



## *Making known God's love in Jesus: spiritual growth within the church*

Teaching continues to be a key part of Sunday services, and Rev Sam Torrens was supported in preaching by Victoria Lindford, a probationer who was with us until November. We also have a number of Housegroups, and there was a campaign to encourage more people to join these during the year.

Once the Basis of Union had been formally endorsed by both congregations, we worked to build relationships to smooth merger of the two churches. Barclay congregation joined Viewforth in their building for united services on Sunday mornings in July so people could get to know each other before the formal Service of Union on 16 August. Rev Shirley Fraser, who was Interim Moderator at Viewforth, was employed by BV for 6 months post-union to provide continuity of pastoral care. In addition a programme of visits was taken to non-attending members on the Viewforth Roll, and that allowed contact to be made with those whose engagement had lapsed.

### **Achievements and Performance**

For the six months that the church halls were out of use, the range of activities was maintained: children's Sunday clubs were run in other venues, and it has been encouraging to see new younger children joining these. The week-long Holiday Club relocated to the church sanctuary and attendance continued to grow this year.

We ran a *Science and Religion* course at the start of the year, which attracted people from within and outwith the congregation, and an Alpha course will run in Spring 2010. The Housegroup initiative mentioned above has resulted in the formation of a new group and strengthened numbers in the existing ones.

Following considerable planning work, a new website has been launched which much more clearly communicates our objectives and the people-centred nature of church life. The colour scheme and design has been applied to external signage following the union, and to leaflets which were distributed at Christmas to the 10,000 people in the extended parish.

It was greatly encouraging to see the mix of ages relaxing and worshipping together at Lendrickmuir in Fife on a church weekend away organised in the Autumn. A similar spectrum is seen on Sundays where the morning service, in particular, has seen a noticeable increase in attendance following the union.

However, looking forward we are aware that, despite the range of activities and outreach that exists at BV, there are many in the parish with whom we have not found a way to engage. For 2010 it is this issue, and the opportunities offered by an *Emerging Church* approach, that we hope to address more effectively.



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