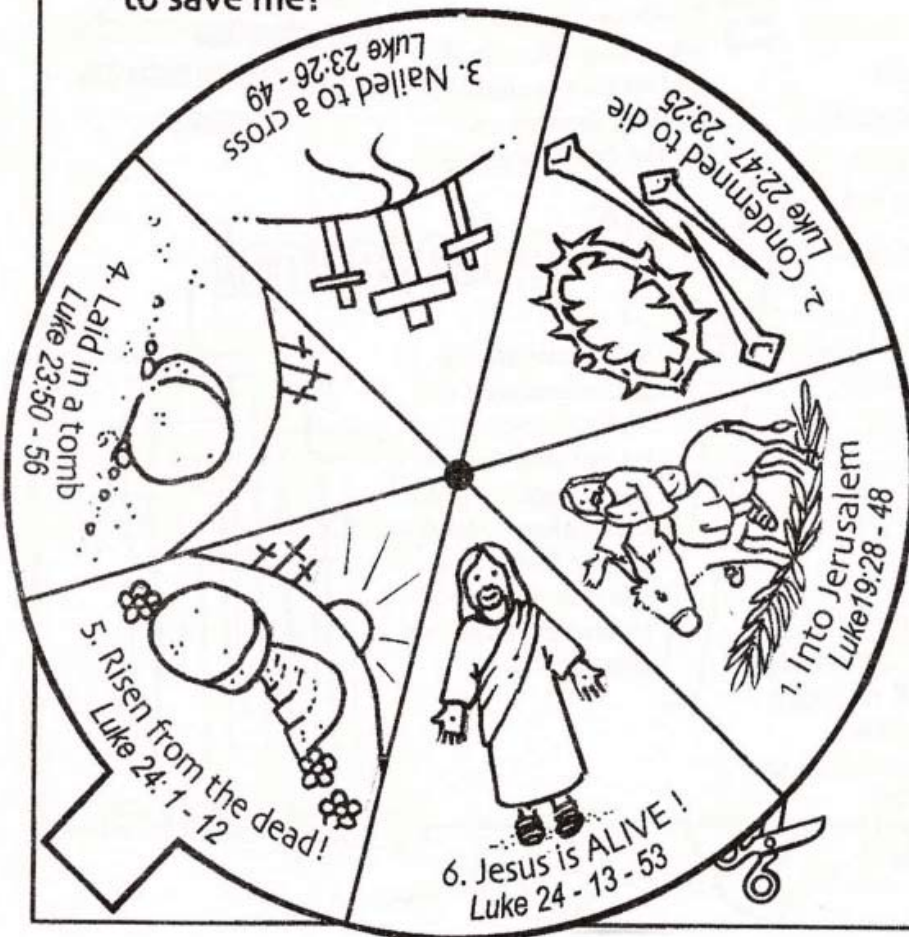
Prayer of Archbishop Desmond Tutu



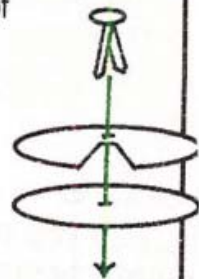


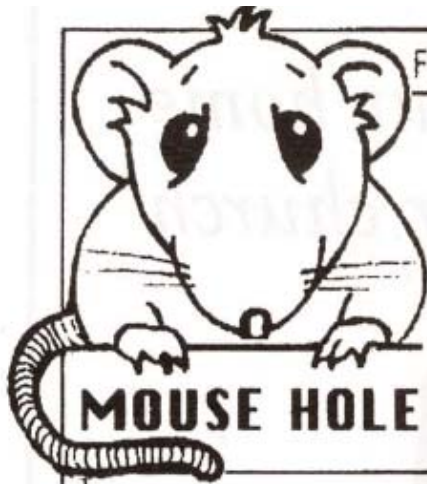
Mouse Makes

Nailed on a cross,
condemned to die,
They said that Jesus was telling lies.
But he is risen for all to see!
He came to save us,
Jesus came to save me!



To make your Easter Story Teller glue the page onto thin card. Colour in then carefully cut around both circles. With the help of an adult, pierce a small hole through the black dot in the centre of both circles. Push a split pin through the top circle and again through the bottom circle to join together. Spin around to tell the Easter Story.





MOUSE HOLE

From my home in the church I learn about all sorts of things...



Jesus is alive!

In the 40 days after Jesus had risen from the dead he appeared to more than 500 people before he was taken up to heaven to be with God, his Father.

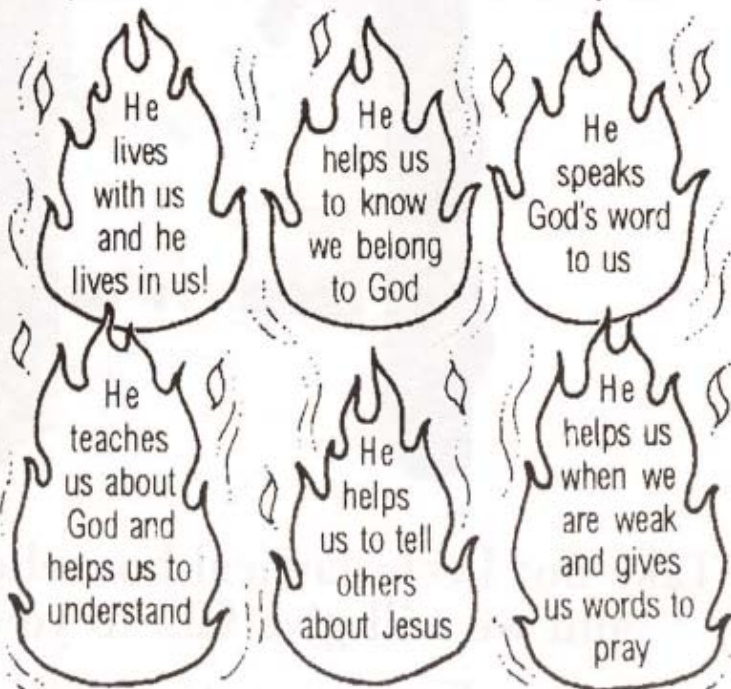


But Jesus did not leave us on our own... he sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and to help us.

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, there was a sound like the blowing of a violent wind.



Make a simple 'wind catcher' by gluing coloured ribbons [or strips cut from coloured plastic bags] onto a length of dowelling or garden cane.
Hang it outside and when it blows in the breeze it will remind you of the Holy Spirit, the "Breath of God."



The Holy Spirit also helps us to grow more like Jesus.

Look up Galatians 5: 22-23 to find out what kind of 'fruit' he can help us grow...

N SS P C
 A F SS
 P C O O
 S C O
 OO SS I D SS



Read what happened at **PENTECOST** in Acts 2: 1-41



To Make you Smile!

A little girl aged four-and-three-quarters was explaining to her mum and dad that she was learning the Lord's Prayer at school. She then went on to recite it as follows: 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy king dot com.....'

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy: 'So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?' The little boy replied, 'Thank God he's in bed!'

A Revenue & Customs officer visits a farm and tells the farmer: 'I want to inspect your property for illegally grown drugs.' The farmer replies: 'Fine, but don't go into that field there.' The officer takes exception to this and tells the farmer: 'Sir, I am backed by the full authority of the Government,' From his pocket he takes out his badge and shows it to the farmer. 'This badge,' he carries on pompously, 'authorises me to go wherever I wish – anywhere, no questions asked or answers given. Do you understand?' The chastened farmer apologises and goes about his chores while the officer decides to investigate just why the farmer didn't want him to visit that particular field. Suddenly the farmer hears screams and sees the officer running for his life, chased by the farm's bull which is gaining ground with every stride. Keen to help, the farmer runs to the fence and shouts out his advice: 'Your badge!' he cries. 'Show him your badge!'

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away. 'Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer,' said his mother. 'I don't need to,' the boy replied. 'Of course, you do,' his mother insisted. 'We always say a prayer before eating at our house.' 'That's at our house,' Johnny explained. 'But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook!'

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible – Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Ricky was excited about the task – but he couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know.'



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word with you about your carbon footprint!



© www.parishpump.co.uk

"I don't care how long magician David Blaine held his breath under water - I want you out of there!!!"



Easter Time

Young and old walk slowly on
In the gentle Alford Breeze,
They raise a cross on Beltie hill
By the side of the tall pine trees.

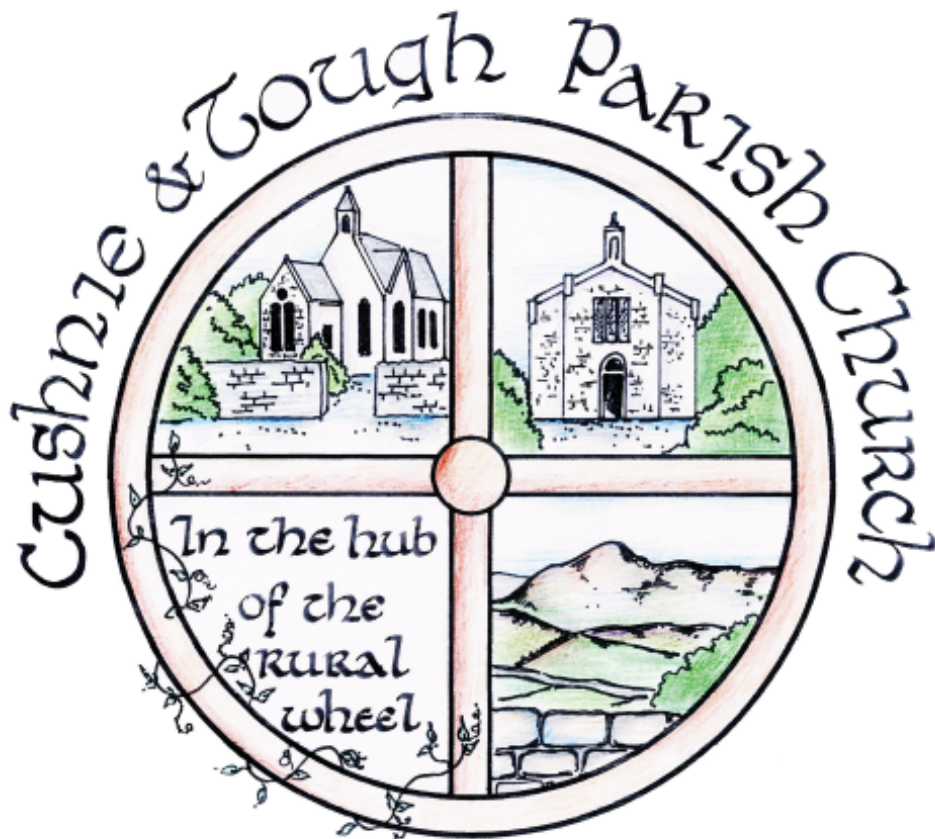
On another hill, long years ago,
On a cross, our Saviour died,
A crown of thorns upon his head,
A spear thrust through his side.

Despair of friends turned into joy
On that first Easter Day
As the ever-faithful women found
The tombstone rolled away.

Now amid the flowers of spring
We remember that day still
As children watch their Easter eggs
Go tumbling down a hill.

What a wonderful way to remember
That must surely be –
“Suffer the little children
and let them come to me.”

Don Patience



Scottish Charity No. SCO 30817

Church of Scotland Cushnie & Tough Parish Church

Normal worship arrangements:

10.00 am Tough Church
11.30 am Cushnie Church

Special Services:

- Thurs. 1 April 2010 'Maundy Thursday Service' with Communion, involving Howe Trinity and St Andrew's Scottish Episcopal Churches, 7.00 pm in Tough Church.
- Fri. 2nd April 2010 Ecumenical Walk with the Cross for Good Friday, leaving St Andrew's Church at 8am, walking around parts of Alford, stopping at several focal points for a reading and prayer, and ending with a short service on Beltie Hill around the Cross.
- Fri. 2nd April 2010 'Good Friday' united evening service at 7.30 pm in Cushnie Church.
- Sun. 4 April 2010 United Easter Service at 10.30 am in Tough Church
- Sun. 25 April 2010 10.00 am normal worship service at Tough Church.
11.30 am Communion in Cushnie Church.
- Sun. 2 May 2010 10.00 am Communion in Tough Church
11.30 am normal worship service in Cushnie Church.
- Sun. 6 June 2010 10.30 am United Worship in Tough Church.

**United summer 'Family' services will take place every Sunday during July in Tough Church and during August in Cushnie Church.
These joint services will take place at 10.00 am.**

*Welcome
Happy Easter*